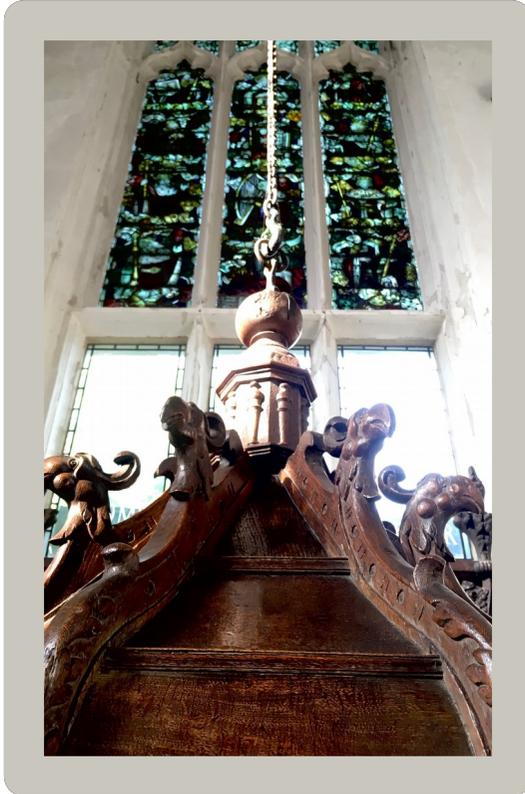


LITTLE S. MARY'S, CAMBRIDGE

March 2020: No. 536

NEWSLETTER



This newsletter contains: Further thoughts on the Lord's Prayer; Garden News; Know your PCC; A-Z: Doxology; Christianity in Science Fiction; news from the Cathedral Relief Service in Kolkata; Words & Music; observations on the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project; plus the usual Vicar's letter, daily intentions for prayer and more.

Highlights of March

Tuesday 3rd - **Lent Group** at 7.30pm; Fr Tim Harling, Dean of Queens' College, will lead us in meditating on the Lord's Passion through the Rosary, art and scripture. *No previous experience or knowledge required*

Friday 6th - **World Day of Prayer** service at 10.30am, followed by refreshments

Monday 9th - **Student/Young Adult Group** at 7.30pm for supper, a talk, discussion and 'compline' tonight's is Vocation & the religious life.

Tuesday 10th - **Forum Lunch Club** for the elderly and their carers from 12 noon onwards. *See Bob DeWolf for more info.* **Lent Group** at 7.30pm.

Wednesday 11th - **Monthly Healing Mass** at 10am, preceded by silent prayer from 9.45am. 7.30pm - **Stations of the Cross.**

Tuesday 17th - **Lent Group** at 7.30pm.

Thursday 19th - **Sung Mass** at 7pm for the Feast of S. Joseph.

Saturday 21st - **Gardeners' Coffee** in the Parish Centre after 10am Mass. *See Christine Tipple for more information.*

Tuesday 24th - **Lent Group** at 7.30pm.

Wednesday 25th - **Annunciation of Our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary,** 7pm High Mass.

Thursday 26th - **Mothers' Union** from 10.30am with prayers in the Lady Chapel followed by coffee and discussion, all welcome! *See Jo Wibberley for more information.*

Tuesday 31st - **Lent Group** at 7.30pm.

From the Vicar

Saturday after Ash Wednesday, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Are you crissed out yet? On the Ten O'Clock news this week we had, in quick succession, the Coronavirus Crisis (which will lead to an Economic Crisis), the Climate Crisis, and the Syria Crisis. Combine that with the new practice of giving storms proper names – Jorge approaches as I type – and it is difficult not to feel a certain sense of rising hysteria...

A few years ago I was bemoaning the state of the Church of England to my confessor, in similarly hysterical fashion. An historian, he simply said at the end (with a twinkle in his eye), 'It was much worse in the 13th century!' It is certainly important to gain perspective on things we regard as crises or disasters, not least in realising which are things we can do something about directly and which we cannot, and which are global and which are local crises, and whether it has indeed been worse in the past. Invariably it has.

Lent, Holy Week and Easter however, recognise two things: the first is that the problems of the world come down to sin and I am implicated in that and need, daily, to turn from that and my contribution towards it; secondly that the greatest ever crisis happened on Good Friday when the world ended in the death of the Son of God, and so all crises pale in contrast to that one. And that Great Crisis ended in the Resurrection and so we have hope.

Sin and hope therefore are the watchwords of this season we are now in. Indeed they need each other – *only* sin and we despair; but hope is only possible with sin (paradoxically) because sin tells us that the present disasters are the result of human folly, not some iron necessity of existence, and therefore are healable, and so we can hope.

My hope for us in Lent, therefore, is that we use the weapons at our disposal (prayer, fasting and almsgiving) to chip away at the dominion of sin within us and in the world. Our Lent Book, our Lent Group and the

Stations of the Cross are three ways to be strengthened in our fight against sin, the world and the Devil (as the baptismal liturgy puts it).

In other news – as they say – I’m delighted to tell you that we are gaining another ordinand (someone in formation for the sacred ministry) for Lent. **Jan Smith** is training to be a priest with the Eastern Region Ministry Course and has a particular ministry among deaf people. Do say hello to her. She joins **Samantha Sieber**, **Catherine Towner** and **Simon Allatt** on placement. We keep them all in our prayers. We also keep **Tim Wheatley** and **Joyce Bishop** in our prayers: both of whom have been ill in the last week or so; additionally Judy Swan continues her chemotherapy.

We are working hard to make sure that the project to clean and redecorate the interior of the church takes place this year. We are presently exploring the complicated scaffolding arrangements that will be necessary to allow work to happen to walls and ceiling while also allowing the church to continue in use for worship. The plan is also to clean the windows, repair masonry, and block in wiring and piping. As ever it is proving a bigger job than we first thought and so there are both financial considerations and issues of timing – avoiding clashing with weddings or major liturgical festivals. If you have a spare moment in your prayers do please remember the work and our architects Freeland Rees Roberts.

Many of you have kindly asked after me given that we are without an assistant curate or pastoral assistant at the moment. I won’t pretend that the diary isn’t pretty full and I can only apologise to those whom I ought to be visiting and haven’t yet or who are still waiting for a response to their email! I have a medium-term hope of some extra help (more on this in future months) but in the mean time I would be grateful for your prayers and patience and you might get a quicker response if you go through the churchwardens or Elaine Shield in the office initially with an enquiry.

With renewed prayers for us all in this holy season, I am,
yours in Christ,

Fr Robert.

Thoughts on the Lord's Prayer ...

by "Peregrine" - continuing a series:

THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

Fiat voluntas Tua: 'Not my will but Thine'. T.S. Eliot made Becket say that his final test was to 'make perfect my will'. I think what Eliot makes Becket say means that his will, what he wants, should become utterly selfless, submitting to what he understands to be the Divine will for his martyrdom. But, being Eliot, surely there is an irony in what Thomas says. For who can know the divine will? Who can 'make perfect' himself? Such a grace can only be given: we cannot do it ourselves. And Becket's apparent humility is in fact a subtle sort of spiritual pride, his final and crucial flaw. It is easy to despair.

But Jesus would not have given us this clause if it was only to lead us to despair at our own weak wills. Here again we are asking for help, having acknowledged duly our utter dependence on God. The grace for which we are asking is not the wiping out of our wills, our autonomy, but rather that we may see clearly enough to desire *of our own selves*, to long for, that which our Lover, God, wants. Just as a bride longs to please her husband, decking herself in gladness, rejoicing in the beauty of the body she can give him; just as a man brings home for his beloved the fruits of his labour, of his hunting, the joy in which (if he is a wise man) is not complete until she shows her delight. Reciprocals, not equals; neither is complete without the other's knowledge - as Milton knew and to my mind expressed better than anybody. (Oh goodness, how politically incorrect are those last few sentences. I don't care. Fashions change quickly.) So Thy will be done. But it is a hard saying nevertheless. For it implies that sometimes the answer to our most agonised prayer, our most extreme and urgent petitions, is simply 'No.' And we do not have to be given a reason. Prayer is not a bargain, but a submission.

But what did Jesus mean by that distinction between earth and Heaven? 'Earth' is easy enough: that world in which we live, which we love (perhaps, as Philip Sidney said, 'too much'), palpably subject to time,

change, decay, the world we know where if the toast can fall butter side down, it will. A world where the myth of the Fall perfectly expresses the Second Law of Thermodynamics (but is much more fun!), a world where the rags of time are shot through with a half suspected glory. But 'Heaven'? I am not learned enough to be able to trace the development of the idea covered by that word in Jewish thought. In the earliest books of the Bible there is a clear echoing of the Babylonian ideas, and Heaven is populated not just by God but by the *Elohim*. The monotheism, however, which is the distinctive development that marks out the Scriptures, seems to my mind to turn the *Elohim* into angels, beings not material – or material in a different, incomprehensible, way - but spiritual, the host of Heaven, the choir of Angels or ministers. It's to my mind a waste of time to try to get a coherent cosmology out of the Old Testament, for it's a library compiled over a long time with many different influences, and it cannot have stood quite apart from contact with the developments in Greek and Eastern thought. But what you do get consistently is an idea of a realm of energy, of willing service, of awe and majesty, of justice. But not a place, though that may have been how it was conceived of in the very earliest times. If you think of it as a place, towards it one might try to build a ziggurat called Babel.

Despite the materiality of the imagery that gives us the great works of Dante and Van Eyck, neither Heaven nor Hell is a place but a state. Says Mephistopheles to Marlowe's Faustus when asked for a description of Hell, 'Why, this is Hell, nor am I out of it.' Milton's Satan can 'joy in nought' for the 'hot hell that ever in him burns.' Wise John Byrom (who will be remembered by many at LSM), to whose quiet teaching I owe so much, put it that Hell is where the lost are finally and irrevocably, as they wished to be, on their own, ignored. They have themselves to themselves, bolting the doors on the inside. But 'Heaven'? What content do we put into that word? Casting down golden crowns beside the silvery sea does not sound awfully attractive. The child's vision of Heaven in Mahler's 4th and *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* is all right if you fancy the Land of Cockaigne and are not afraid of indigestion – oh dear, I wander from the point, and my perennial flippancy keeps breaking in. Those harps with golden wires – Milton got it spot on, I think, in *At a Solemn Musick*: the joining of all the voices of creation – including perhaps my unlovely offering – in a

universal endless fugue of joy, where each takes up the theme and sings their own unique version and gives it back to the whole and the dance starts again. Music and dance may be the nearest we can get to visualising (*visualising!*) the endless energy that moves the electron round the nucleus, the planets round the sun, the galaxy round its centre. Plato thought the soul of the Universe was music, Harmony: and Harmonia is the child of Aphrodite and Ares, of Concord and Discord, the chord where all tears are dried - and have been worth the weeping. And now... but my words are taking off into the *hwy!* that for minds like mine can intoxicate, and hide that which I wanted to address. Even the gift of speech and fecundity with words with which God has blessed me can become a distraction – ‘all our doings without charity are nothing worth.’ For me, as for so many, the metaphors which ought to illumine the unseeable have got so much in the way, mistaken as descriptions, not the symbols they are.

I don't doubt that ‘in Heaven’ we shall have bodies and selves and all the other things. We may have our pets with us. I can't imagine a heaven without the dogs I have loved, and – who knows? - I might be able to see their visions too. But surely it is a state of being where there is no need of explanation or pretence or intention, for we are known as we are known, fully, and in our unique measure and unique vision, know the Beloved back, and exchange the smiles that friends enjoy. Acceptance. Knowing one is accepted.

Someone once said that joy is the serious business of Heaven. A paradox for a world of paradox may be the easiest way of thinking about these mysteries. ‘Yes, we shall have books in Heaven: they will be the ones we have given away.’ Obedience which is the true freedom: ‘in whose service - which means actually ‘in slavery to, legally bound to’ - is perfect freedom’. Only by giving something away – ourselves included – do we own anything. ‘Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor...’

An A-Z of Interesting Things ...

I am inviting suggestions for the next few letters in the alphabet – I have some ideas but could always do with more! – Ed.

D is for Doxology

Doxology (from the Greek *doxa* “glory” and *logos* “word”) means a short hymn of praise to God in various Christian worship services, often added to the end of canticles, psalms, and hymns.

We commonly use the **Gloria Patri** (so named for its first two words in Latin) or “Lesser Doxology **Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen** (from the Latin *Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.*) Through saying these words, we praise God and declare our faith in the coequality of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

Another regularly-used Doxology (and one that is omitted in some circumstances) comes at the end of the Lord’s Prayer: **For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.**

ON CHRISTIANITY IN SCIENCE FICTION

by **Edmund Racher**

The theme and legacy of Christian belief in tales of the fantastic must be fairly well established: though the genre of fantasy has a number of roots and manifestations, the influence of J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis (a devout Catholic and a lay theologian respectively) in the twentieth century has set out a template for the genre – to be used, adapted or defied as necessary.

However, the desire to look beyond the confines of the present or the possible manifests itself in different forms, and whilst the use of the distinction between science fiction and fantasy can be debated, it is sufficiently well known to be invoked here in order to limit the scope of this article (likewise, I shall mostly talk of the written word). I enjoy both in their season: to see beyond my current time or place has been an instinct from an early age. This may be legitimately interpreted as both a longing to understand more of God's Creation and a rapacious desire to gain greater control of it.

Religion in Science Fiction as a whole might be said to follow two routes: either to put it to one side altogether (it seems unlikely there was a Chaplain aboard the starship *Enterprise*) or to invoke utterly unknown or radically distorted faiths. As examples of these I might cite the rather amorphous notion of The Force from *Star Wars* or the Zensunni Budislam and Orange Catholic Bible ('Thou shalt not make a machine in the likeness of a human mind') of Frank Herbert's excellent *Dune*.

However, a specifically Christian role in future events has been the subject of a fair few stories. Arthur C. Clarke's short story *The Star* is told from the point of view of a Jesuit priest aboard an astronomical research vessel. Robert Silverberg's wry *Good news from the Vatican* sees a robot elected Pope. The *Hyperion Cantos* of Dan Simmons suppose a Catholic Church which has managed to establish a New Vatican on its own planet. Walter M Miller Jr was inspired by the 1944 bombing of Monte Cassino to write *A*

Canticle for Leibowitz – in which the monks of the Albertian Order of Leibowitz preserve learning through a post-nuclear dark age.

It might be supposed that authors regard the hierarchy, doctrine and resources of Rome as assets that might let it endure where other churches do not – or perhaps that those qualities make in an interesting contrast for the distant future (John Brunner's 1968 tale of overpopulation *Stand on Zanzibar* bucks the trend here by supposing a schism within Roman Catholicism). Mary Doria Russell's *The Sparrow* rather encapsulates this trope in a nutshell. Upon radio contact with aliens, the United Nations start carefully debating whether or not to investigate further. The Jesuits decide to go there immediately – either to greet other believers or to take to lost souls the Gospel. I do not spoil much if I say that this does not end well, but Russell does not attribute this either solely or even mostly to the missionary impulse.

Of course, this is hardly a universal law - the unflatteringly drawn Curate of H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* gives the lie to that almost immediately. And a certain form of American Protestantism has flourished in the form of the (rather successful) *Left Behind* books, which deal with the aftermath of the Rapture. You will not find this doctrine in the XXXIX Articles and I can only direct you to BBC Radio 4's *In Our Time*, which recently broadcast a very interesting overview of it. Just as luridly apocalyptic might be the *Christ Clone Trilogy*, in which DNA is found on the Shroud of Turin and used as the title suggests. The prospect of this has the sort of distressing theological implications that would likely make the meekest Anglican synod see red. Both of these can, I think, happily be left by the wayside.

A far more Anglican apocalypse may be found in the childless future of P.D. James' *The Children of Men*. Whilst better known as a crime writer and Peer of the Realm, James did author a dystopia – unfortunately eclipsed by its 2006 film adaptation. To my mind, the book is far the superior, dealing both with the loss and distortion of faith, both in human institutions and in Christianity, as the winding-down of civilisation makes hollow the idea of progress.

Setting aside any talk of the future Church, I must make room for *The Book of the New Sun*, a notoriously labyrinthine tale of a Messiah in a world where the sun itself is ancient enough to hang dull and red in the sky. The author, Gene Wolfe, died last year. He was a convert to Catholicism and his works bear distinct echoes of this, without explicit mention of any scripture or doctrine. I do not wish to say much, but the protagonist's solution to the Temptation in the Desert has a remarkable black humour to it.

I can recommend *The Children of Men* and *A Canticle for Leibowitz* to you; likewise *The Books of the New and Long Sun* – though Wolfe will not be for everybody! However, I shall end where I began, with C.S. Lewis. Far less well known than the *Chronicles of Narnia* is his *Cosmic Trilogy (or Space Trilogy)* – *Out of the Silent Planet*, in which the Solar System outside Earth is inhabited and maintains a belief in God. This was developed from his essay *Religion and Rocketry*, among other sources. The Tolkienesque feature of an invented language appears, as does the scenario of a human encounter with a new species that has not endured the Fall of Man. Like Milton, the question of what life in Eden would resemble proves an appealing theme for Lewis (unlike Milton, we don't already know how the story ends). I commend these books, dense, well written and intriguing in their extensions of theology, to you. That the protagonist happens to be a Cambridge academic will doubtless not in any way influence your opinion of them.



Calendar and Intentions

for

March 2020

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 intentions.

Calendar for March

SUN 1st **1ST SUNDAY OF LENT**
MON 2nd *S. Chad, bishop & missionary*
TUE 3rd
WED 4th Ember Day
THU 5th
FRI 6th *S. Tibb virgin, Ember Day*
SAT 7th *Ss Perpetua & Felicity, Ember Day*

SUN 8th **2ND SUNDAY OF LENT**
MON 9th
TUE 10th
WED 11th
THU 12th
FRI 13th
SAT 14th

SUN 15th **3RD SUNDAY OF LENT**
MON 16th
TUE 17th *S. Patrick, bishop*
WED 18th *S. Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop & doctor*
THU 19th **S. Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary**
FRI 20th *S. Cuthbert, bishop & missionary*
SAT 21st *Thomas Cranmer, archbishop & martyr*

SUN 22nd **4TH SUNDAY OF LENT (MOTHERING)**
MON 23rd
TUE 24th *Oscar Romero, bishop & martyr*
WED 25th **THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LORD**
THU 26th
FRI 27th
SAT 28th

SUN 29th **5TH SUNDAY OF LENT**
MON 30th
TUE 31st

Daily Intentions & Anniversaries of death

Our Parish & People	1 st
Astronomers	2 nd
Our Lent Group	<i>Ceta Cherry, Harold Auckland</i> 3 rd
Farmers & those who work the land	<i>Stephen Barnard</i> 4 th
Greater practice of praying the Stations of the Cross	5 th
Penitence	<i>Roger Knight, Mary Rowlings</i> 6 th
Families separated by war & persecution	<i>Geoffrey Clayton, bp.</i> 7 th

Our Parish & People	<i>Jessie Rolph</i> 8 th
Young adults at LSM	9 th
Our Lent Group	<i>Carl George</i> 10 th
The sick	11 th
Our home communicants	12 th
An end to superstition	<i>Elsie Murrell, Helen Dex, Beryl Oliver</i> 13 th
Ely Diocesan Synod	14 th

Our Parish & People	<i>Elizabeth Lampe, Violet Barnard, Michael Ogden, Alan Gustard</i> 15 th
South Cambridge Deanery	<i>Teresa Pike, Jean Gustard</i> 16 th
Church & people of Ireland	<i>Richard Boulind, Ann Robinson</i> 17 th
Peace in the Holy Land	18 th
Husbands & fathers	<i>Mary McDougall, Eileen Barnard</i> 19 th
Conversion of England & Wales	20 th
The Archbishop of Canterbury	<i>Constance Hennings, Margaret Bottrall</i> 21 st

Our Parish & People	<i>Emily Glennie, Nellie Edwards, Merlin Rotherham-Brown, Ken Topley</i> 22 nd
S. Cyprian's Sharpeville	23 rd
Those persecuted for the Faith	<i>George Head</i> 24 th
That Christ would be born in our hearts	25 th
Friends of LSM	<i>Philip Hall</i> 26 th
Keeping our Lenten disciplines	27 th
All who despair	<i>John Gilling, pr.</i> 28 th

Our Parish & People	29 th
Confessors & spiritual directors	30 th
Renewed zeal for Passiontide	<i>Pamela Horne</i> 31 st

Cathedral Relief Service (CRS), Kolkata, India

Report of a visit 4-7 January 2020

Thomas Mathews

Before leaving for India, I had been very excited about the invitation I had received from Rig David to visit Kolkata (the former Calcutta) to see the work of CRS for myself. My excitement proved to be fully justified after I arrived in Kolkata on 4 January this year. I was met at the airport by Rig and by Cheryl George (one of the senior workers, who had recently been injured in a road traffic accident). I was driven to the guesthouse of La Martinière School, where I stayed for the next three nights. The accommodation was basic, but perfectly adequate and comfortable.

The next morning (Sunday 5 January) I was picked up early for the short drive to the magnificent St Paul's Cathedral for the 8:30am Sung Eucharist, celebrated by the Presbyter-in-Charge, the Rev'd Abir Adhikari. It was a great privilege for me to partake in the Lord's Supper there, before venturing into the slums of Kolkata.

The first project we visited was at Hastings. Despite the very English-sounding name, this is a rather deprived slum area. The population here (approximately 250 families) is almost totally Muslim (mostly illegal immigrants from the former East Pakistan, now Bangladesh - who fled their homeland at the time of the war of liberation from Pakistan). Many of the adults here are illiterate and unemployed, although a few work as day labourers or domestic helpers. Several of the men are drug addicts and drug pedlars, and the women eke out a meagre living from prostitution. We tread carefully through the slush and garbage to reach a small clean area under a concrete flyover, where a group of young children, aged about 3 to 4, greet us enthusiastically with folded hands and welcome songs. To the tune of *Ten Green Bottles*, we joined the children in singing "Ten Ripe Mangoes Hanging from the Tree", and then listened as the volunteer teachers went through the alphabet and numbers with them. The patience and dedication of these CRS staff is truly amazing and deeply touching. They do not preach the Gospel here, or try to proselytise, but when they

comfort an upset young child with a hug one can see the love of the Lord in action.

After a couple of hours at Hastings, we were driven to the next project at Brace Bridge. The area is named after an unused old railway station with several disused platforms and railway lines still in place. Around the station another large slum area has grown, again with a predominantly Muslim population. We walked across the railway lines, and went down a narrow dirty crowded street until we reached a rough open shed-like construction (built recently by CRS), with no walls but with a corrugated iron sheet for a sloping roof to keep out the rain and the sun. In one half of this open shed, there was a group of young children like the ones at Hastings, practising their letters and numbers, and singing little nursery rhymes. On the other side, there was a group of women busy with their sewing and embroidery, each one eager to show me her work. The women were being taught the intricacies of embroidery by CRS staff members, who provided them the materials and tools needed. It would be quite easy and understandable to dismiss the work produced by these women as crude and unrefined, but when one considers the background of the women, their illiteracy, and the standards that they have been used to, one can see the heights that they have soared to achieve what they produce now. I accept that a lot more needs to be done to make their work saleable in the Western world, but I am sure that that will come with patience and understanding.



By the end of my visit to these two projects, I felt emotionally drained by the abject poverty I had witnessed, and the seemingly hopeless mountain of a task that CRS had taken on. My emotions were, however, quickly reversed when I reminded myself of the enthusiasm of the women and children being helped, and of the joy that CRS was bringing into their lives. I snapped out of my depression, and went to bed that night reciting Jesus' words in Matthew 25.40: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to Me."

The next morning (Monday 6 January) I was collected from La Martinière School and driven to the offices of CRS, within the precincts of St Paul's Cathedral. There I saw the work of Nari Dana ("Women's Wings"), the amazing programme designed to empower illiterate vulnerable women from the slums of Kolkata by training them in various skills to help them earn a living. There was tailoring, sewing, embroidery, bag-making, beautician's courses etc. The last programme was particularly popular, as practitioners of facial make-up and hair styling are in great demand (and the work lucrative), especially during the marriage season, and various religious festivals.

There were two other projects for me to visit that day. The first was Bibibagan, a free eye camp in a small crowded room open on to the street. An optometrist with a few old tools and sight charts was available to see patients who came with various eye complaints. Those with long-sightedness were given free reading glasses. Others who needed surgery (e.g. those with conditions like advanced cataracts) were given a chit of paper - a letter of referral to the nearby government hospital. It did make me wonder if that piece of paper carried any weight at all, but apparently it did, albeit needing patience, hours of waiting and repeated visits to the hospital. The final project I visited was Antananarivo, another combined project with education for children in an older age group (up to about age 12) and a women's empowerment project run by Nari Dana.

On the morning of my departure from Kolkata, I was privileged to be invited, with Rig David, to Bishop's House to join the Rt Rev'd Dr Paritosh Canning for breakfast. Bishop Paritosh has only recently been appointed to the Diocese of Calcutta (note the old name of the city in the name of the

diocese) in the Church of North India. A young and far-sighted man with vision and charisma, Bishop Paritosh is very keen on giving CRS all the support and help that he and the Diocese can, and I am sure his prayers and blessings will be invaluable in the years ahead. He hopes to be in Britain later this year for the Lambeth Conference, and has expressed an interest to visit LSM during that visit.

The work being done by CRS is truly amazing. Given very meagre resources, they have taken on tasks that seem enormous and totally unconquerable. With patience and deep faith, however, they have achieved miracles. Yet there is so much more to be done! They need our prayers and our material help. The staff working for CRS need to be better paid, and with vision and imagination we could help to raise the care given to the poor of Kolkata.



KNOW YOUR PCC

SHEILA BENNETT



I am a member of LSM's Parish Church Council, assisting Fr Robert in the administration of the Parish. In addition to being on the PCC, I am on the Deanery Synod and Diocesan Synod.

As a child, I attended St Andrew's Infants and Junior Schools in the centre of Leicester. St Andrew's Church was of a high-church tradition. I went to Australia as one of the "£10 Poms". I lived in Canberra, the federal capital, from 1965 to 1976, getting my BA, working for the Federal Government and helping to set up Medibank (the nearest organisation to a National Health Service). I gained my MA in Health Education in London.

Two of my four very grown-up children have returned to live in Australia, where I also have three granddaughters (and four other grandchildren in England).

I came to LSM in 1993, just at the time Fr Andrew Greany was appointed. I was made to feel comfortable and accepted by the friendly people.

My ultimate work in Cambridge was leading Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service (CCVS) which was funded by the City and County Councils. The CCVS was an umbrella organisation for local charity and community groups. My role was to ensure that groups seeking funds from the councils were constituted properly with a Chairperson, Treasurer and Committee. I was a member of the committee which heard requests for funds. All my committee experience serves me well in the responsibilities I now have.

Observations from Cambridge Churches Homeless Project at Little St Mary's December 2019 -January 2020

A prayer for the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project:

**As we create a space where we can share our food and stories together
around the table**

May our churches be home to those who have no home

May the warmth of our hospitality melt fear and mistrust

May we be transformed by our guests as they bless us,

holding a mirror up to us showing us who we really are

And may we let go of all that stops us from seeing Christ in the other.

Amen

‘Cambridge Churches Homeless Project was set up in response to the growing number of homeless people presenting at churches asking for help and sleeping rough in the city’ www.chhp.org.uk

This winter, from 1 December until the end of March, 12 venues, 11 local churches and Beth Shalom Synagogue are offering 17 bed spaces every night. The project has been running since 2013, with LSM involved from the outset, and in 2018 CCHP became a Charitable Incorporated

Organisation (CIO) employing a Project Worker and two drivers. Lucy McKitterick was instrumental in setting up the project; she is now running the Night Shelter in King's Lynn.

This season, LSM has provided a home every Tuesday evening for homeless people, beginning in Advent, including New Year's Eve 2019 and throughout January this year. The guests slept both in the Parish Centre and in the Church, providing space and sanctuary.

On 21 January the church hosted both our homeless guests and also members of the Society of Mary, who held their devotions in the church. Afterwards the SoM shared tea, coffee and biscuits, served by our volunteers at the back of the church, whilst in the Parish Centre the guests feasted on roast lamb, aubergine parmigiana, and chocolate brownies and fruit salad. It was heartening to see how naturally the church accommodated everyone; one member of the Core Team, from St Paul's attended the service.

We welcomed up to 17 guests, including one female. Numbers fluctuated as at least four guests were admitted to hospital during the course of the project whilst others moved on, by accessing accommodation, supported by CCHP, or stayed with family members.

Escape-pea or Role of Volunteers

I am so grateful to the volunteers (over 40 in number) who helped so willingly in so many ways to ensure the smooth running of the evening, night and morning. Our volunteers came not exclusively from LSM; local churches, the Buddhist Centre, and Peterhouse were all represented and, as Jon Canessa, Bishop's Officer for Homelessness, writes in last year's report; This wonderful diversity of people contributes to making the project a joy to be involved with.'

Everyone attended one compulsory training evening during the autumn (five in all, attended by over 100 potential volunteers). The core values of CCHP – a commitment to social justice, bringing hope, building community, celebrating diversity, and showing compassion and reconciliation - underpinned everything that was said at the meetings.

At LSM, our volunteers welcomed the guests with tea and coffee, set out the bedding, prepared, served and cleared up the meal, shared the meal with the guests, kept vigil overnight, cleared up in the morning by loading the van which transported the kit to the next venue, and ensured that the kitchen was spotless for coffee after Wednesday 10am Mass.

The communal meal was a great highlight and our cooks produced feasts Tuesday after Tuesday. Many were the pea jokes as they fell on the floor 'escape-peas'. Thank you Frank, Neil, Irene, Bob, Adrian and all the kitchen assistants who worked tirelessly to create the meal, to serve and to restore order, all whilst observing stringent Food Hygiene Regulations. Thank you to Monika, who provided bread from her bakery in Hills Road every Tuesday. It was much appreciated by guests and volunteers alike. Thank you too to Rachel and Adrian who washed the sheet sleeping bags and pillowcases every week. Huge thanks to all volunteers.

It was a privilege to spend time with the guests week on week, to mark their unfailing courtesy, to share jokes and conversation, including a discussion on favourite Greek Myths and Books of the Bible. I am glad that LSM is able to play its part in the work of CCHP. I conclude with the CCHP Prayer which the volunteers shared during the team brief at the beginning of the evening:

Blessing of St Francis
(adopted and adapted by the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project)

May God bless us with discomfort at easy answers,
Half-truths and superficial relationships,
So that we may live deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with anger at injustice and exclusion,
So that we may bring hope, build community and seek reconciliation.

May God bless us with tears shed for those who feel lost
To their addictions, compulsions and poor mental health,
So that we may reach out our hands to comfort them.

And may God bless us with enough foolishness to believe
That we can make a difference in this world,
**So that we can do what others claim cannot be done
To bring justice and kindness to all we meet. Amen.**

Reflections by Volunteers

"It was a complete joy to be part of the homeless project and to help to make a difference. I worked with a fantastic team on the night with Deanne and Iona and everything seem to run smoothly. It was a bit daunting with all the rules and regulations with regards to food hygiene and completing the paperwork but once done it was fine. I was really impressed by the quality of food everyone produced. I tried to use a lot of the stuff I grew in the allotment and had available at the time and our clients seem very appreciative of the effort and quality of food they received which made the experience all the more rewarding. Look forward to doing it again." Irene

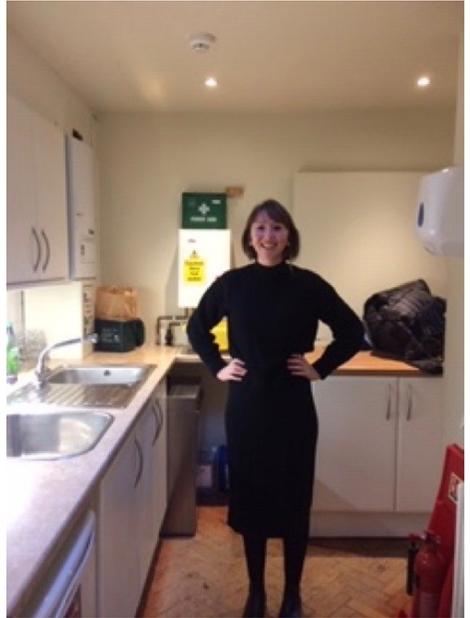
"The beneficiaries of the CCHP are not the obvious ones. The guests only receive food, warmth, love, shelter and a sense of community. The helpers have the reward of being part of a project which reaffirms their worth - a prize beyond rubies." Neil

"It was a pleasure to help with the Project." Janice

"It was noticeable how quickly the guests wanted to go to sleep. Being homeless is exhausting and CCHP gives the guests a warm and peaceful place to rest."

"Helpers in the kitchen were amazing. They all cheerfully coped with the confined space of the LSM kitchen. The management of CCHP has been impressive. The parts I have seen particularly have to do with the organisation of the meals: recording menus, ensuring dietary constraints are met, getting last minute stand-ins among other issues. It shows how much effort is needed to run the "operation" effectively." Bob

“I am a PhD law student from Australia studying in Cambridge and I am one of the volunteers at CCHP (and particularly at LSM!) I arrive at 6:30am and under the direction of our team leader Mary Ward, I help pack up beds, serve tea and coffee and biscuits, and clean up the kitchen. Mornings at LSM are always busy but cheerful and fun (even at 6:30!)”
Matilda



“It’s been a pleasure volunteering with you again this year. It’s so good to see the continued success of the project and the support it provides to so many.”
Petra

“Thanks for the opportunity to help out. I feel I got more out of the project than I put in, and I’m very happy to help next year.” Matthew

“This is what I receive - in brief. A guest will suddenly, unprompted, turn to you and tell his/her story. Later, often much later, you realise you have received so much more than you could ever possibly give. There is no greater love than that. Thank you so much all the organisers and volunteers for the gift you give to us all.” Dee

Mary Ward, CCHP Rota organiser and team leader LSM

Garden News

This month, at the lunch that we host in conjunction with the Friends of Fulbourn hospital, we welcomed a speaker from the Botanic Garden. She is an outreach worker, spreading the idea that community gardens, where people can enjoy working together or just being amongst natural surroundings, are so beneficial. She was very complimentary about our wild flower garden.

If anyone is interested in helping maintain it please come to our **Garden and Coffee Morning Saturday 21 March at 10.30am**

Christine Tipple

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