Parish Magazine

Our Lady and St Peter
East Grinstead

St Bernard
Lingfield

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The Catholic Church of Our Lady and St Peter, with St Bernard's, Lingfield

Priest in charge of the two churches

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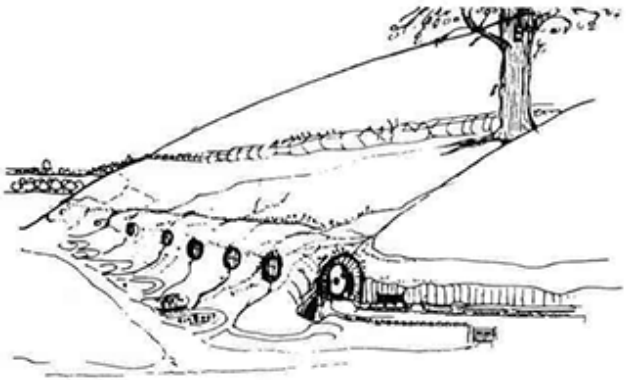
I've seen the light. I've also seen "The Hobbit". It was great. As in *The Lord of the Rings trilogy*, wonderful New Zealand scenery and marvellous costumes and makeup. But most important of all is the story—and the imaginative creativity of J.R.R. Tolkien.

Tolkien himself was a committed Catholic (Vice-President of Oxford Catenian Circle), a faithful Mass-goer, and a man who took prayer seriously. Amidst the lament for a passing rural England (the Shires) and the departure of much of the poetical and spiritual quality of life (the moving westwards of the Fairies or Elves), there is also the portrayal of the qualities needed in the struggle and work for the Kingdom of God. Courage, truth, love, friendship, and above all the gift of self: that is, the willingness to sacrifice oneself for the good of others. The qualities of the good in Middle Earth are the same required today.

See the film. Read the book. Reflect on Tolkien's awareness of evil and the courage that is needed to defeat it, and the hope that beyond anything we can do in the struggle is the promise of grace, new life, and a redeemed world healed from its hurts and made anew according to God's mind.

Father Steven Purnell



Many thanks, yet again, to all who have helped to make this issue, especially those who have written from the heart—that is what this Magazine should be all about. Thanks, also, to all those who have taken the time from their busy lives to contribute: "If you want something done, ask a busy person" (Benjamin Franklin). The next issue will be at the beginning of summer: contributions for it are welcome at any time!

Klara King (EG 321581)
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The Friends of St Peter's

Dear Parishioners, We have been very lucky to have had a good financial year, considering the economic climate. We have organized, on average, three fundraising events per term this year as well as raising money for the school in other ways too.

We were running nicely on track with our fundraising targets when a situation in May changed our perspective. The school was offered the opportunity to have a grant to extend and fully refurbish the children's entrance. We would only be entitled to this money if the school could provide 10% of the total cost from parental donations. This therefore made a huge hole in the funds. As a committee we decided to help, and with the £6,000 we had already set aside to provide Reception with an outdoor canopy (which is now included in the project), we were able to raise a further £6,500 before the end of the school year—a phenomenal achievement. The extension has now been started, and we look forward to completion in early Spring.

We have not only raised money for the extension this year but also raised money to enhance the school's ICT programme. The last financial year we bought enough netbooks for a whole class to use, and this year we are able to assist in upgrading the server and provide extra laptops as well.

We have opened up a BTmydonate account this year. This allows online transactions such as ticket sales and donations, and BT will even calculate the gift aid too.

We continue to help the school keep parents informed via our website (www.friendsofstpeters.co.uk), our parents' email group (Google group), and Facebook and Twitter pages. Parents can also log into our Google calendar for all school dates on their computer or smartphone.

We are in the fortunate position now of having committee members represented across most year groups of the school. This is very important to keep a balanced viewpoint and to ensure that experience matched with new ideas and enthusiasm create a happy and successful—not to mention social—"Friends" organization.

Saying that, we would like members of the parish to join us. We are known as the "Friends of St. Peter's" for that very reason, not a Parent's Association. We are currently looking for people who could help us apply for grants and for businesses who would like to advertise with us or help us out in anyway. Anybody who would like to come to any of our events would be made very welcome indeed. For further details, please telephone EG 316475 or visit our website (www.friendsofstpeters.co.uk), Facebook (www.facebook.com/friendsofstpeters), or Twitter (@stpetersfriends).

Sam O'Neill
Chair, The Friends of St. Peter's

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Just a short note of thanks from all of the Governing Body of St Peter's Catholic Primary School.

We would like to thank the Parish community in general, for all their help and support in the past year. There are a number of people who regularly support the school in numerous ways without ever being named. We are aware that there are also people who have no obvious connection to the school (or their children—or even in some cases their grandchildren—left the school years ago) who still support the school.

We as a Governing Body are, amongst many things, trying to improve the communication and links with the wider Parish Community and will continue to do so in this new year. Hence you may have noticed more listings of our school events in the weekly newsletter. You are all more than welcome to attend these events—you do not have to have a child at the school currently. The Parish Newsletter is on the school website to give families at the school visibility to events taking place within the Parish.

Once again, thank you for your continued support: we hope you all have a happy and healthy 2013.

John Donohue
Chair of School Governors

Justice and Peace Group

The final total for the 2012 Sleep Out was £3,376.02, which was divided equally between Crawley Open House (for their kitchen renovation), The Easter Team, and Worthing Chuches Homeless Project—£1,125.34 each. Many people at our two churches also contribute towards the shared shopping scheme and donate clothes, bedding and other items—thank you. The FoodFest initiative that took place early in July also raised money for Crawley Open House, along with ADVANCE and Meridian Radio—£779.24 each. Thanks to the wide range of participating restaurants in East Grinstead and Lingfield, to the parishioners who supported the whole initiative, and to Nick Castiglione who master-minded the project.

As you know, homelessness is on the increase in these times of austerity, and all homeless charities do great work in providing a safe haven and rehabilitation for those who find themselves on the streets. But for every person that is helped, many have to be turned away with a blanket and a flask with a hot drink and that's no fun at any time of the year, but particularly in the cold and wet. The national homeless charity CRISIS reports that, in 2012, rough sleeping increased by 23% in England; even more shockingly 5,678 people slept rough at some point in London during 2011/12, an increase of 43% on the previous year's total. Someone who is homeless is three and half times more likely to commit suicide than the general population. Crawley Open House has its own stories of the many people who need help, including those who have lost their homes after losing good jobs or their own businesses—homelessness can happen to anyone.

Thank you also for donations of men's jeans, T-shirts and sweatshirts, trainers, and bags for the Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group (GDWG). Members of the J&P Group continue to visit detainees at Tinsley House as part of the GDWG. Please take a copy of the booklet *Mobiles, Money & Mayhem: The Facts and Fibs about Asylum* and inform yourselves about refugees and immigrants—don't rely on what you are told in newspapers. A service entitled **Welcome Stranger** was held on Sunday 30 September at St Mary's Church and reflected on the issues of asylum in the UK. The speaker, an asylum seeker from the Congo, gave his testimony and spoke of inhumanity and lack of compassion in the UK immigration system, but also of hope and friendship provided by GDWG visitors.

Later in November, **Sharing Destiny,** a service to celebrate One World

Week, was held at St. Luke's Church on 18 November, with about 40 attending. The DVD prepared by the Mid-Sussex Diversity Group was shown, and entertainment was provided by various groups and ended with sharing of food.

Two members go to Lewes Prison to run the *Sycamore* programme for prisoners (a restorative justice course welcomed by Prison Governors countrywide) and support individual prisoners in the community. If there are any readers with adult education qualifications who would like to be involved in this scheme, please contact Valerie Maynard, Prison Fellowship (EG 326896). Monthly we write letters to Governments in connection with a wide range of Prisoners of Conscience.

The Group also supports the family support worker of the Anglican Diocese of Chichester, Sarah Richardson-Cornish, who works with disadvantaged families in East Grinstead, which are many and increasing. Sarah welcomes volunteers for a variety of tasks—please phone 07747 481690 if you can help. Another very successful and much-needed project has been the setting up of an East Grinstead Foodbank for people suffering from financial hardship—this operates out of Trinity Methodist Church on Monday and Friday afternoons between 1 pm and 3 pm, and on Wednesday mornings. There has been overwhelming support for this scheme, which is supported and staffed by Christians from all denominations (details from 07983 209940 or info@eastgrinstead.foodbank.org.uk or www.trusseltrust.org/foodbank-projects). Vouchers for an emergency 3-day food supply are obtainable from health and social workers, doctors, local Ministers, etc. The Street Pastors scheme, which will be helping young people in trouble on the streets of East Grinstead on Friday and Saturday nights, has also been launched; this is another Churches Together in East Grinstead project supported by members of all our churches.

Last, but not least, the Shoebox scheme promoted by Samaritan's Purse was well supported in 2012, and 332 boxes were sent to Montenegro (as in 2011) from a variety of churches, schools, and community groups in East Grinstead. Thank you once again for your generosity. Apparently the Shoezone shop in the town is also a drop-off point for this scheme and also deals with about 300 boxes annually.

The J&P Group always needs new (and younger) members, so if you have an interest in issues of social justice, please do come along at 8 pm to Moat United Reformed Church on the second Tuesday of each month and join in.

Dates for the diary

- **Churches Together AGM.** Shrove Tuesday at 7 pm at the Jubilee Centre
- **Womens' World Day of Prayer** (prepared by the Women of France). Friday 1 March—two services, one at 10.30 am, the other at 8 pm, at Trinity Methodist Church

Sue Joy

Catholic Women's League

Last July we celebrated the 150th anniversary of our founder, Margaret Fletcher, with a Mass. At the national level, CWL members attended Mass in Oxford, where she spent most of her life. Margaret Fletcher insisted that the League needed women with '' balanced common sense'' and that it should ''utilise the average woman in convincing the Catholic world that business-like methods and intellectual gifts are excellent weapons in the service of God''. She had a great desire to fight for improved educational opportunities for women. After our Mass we celebrated with a lunch at Muriel Cheesman's house, as we were unable to attend in Oxford.

In August, we joined other members of the Branch at Fr Kevin Gaskins' in Wadhurst for our annual lunch. Fr Kevin is our spiritual director, and he celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination in July. We are very happy to have him back in East Grinstead. Several members attended the Branch Pilgrimage to West Grinstead in August, and three of our members represented our section at the 50th anniversary lunch of the Weybridge section. We have had two parishioners speak to us at our meetings. In June, Bozena Parfit told us about how she prepared her entry for the 10th World Flower Show in Boston, USA, in 2011; in September, Marjorie Pett spoke about her recent memorable visit to Lourdes aided by two young redshirts. In October, Fr Steven gave a very interesting talk on ''The Church and the Jews''—the similarities and the differences. In November, we had a puppet theatre show in the church performed by Beverly Lake and '' The Trinity Messengers'' with the theme of God's Love. We also collected for the Poppy Appeal, as we have done for the last 30 years, raising over £100. We ended the year with a lunch in the Parish Centre, serving a full Christmas meal. We were pleased to be able to send donations to our charities as usual with monies raised during the year.

Our National President, Margaret Richards, is due to step down in 2013, and we have all had to cast our votes between three candidates for the next President. We look forward to knowing who this will be.

Gill O'Driscoll

St. Vincent de Paul Society (England & Wales)

The SVP, which celebrates its bi-centenary in 2013, is still very much alive and active.

On 23 April 1833, Frederic Ozanam's 20th birthday, the first meeting took place at 18, rue du Petit-Bourbon, (today 38, rue St. Sulpice) in the offices of the newspaper *La Tribune Catholique*, of which Emmanuel Bailly was Chief Editor.

Bailly had gathered around him six students of the Sorbonne University, Paris, who were between the ages of 19 and 23. This small group, united by a sound friendship, became the "Conference of Charity" and, less than a year later, placed itself under the patronage of St. Vincent de Paul, whose spirit and example inspired them. Thus The Society of St. Vincent de Paul was born.

Its first President was Emmanuel Bailly, but its most symbolic figure was unquestionably Frederic Ozanam. Bailly realized that it was one thing to debate religion in history circles within the safe and privileged surroundings of the Sorbonne, and quite another to go out into the slums of Paris to serve the poor. It was providential that he, as President, saw fit to send his young friends to Sister Rosalie Rendu, herself a Vincentian Daughter of Charity, who lived and worked in the destitute neighbourhood of the rue Mouffetard, Paris. She grasped immediately the vocation of these enthusiastic and generous young people. She led them to the poor and taught them how to serve those in need with love and respect and in the most authentic tradition of St. Vincent de Paul. The tradition of visiting on a " person-to-person contact basis" became the first young members' trademark, and so it remains today.

It is difficult not to marvel at the amazing growth of the Society, which is truly international, now having a presence in about 150 countries. From just a few members in 1833, it had grown to 76,500 members in 1883 and by 1913 had nearly doubled its membership to 134,000. In 2013, 200 years since it began, there are over 700,000 member volunteers in the world.

A major Pilgrimage, starting at Lyons, where Frederic lived as a young person, is due to take place in April 2013 and will end in Paris, the traditional headquarters of the International Society of St. Vincent de Paul. On 6 July, there will be an SVP National Meeting at Birmingham Cathedral Hall, and the next day, 7 July, SVP members will have the opportunity to attend the Walsingham National Pilgrimage.

Please think about becoming a member in this momentous year, by contacting your parish SVP group. If you cannot become a member, why not become a Friend of the SVP?

Peter Wells,
President of Our Lady and St. Peter SVP Group

Christian Meditation Group

In the Parish Newsletter you will often see a notice for a meeting of the Christian Meditation Group claiming that it follows the teachings of Fr John Main. When I first saw this notice, I associated meditation with the embellishing of New Testament stories—for example, the passage of Christ asleep in a fishing boat when a storm erupts. To me, meditation was pondering this story as if I was there on the boat. I would try to imagine the feeling of being seasick as the waves rose, the cold rain and wind on my face and the smell of salt in the air.

Looking at another form of meditation, I have read about the way meditation is practised in Buddhism. They consider the practice as three precious jewels. The first is reading the teaching to be meditated. The second is time taken to consider the implications of the teaching. The third is the physical practice of meditation, sitting in a lotus position in silence.

So how is meditation practised by our Christian meditation group? We listen to a short talk by Fr John Main or Fr Laurence Freeman. Then we sit still for twenty minutes to meditate. During this time the only thing asked of us is to lightly close our eyes and continually say in our mind a mantra to help clear our mind of random thoughts. As a mantra we use the Aramaic word '*ma-ra-na-tha'* meaning 'Come Lord'. Is it boring to endlessly say the mantra? This, in my view, is the crunch point of our meditation. Fr John Main has a chapter on the mantra and boredom in his book *The Heart of Creation*; I have summarized the chapter below.

Coming back to our group practice, after meditating we discuss the

talk heard earlier and close with a prayer. The meeting lasts about an hour.

Much has been said and written about meditation, but as we have all been created as individuals its effect on each of us will be different. May I suggest that if, when you have read the summary of John Main's teaching, given below, you feel drawn towards it, then you should try it. It is like riding a bicycle: no matter what is said about how to ride it, until you try you will never know.

Richard Osterfield

The mantra and boredom

A summary of a chapter from Fr John Main's book The Heart of Creation

One of the great problems of modern life is that so many people, for a large part of their life, experience a terrible and deadening boredom. For many people the first glance at meditation and the saying of the mantra makes it seem to them that it, too, will soon become another exercise in dull repetition. However, only a little experience of really *learning* to say the mantra (and this is the art of meditation) could change their minds—to understand that the art of meditation is simply *setting the mantra free* within your heart. The difficulty of this for us is that we always want to be in control. It is very difficult for us as Westerners to learn to set the mantra free, to let it sound, to let it sing in our heart in a sort of glorious liberty.

One of the biggest religious problems that we face is really allowing God to be free. So often we want to control him, getting him to see everything from our point of view and to make things turn out as we would want them to. But setting the mantra free in your heart is a preparation, indeed a sacrament, for allowing God to be totally free in your heart, at the centre of your life. Freedom can be frightening, challenging, frustrating, but it is never boring. The right kind of repetition is necessary to set us free, but freedom as exercised is never repetitious. To be free ourselves, we have to learn to set God free, free to lead us and to love us. As we all know from our human relationships, there can be no love without freedom. Once we love . . . we become wholly at the disposition of the other. That is exactly the experience of Christian prayer, of Christian mediation: to be wholly at the disposition of God.

Saying the mantra can never be mere repetition. Each time we say it, we ratify our personal entry into the reality of God in whom all things are

made new. Ritual itself—all true ritual—is making eternal reality present in time. And ritual is at the other extreme from dull repetition. Repetition is merely a closed routine, but in ritual we enter into the totality of the expansive mystery of being. It is total because it combines the mystery of our own being with the mystery of the being of God. Each time we say the mantra, we find our way more deeply into the presence of God, the one who is and who describes himself as "I Am". Daily meditation is a ritual loss of self, but it is also much more than loss of self. It is an entering into ultimate being, ultimate reality, ultimate love. This is made possible as we become detached from our own limited way of seeing and feeling and understanding, as we open our hearts to the totality of perception and consciousness. In meditation and through the silence that the mantra leads us to, we come to that greatest human experience: we know ourselves to be "known'" We understand that we are understood, and, in the experience of coming into the presence of love, we discover that we are lovable.

How long does it take? It does not matter how long it takes. All that matters is that we are under way. All that matters is that we learn to let go, deeply enough, totally enough, and sincerely enough, to be able to say our mantra with total attention and total generosity. To meditate, all that is required is that total generosity which is a human generosity born of faith. It is our faith in the reality of God, which is so difficult for modern men and women. It is also faith in the reality of ourselves, which is perhaps more difficult for us as modern people with our conditioned self-doubt and complex systems of dependency. But by saying the mantra, in meditating every morning and evening, we discover faith, and we discover it is very close to us in the person of Jesus. Through our relationship with him we can go where it would otherwise be closed to us to go.

Richard Osterfield

Gospel of Life Group

> "The Gospel of God's love for man, the Gospel of the dignity of the person, and the Gospel of Life are a single and indivisible Gospel."
>
> *Evangelium Vitae*

In 2012 the Gospel of Life Group donated 16 mother-and-baby packs when babies were born at the West Sussex homes run by the LIFE Charity, and

7 vouchers for mothers who arrived with their babies already born. This was in addition to Christmas and Easter presents.

The Parish pro-life group has been pleased to support the work of the Life Charity for some nine years now. LIFE exists to save lives and transform the futures of some of the most disadvantaged children and young people in the UK.

The health and well-being of vulnerable pregnant mothers and young families is improved by supporting them through difficult times and offering them the help they need to turn their lives around. Through a network of houses, LIFE provides supported accommodation and access to life-skills training. There are seven houses in the diocese, and the Parish group supports those in West Sussex, located at Crawley, Haywards Heath, Brighton, and Littlehampton. A display on LIFE'S supported housing service will be shown at the church early in spring 2013, to coincide with an article in A&B News.

Each house has a support worker who ensures mothers get the care, support, and training they need to build confidence and self-esteem, in order to equip them to successfully move into independent accommodation with their babies. One of the support workers joined Walk for Life in October, along with her 18-year-old daughter, who was born at the Crawley LIFE house. Yes, she was helped by LIFE, and now helps other women who fall pregnant and find themselves in very difficult circumstances, often homeless. LIFE provides the "positive alternative" for those women and their babies.

It is essential that the Gospel of Life Group continues to fundraise, to support the great work that LIFE does, and we are grateful to the Parish for its generous support. Around 40 supporters walked from Worth Abbey to Trinity Methodist Church, raising £2,138 in sponsorship. We will continue to hold sponsored walks and cake/plant sales to finance the donations to the LIFE houses.

Our Group is named after *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope John Paul II's encyclical on the value and inviolability of human life.

Elizabeth Monai carrying the cross on the walk along the Worth Way, with other walkers in the background.

We spend five minutes or so at each meeting looking at a section of the encyclical to help increase our understanding and appreciation of the Catholic Church's position on life issues. The Diocese is now looking to establish a "Gospel of Life Network" across Parishes, with the aim of making known all pro-life activity and of improving communication and mutual support among groups. The Parish Gospel of Life Group has supported this initiative and hopes it will result in increased pro-life activity across the diocese.

Les Whittaker

Street Pastors are coming to town

On 22 February last year, Churches Together members met with police at the Jubilee Centre to discuss the need for Street Pastors in our town. There was strong support, and since then a lot of work has been invested in setting up the initiative.

Who are Street Pastors?

The project was pioneered in London in January 2003 as a Christian inter-denominational organization that empowers individuals to work together within their local community, contributing positively to society and improving the quality of life for local residents, the disadvantaged, and the vulnerable.

A steering committee is now in place with members drawn from Churches Together in East Grinstead, and we work in partnership with the police and the local council. We have received a number of applications from local Christians, and so, as long as we can raise sufficient capital, we are very likely to see the first team on duty in our town in the Spring.

What do Street Pastors do?

- Engage with people in town centres on Friday and Saturday nights to help discourage antisocial behaviour and potential acts of aggression and vandalism by providing a calming, reassuring presence.
- Provide help for insecure, troubled, or desperate people, and listen to those who need to talk.

- Give bottles of water to those who need re-hydrating.
- Offer care without judgement—regardless of the causes of pain, sickness, or danger.
- Ensure that young people are guided home safely, waiting with vulnerable people for transport.
- Provide first aid.
- Give food, a hot drink, and a blanket on a cold night to someone about to spend the night sleeping out.
- Clear glass bottles and broken glass, to discourage violence, vandalism, and prevent injury.
- Give flip-flops to those who need comfortable footwear.

What Street Pastors don't do

- They do not preach or evangelize on the streets, but would be happy to talk about their faith if asked.
- They do not have powers of arrest.

What are the benefits?

- There is evidence of substantial crime-reduction figures.
- Reduced costs to the NHS, local council, and local community
- Tragedies averted—people have been found unconscious/sleeping out in freezing temperatures.
- People feel safer and report a calmer atmosphere on the streets at night.
- The police state that their time is better directed to professional service, as Pastors are used to comfort or wait with distressed people while family help is on the way.
- Night clubs and local businesses report fewer acts of violence and vandalism in towns where Street Pastors operate.
- A positive example of Christian faith in action

How can I help?

- **Apply to be a Street Pastor.** Pick up an application pack (at the back of Church). Our oldest applicant is 84!
- **Join the prayer team.** Some will be asked to keep vigil in the base at St Swithin's Church in the hours that the Street Pastors are operating. From there, they will receive prayer requests from those on duty. I am aware this may not be practical for everyone;

therefore, I will be pleased to hear from parishioners who wish to be kept informed of prayer requests at home.

- **Sponsor a named Street Pastor.** Each volunteer must complete 4 modules before engaging with the public. They will then need to complete a further 8. In all, there are 50 hours of training. You or your club/business may wish to give a one-off or regular donation by planned giving or gift aid.
- **Assist with fund-raising**. You are not asked to join a committee! You could assist in selling tickets, or simply come along to events.
- **Spread the word**. We will be promoting the initiative, but please talk to friends and shopkeepers, perhaps using the information here. Look for chances to inform people in our community.

Jesus was the ultimate Street Pastor, engaging with people wherever He found them, whether they were sitting in a tree, at work, or on a dusty road. Spending time with the marginalized, He saw and loved the person first, then dealt with their problem. On behalf of the Street Pastors committee, please remember this worthwhile initiative in your daily prayers.

Want to know more? Contact Mary Nicholls, Trinity Methodist Church (coordinator; eastgrinstead@streetpastors.org.uk) or Beverley Lake, St Peter's (prayer coordinator; EG 325578).

Update

Thank you all so much for your support for the Street Pastors initiative. Our prayers are being answered in many ways. There are now 12 volunteers who are willing to go out on Saturday nights to help those in need in our town centre. We also have a strong prayer team, some willing to pray at the base in St. Swithin's Church Hall and others to pray at home. We would like to thank those of you who have already supported us financially. Some of your gifts have helped us to buy stationery and to print information leaflets and enabled several volunteers to complete 2 training sessions. Thank you to "Alfresco" for donating lollypops for the Christmas shopping day, which helped us to promote the initiative. To find out more, please do visit the Ascension Trust Street Pastors website (www.streetpastors.org.uk).

* * *

At a Christmas family gathering, I explained to a very "tired" relative all about Street Pastors. She smiled sweetly and said, "That's lovely dear,

you must send me the recipe." So here it is: First, take a vessel and fill to the brim with Holy Spirit. Take one cup of human kindness and a teaspoon of courage. Now beat together with a big heart, smothered with unconditional love, two arms to hold, two ears to listen, and an odd word to encourage (optional). Rest ingredients periodically, as they should not be over-worked. Take a community of souls to pray into it (you can find these in all good churches). When you've done that, mix all ingredients together carefully with two hands to give. Then, at the last minute, stir in a bucket full of smiles and a giggle. Make copious batches, blend together, and then give generously to God's children out at night. A word of warning: many of those who enjoy the fruits of the vine are particularly partial to this recipe and just might ask for the ingredients. It's not a secret though, anyone can ask and it shall be freely given.

Beverley Lake (EG 325578)

"Trinity Messengers" Puppet Ministry

Puppet ministry is a way of serving God through the performance of short sketches, Bible stories, and songs with Christian themes using hand puppets. We help make the Christian message come alive in a thought-provoking, fun way that rarely fails in getting people to think about their faith and God's love for them. Even those with a deep Christian faith have been spiritually moved as the puppets "speak'"to both adults and children on different levels. Popular songs are adapted to faith-filled messages, and it is common to find the audience singing praises to God to the tune of Status Quo's *Rockin' all over the World*!

The Trinity Messengers Puppet Ministry team consists of six adults and occasionally a few enthusiastic teenagers. For no charge, we visit schools, fun days, rest homes, day centres, and other clubs. Short bible-themed plays are presented, and we are happy to write our own sketches to meet the requirements of individual groups.We have led primary school assemblies and after-school clubs, mesmerizing children and their teachers with our colourful characters.

"Trinity Messengers" was founded in 2006 by two members of Trinity Methodist Church, and after seeing them I was inspired to join the team in 2010. We have visited Our Lady and St. Peter's twice this year, delighting

Five members of the puppet troupe meet three members of the CWL.

Ivy's lunch club and members of the CWL. Each of our puppets has a name and character, and often folk get the chance to meet them after the show for photographs and a hands-on lesson in puppeteering.

If you would like us to visit your group or event, or to make a small donation towards this special ministry, please speak with me.

Beverley Lake (EG 325578)

Fairtrade East Grinstead

What is Fairtrade?

Fairtrade is about community—local and global. Fairtrade Towns bring people together and increase understanding of how small actions add up to make a big difference to the lives of people thousands of miles away. It shows how our community wants trade to work and how it will directly benefit some of the world's poorest farmers and workers through increasing awareness and sales of Fairtrade products in our area. Being a Fairtrade Town boosts civic pride and offers an opportunity to act and celebrate together.

History of Fairtrade East Grinstead

Fairtrade East Grinstead, founded in 2005 as an East Grinstead Town Council initiative, has always operated independently. East Grinstead is recognized as a Fairtrade Town, a status conferred by the Fairtrade Foundation, which we hope will continue, assisted by our own activities. Our purpose is to raise local awareness of Fairtrade-labelled goods, encourage local shops, schools, and businesses to sell these and/or to stock them for their own use, and to represent the Fair Trade movement through local town fairs. A good opportunity to showcase this is during the annual Fairtrade Fortnight each February—in 2013 this will be from 25 February to 10 March.

Local supermarkets offer a growing range of Fairtrade goods for sale, and we hope this trend will continue. Additionally, a majority of our individual committee members are independent Fairtraders who continue offering many products for sale through local church and school premises, which is often how these first become familiar to many local residents.

What is the Fairtrade Mark?

So, what is Fairtrade and how does it differ from other ethical labels? Well, the Fairtrade Mark remains unique. While other schemes aim to "protect the environment", Fairtrade's focus is on helping farmers and workers in the developing world improve the quality of their lives and take more control over their futures. It gives them stability of prices for their goods, which can fluctuate enormously on the world market, making life uncertain and often precarious. Fairtrade is the only certification scheme whose purpose is to tackle poverty and empower producers in developing countries. This delivers unique benefits to producers, businesses, and consumers.

For most Fairtrade products, buyers must pay at least the Fairtrade minimum price, or the market price if higher. Also, producer organizations are always paid a Fairtrade social premium—a mandatory amount above the cost of the goods. Local farmers and producers decide how to spend this, agreed democratically within local communities for their benefit, not for company owners. Often invested in farm improvements, processing facilities, and schools and medical centres, these can change whole communities.

Achievements

St Peter's Catholic Primary School achieved Fairtrade School status in July 2012. Imberhorne and Sackville Secondary Schools are very involved

in Fairtrade activities and are applying for Fairtrade School Status soon. They undertake Fairtrade activities during the annual Fairtrade Fortnight, and Imberhorne has organized Christmas Fairs; both are represented on Fairtrade East Grinstead. The Meads School has held a Fairtrade Week, helped by teacher-training students from Chichester.

Fairtraders run monthly stalls at Moat URC Church, Our Lady and St Peter's, and Trinity Methodist Church—all Fairtrade Churches. Fairtraders have also run stalls at the May Fair in East Grinstead, at Felbridge Country Fair, and at the Jubilee event at East Court.

Presentations have been made to local Scout Beaver Groups and at school assemblies (if anyone would like us to do this, that can be arranged). Waitrose has agreed for Fairtrade East Grinstead to be a recipient of the Green Token scheme and has generously provided Fairtrade bananas for events, as well as prizes for the recent Fairtrade raffle and the services of the Wine Manager at a Fairtrade wine-tasting evening at an EG Wine Circle event on 19 March 2013.

Want to know more? Why not have a look at the Fairtrade Foundation website (www.fairtrade.org.uk). If you would like to join the Fairtrade East Grinstead Group, then please contact Sue Joy (phone EG 315440 or email SusanJoy471@hotmail.com). Thanks to Dylan, a Year 12 student at Sackville School, we will have our own website soon and a leaflet listing the shops and cafes that stock Fairtrade goods.

Sue Joy

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Parishioners of St. Bernard's, Lingfield, and Our Lady and St. Peter's, East Grinstead, made up almost half of the group of 30 travelling to the Holy Land under the leaderships of Fr Carl Davies from St. Gabriel's, Billingshurst. We left Heathrow on our El Al flight to Tel Aviv on Monday, 15 October, getting acquainted with pilgrims from other churches *en route*. We arrived at the Golden Walls Hotel just outside the walled city of Jerusalem at about 9.30 pm to find a late supper laid out for us. We were soon off to find our rooms as we knew we had an early start the next day (and every day, in fact).

On our first day we drove to the Mount of Olives, stopping for a panoramic view of the city as we walked to a Jewish cemetery overlooking

the Kidron Valley. We visited the Pater Noster church ("Our Father" was written in 147 different languages on tablets on the walls). Our first Mass was in the Garden of Gethsemane—now sadly divided into four parts. We visited the Church of Mary Magdalene (which contains the coffin of Princess Alice of Greece) before a very welcome stop for lunch at the quiet, peaceful convent of the Sisters of Sion, Ein Karem. This was such a contrast to the busy, noisy, traffic-congested area we'd been in earlier. In the afternoon we took a short drive to the Israel Museum to see a walk-around model of Ancient Jerusalem and facsimile copies of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Perhaps here I should mention that the temperature during the day soared to 34° C—we all really needed our water bottles—and I should introduce our guide Abrahim, a Palestinian Arab Christian, who came from Shepherds Fields, Bethlehem; our driver was from Nazareth. Abrahim has to have a six-monthly renewable permit to enter Jerusalem to work and has to cross six checkpoints each day; this is because of the wall we read about so often. It is truly shocking, being 20 m high in some parts and made of metal, which makes life very difficult for the Palestinians.

Wednesday was a little less hectic, and we crossed into Palestinian territory. Mass was at the Fields of the Shepherds (in a cave), then we visited an olive-wood cooperative for shopping. This enables 36 Palestinian Christian families to earn a living. After lunch we went to Manger Square and visited the Basilica and Grotto of the Nativity and then a cave where St. Jerome lived for 34 years, translating the Bible from Hebrew into Latin (the Vulgate). Our last call was to a Benedictine monastery and Crusader church at Abu Guosh, a possible site of Emmaus, where there is an underground spring and a very peaceful garden.

On Thursday, our coach took us to the Zion Gate in Jerusalem where we walked through the Jewish Quarter and prayed at the Wailing Wall; the ladies peeked over the fence to watch a Bar-Mitzvah ceremony (men and women pray separately). On then to the Pool of Bethesda and the Church of St Anne. A little biblical history here: a dam collected water from two pools, later transformed into an artificial reservoir which went to the Temple in an open-air canal (Isaiah ch.7, vs.3 and 2 Kings ch.18, vs.17). Between 150 BC and AD 70 it was a healing centre (paralytic healed, John ch.5). The Romanesque church dedicated to St Anne was transformed into a Koranic law school in 1192. Years later, the Ottoman Turks offered the damaged church to France as a gesture of gratitude for their aid in the Crimean War (1854–56) after the gift was declined by Queen Victoria.

St Anne's church is renowned for its sober interior and wonderful acoustics, which we tried out by singing the hymn "Virgin Mary, By God's Decree". As we we were fortunate to have East Grinstead's director of music and Lingfield's organist in our party, we gave a good account of ourselves. This was followed by lunch at Ecce Homo Convent and Mass in their chapel. After Mass, we walked the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem's old city to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where some of our party climbed stairs to Golgotha.

Amazingly, after such a comparatively busy day, we had sufficient energy left for the "Sultan's Evening" at our hotel where we enjoyed watching the belly dancing and eating the Turkish food, and all joined in the Arabian dancing. The food was heralded by a procession of dancers waving sparklers.

The next day was a full-day excursion to Herod's desert fortress of Masada, which we ascended by cable car. The Judean wilderness is just that—nothing but sand-coloured mounds, hillocks, and hills. We went on to the Dead Sea for lunch, where most of us bathed (or floated) in the slightly viscous therapeutic water, a really strange experience. Then on to Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947 by seven Bedouin shepherd boys in a local cave. Further excavation of the caves between 1951 and 1956 by a French team of archaeologists found additional scrolls and early structures that supported the theory that Qumran had indeed been the scene of Essene activity. Our last visit was to view from a distance the monastery of St. George at Wadi Qelt, built into a rock face.

On Saturday we drove to Mount Zion, where we had Mass at the Church of St Peter in Gallicantu and visited the Dormition Abbey and Upper Room. After lunch we drove to Bethany, where we visited the church and the tomb of Lazarus, with a final stop at the Jeel al-Amal Boys' Home which is supported by our pilgrimage organizers. In the evening we were joined by pilgrims from Cornwall staying at our hotel for a Jerusalem by Night coach tour.

Sunday started with Mass in the basement of our hotel as Jerusalem is so crowded. Then we packed and drove to Jericho through fertile plains irrigated by the River Jordan and caught a glimpse of the Golan Heights. We lunched at an Arab restaurant and more shopping before leaving for Tiberias and our hotel Ron Beach Hotel, by the Sea of Galilee. On our journey we stopped for a refreshing drink of fresh pomegranate juice, chopped in half and squeezed in front of us—delicious and thirst-quenching.

There was a 7.30 am start on Monday when we went to Mount Tabor to visit the Basilica of the Transfiguration and view the plain of Armageddon. Then on to Nazareth where there is now a museum with a reconstruction of first-century Galilean life. After lunch we visited three more churches: St. Gabriel's church (with Mary's Well, but now dry), the Synagogue church, and the Basilica of the Annunciation at which we had Mass . We returned to Tiberias via Cana (it was dark by then) to see the church built over the scene of Jesus' first miracle.

Tuesday was our last full day. Our first visit was to the ruins of Capernaum; we continued on to Mensa Christi (where Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection) and had a most moving Mass on the shore of Lake Galilee in the garden of the Church of the Multiplication of the loaves and fishes. Lunch was at St. Peter's fish restaurant where the majority of us ate the local St. Peter's fish, which we enjoyed. Our next visit was to the church commemorating the Sermon on the Mount, returning to our hotel by the boat "Noah" across the Sea of Galilee.

This was calm but a little choppy in the middle, where we stopped for a reading from the Gospel of Jesus walking on the water and sang an appropriate hymn. We also fitted in a quick visit to a kibbutz on this trip.

We had time on our last day to visit Tiberias with its restored amphitheatre and aqueduct and Herod's Palace. We then had time for a most moving visit to Yad Vashem, Israel's official memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, before continuing our journey home.

We had an excellent pilgrimage, very blessed by having Mass said daily in the holiest of places (hotel basement excluded!). Lasting impressions are the heat and sheer number of people in the Old City of Jerusalem (but it was one of the busiest pilgrimage seasons, and people pour into the city from the cruise liners as well) and the holy places, of course, although it is difficult to picture them as they were in Our Lord's time because of all the building. And there is the tragedy of the wall dividing the city. I would love to go again.

Muriel Cheesman

Friends of the Holy Land

Following the successful weekend appeal in September for the Friends of the Holy Land, it is planned to show a film, followed by refreshments, in

the New Year (date to be arranged), showing the circumstances in which the Christians live in Palestine and all the problems they have to endure.

It is hoped that a number of people will agree to form a parish group in order to fund-raise and support a particular family living in Beit Jala, a suburb of Bethlehem.

With the Christian community in the Holy Land dwindling fast, it is imperative that everything possible is done to enable them to stay in their homeland and not to emigrate. They are being forced out of their country, on account of no work and very little freedom.

The Friends of the Holy Land is a registered charity set up by the Catholic and Anglican Bishops of England and Wales and is a truly ecumenical venture to try to do everything possible to assist the Christians in the Holy Land. Therefore, please encourage your Christian friends, whether Catholic or not, to support this venture.

A meeting has now been arranged for Wednesday, 30 January, at St Bernard's Hall, Lingfield, at 7 for 7.30 pm for a film show and refreshments. All are welcome, including non-Catholic friends.

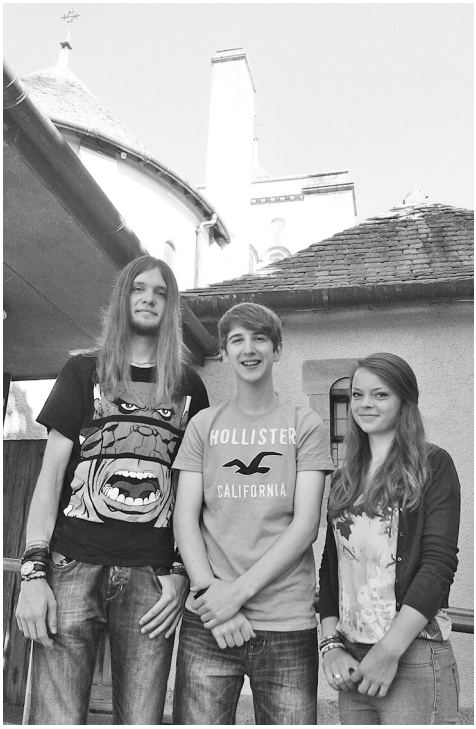
Mary Edwards (EG 832297)
cbeandmme@aol.com

Why I love going to Lourdes

Summer 2012 was my third visit to Lourdes and my second as a Helper with the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. The first time I went in 2009 was as a Red Shirt when I was in Year 11, and we took part in all the welcoming of pilgrims as the train arrived in Lourdes, helping with unloading the luggage, and meeting and greeting pilgrims at the daily service within the Domain. Being a helper (or Brancardia if you are male) when you are 17+ means you get to know individual pilgrims very well and can share in their spiritual journey as well as make your own, the focus being on service to God and to others, especially those who are sick or have disabilities. This year's theme was "With Bernadette Praying the Rosary". A major feature of this year's pilgrimage was the unpredictable weather, and we all got soaked at the first Mass when running back and forth to the hotel getting pilgrims' coats. When it rains in Lourdes, it pours!

As well as helping the pilgrims in my hotel, the Hotel Padoue, go

to the Domain for daily Mass and visits to pray at the Grotto, I also visited the Basilicas and looked at the mosaics, went to the Baths and did the Water Walk and High Stations, and lit many candles for unwell family members, including my grandmother, friends, and parishioners. My grandmother, who has dementia, was with my mother and myself in Lourdes in 2009 (three generations of Joys) and loved being there. This year, sadly, she was far from well and later died on 15 November.



We also take our pilgrims for coffee or an ice cream in the many restaurants in the town of Lourdes, and to the Little Flower to unwind with an alcoholic beverage in the evenings. Other highlights of the pilgrimage, as always, are the Anointing Service in the underground Basilica, a visit to the Accueil (or Hospital), and the Torchlight Procession. And the journey . . . a French military train with three special nursing carriages which takes twelve hours overnight from Calais via sidings in Bordeaux, arriving in Lourdes in the Pyrenees in the morning! Loading up and unloading bags, medical supplies, wheelchairs, etc. resembles an army of ants scurrying backwards and forwards.

Lourdes is a place where you make good friends, become closer to God in serving others and can wonder at the miracle of Our Lady appearing to an ordinary girl like St Bernadette. Quite amazing—and I can't wait to go back next year. Thank you to all those who supported me financially, especially the Catenians.

The picture shows Richard Spencer, Niamh Slatter, and myself. Richard and Niamh also received a grant from the Catenians.

James Joy

A dream come true

To visit Lourdes had been a long-held dream of mine, but the opportunity to do so over many years never materialized and I thought that, as an octogenarian, my dream would remain just that.

However, on my way into Mass on the 3rd of March, I happened to overhear that Fr Laurence was taking a party to Lourdes. I reflected that it was on the 3rd of March 1939 that I was baptised in St Peter's Church in our town in South Africa. Now, there were only two junior schools there: the Government School and a private one—the Dominican Convent. My parents although strongly anti-Catholic opted for the better education at the Convent, but with stern words to never even think of being swayed into the Catholic persuasion! Now children, being very forthright, I soon learned that you would never go to Heaven if you were not baptised and just ended up in *Limbo for ever, and ever!* Well, I thought, that's a non-starter—I want to go to Heaven, not Limbo—so I asked my parents to get me baptised, and, of course, they took me to the Anglican Church.

The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Short who happened to be very tall and to a small 9-year-old he seemed to stretch upwards for ever as I looked up at him. So it was that at least I had Heaven in my sights!

By the end of Mass, I reflected that I had received the waters of baptism at an early stage of my life and how wonderful it would be to have the miraculous waters of Lourdes in this other phase of my earthly sojourn. It would be the completion of a circle.

Leaving the Church, I accidentally bumped into Fr Laurence and asked if I could join his party, but would need a little assistance in getting round Lourdes. He kindly agreed, got a form, said "Ring Pilgrimage Office—rather better for you to go by train—ask for Hotel Europe", and hurriedly set off for Egypt!

I then set the chains in motion—GP's permission to travel and a visit from a Nurse of the Medical Team, at the end of which she said I would travel in one of the three ambulance carriages. One cannot praise too much the excellent efficiency of the Pilgrimage Office, for indeed they have a mammoth task in setting up such a large pilgrimage for the whole Diocese. Although it is about a 13-hour train journey from Calais to Lourdes, some 740 miles, it was a joy to see so much of the French countryside during the daylight hours.

How does one describe Lourdes? All the Masses, Services, and prayers were so in tune with the Pastoral theme for 2012, "With Bernadette Praying

the Rosary", and it is the wonderful spirit and aura that exists in Lourdes that is so special and captivated and inspired us all. At the Inaugural Mass, Bishop Kieran invited us to commit ourselves "to support one another in love", and this was evident throughout our visit. The kindness of the Chaplains, Nurses, Helpers, the waving and smiling Red Shirts, who lined the routes to the Basilicas—all so unselfishly giving up their free time to help the sick and disabled—are a glowing testament of their commitment.

We had our moments of fun as well—the Hotel party was a good get-together. Three others and myself were chosen to be on a judging panel for an item, but not told what the item was. Picture four young chaps sitting facing us. Then on come four girls holding large scissors to stand behind the boys. Hairdressers with a difference? But then appeared others carrying really large basins of cooked spaghetti, and these were tipped over the heads of the boys, and you can imagine the girls trimming the spaghetti! We had to judge which hairdo was the winner. It so happens one boy was from the Cameroons, and so his hair was very curly and tight. The basin of spaghetti tipped perfectly onto his head and more or less stuck in a perfect bouffant style—unanimously judged the winner by us! The talented Moon family regaled us with a catchy song—"Plastic

Jesus on the dashboard of my car"—a jibe at the many souvenir shops. We were in fits of laughter, for although it was slightly irreverent it really was hilarious.

The Grotto—"A Little Piece of Heaven on Earth"—is the central focal point for all pilgrims, and as St. Bernadette said farewell to her beloved Grotto she said, "The Grotto was my heaven; you will find me there at the foot of the rock". It really is indescribable: the atmosphere and peace as one makes one's way through the Grotto to the rock where Our Lady appeared, a rock worn smooth by the millions of pilgrims who have stopped there to kiss or touch it and send up their thoughts and prayers asking the Blessed Virgin to intercede for them and others. The actual source of the spring is visible through a glass cover, and the water is then channelled underground to the Baths and taps. Our final Mass was at the Grotto with Bishop Kieran and Fr Stephen Ortiger of Worth Abbey, the Homilist. The Communion Hymn was the lovely "Be thou my vision, 0 Lord of my heart", and I think for all us pilgrims the vision of the Grotto will also always remain in our hearts.

The programme for the pilgrimage was a very full one, but owing to a contretemps between my cardiac pacemaker and the magnets of

the industrial-sized loudspeakers in the Basilicas I had to forego some events. But that did not preclude me from the day we were booked for the Baths.

I had been told that the water is icily cold, and pilgrims with heart conditions are advised to have wet cloths dipped into the water and wrapped round them. When my turn came, I was asked the usual question by the attendants—"Do you have a heart condition?"—to which I replied in the affirmative. I was advised of the alternative, but said that I was quite determined to go completely into the water come what may, and I won the day.

Of course the first foot into the water is icily cold—but as I was tilted by the attendants up to the neck into the miraculous water and then started making my way to the top of the bath where the statue of Our Lady is, the water did not seem at all cold and I never gave it another thought. I was utterly determined to make it to the statue, which I did, to kiss the feet of Our Lady as is the custom.

The attendants then give one fresh water from a dispenser to drink or splash one's face. I particularly wished to be fully immersed in the water as I wanted to thank Our Lady for all the graces she has obtained for me—even long before I became a Catholic, right back to the time when I was at boarding school, away from my parents anti-Catholicism, and used to tag along at the back of the Children of Mary procession, envying of course the other girls' blue ribbon and medal! Our Lady helps us in many ways, and perhaps we are not always aware of that fact, but she is always here with us as a loving Mother.

So I had completed my "circle" from baptism in the Anglican Church to the miraculous waters of Lourdes.

We left Lourdes with many memories, thanksgiving, and joy at our very successful pilgrimage under the care of Bishop Kieran and had made many new friends.

Our coach was held up at the checkpoint at Dover owing to a lost passport, so we were relieved when the coach finally started up again only to see that another of our coaches had been stopped and their luggage was being unloaded. Our hearts sank thinking, we might land in a similar situation. Someone shouted, "Let's say the Hail Mary", and we started in hopeful prayerful unison, "Hail Mary, full of Grace", and at that very moment found that we were being waved through the checkpoint, much to our relief. A happy ending to a most memorable visit to Lourdes!

Marjorie Pett

Lovely, lovely Lourdes

Long ago, I heard the story of Bernadette, who saw a vision while she tended to the sheep. The vision showed her a spring, and the water is said to be miraculous, a cure for all sorts of aches, pains, and illnesses. The story of Bernadette was captivating, so when I was lucky enough to win some tickets to try the TGV, France's high-speed train, which can get to 200 mph . . . a visit to Lourdes was a quick decision!

Even the most hardened doubter would be impressed at the faith and hope that brings pilgrims to Lourdes from all over the world—the little French town is bursting at the seams with hotels and accommodation, from 5 star hotelss to small B&Bs. There are cafes, restaurants, and about a million (!) souvenir shops selling rosaries, medals, statues, candle—just about everything!

By contrast, the Sanctuary and the Basilica are quiet and peaceful. The crowds here are hushed, and they tirelessly queue to visit the Grotto or to bathe in the waters. At any time of the day, you can attend a service in one or other of the numerous chapels; there are some set walks, called The Way of The Cross, to contemplate, and torchlight processions at night, if you care to join in.

More than 5 million people visit Lourdes every year—to sit, rest, and wonder. And I wonder, too, at the faith of the believers, young and old, some in wheelchairs, and many accompanied by carers or nurses, and at the comfort they get in their hopes for a miracle

Charmaine Hallmark

Lord, teach us to pray with one heart

Many times, we have said how our prayer was individualistic in the past. Even during the celebration of the Eucharist, every Christian prayed in silence or said his or her rosary while the priest prayed in Latin. We have to make a certain effort to get rid of these habits and disoover the beauty and strength of a real oommunity prayer.

What are the conditions required? First of all, we must find the essential link between oommunity prayer and brotherhood. If there's no fraternity, if there's no living and warm relation among the persons involved, community

prayer is impossible. Without fratemity, we pray next to one another, but not together. A true fraternity allows for a real community prayer, and this prayer in turn feeds the fraternity. Secondly, it's important for everyone to feel responsible for others. I ought to be convinced that I need others and others need me. Don't forget that we received faith in Christ through others: our parents, our teachers, our Christian community. With others, this faith grows and flourishes. Through others, Christ comes to me, speaks to me, calls me, enlightens me, sometimes provokes me. We are living in a society full of contradictions: we complain about loneliness, isolation in the midst of the crowd, and, at the same time, we are individualistic to the utmost, refusing what it takes to belong to a group.

To be Christian is to want to build a solidarity among persons. Community prayer builds this solidarity, since it brings to us the One who nourishes us: Christ. Community prayer is not a pastor's whim looking for something new. It is necessary to every Christian who wants to live the Gospel.

That's why Christ taught us how to pray by saying: Our Father. Prayer ought to bring us together and not isolate us. It expresses and nourishes this union among persons, which is the very heart of the life of the Church.

God Bless.

Father Peter ap Morris

A morning prayer

Lord, help me to remember,
that nothing is going to happen
to me today that You and I
together can't handle.

An anytime prayer,

This one is an anytime prayer, but especially if you are going to an unknown, maybe dangerous place:

The Light of God surrounds me
The Love of God enfolds me
The Power of God protects me
Wherever I am, God is.

Valerie Powell

A sideways glance at some aspects of the Bible

The River Jordan runs its course from the heights of its multiple sources on and near Mount Herman to the depths of the Dead Sea and exists in three sections—from its sources to Lake Huleh; then to the Sea of Galilee (about 10 miles); and, after flowing in a winding course of about 65 miles, it disappears into the Dead Sea—in a straight line, this would only be 10 miles!

Along much of its length, the river and associated seas border on the northern side the Jordan desert or wilderness. John the Baptist and Jesus would spend much time in the wilderness around Capernaum and the Jordan.

It seems logical that Simon Peter should reside at Capernaum, just north of the family fishing grounds at the head of the Sea of Galilee. It appears to have been quite a substantial house in that besides his own family, he had room for his mother-in-law and for Jesus, In fact, from the Bible we learn that when Jesus left the synagogue (at Capernaum) with James and John, they went straight to the house of Simon and Andrew: in other words, it was a house shared by the brothers. Furthermore, it became the focus or headquarters of Jesus' ministry. The area must have become rather crowded when people flocked to Jesus for healing.

On the subject of healing, we turn to Simon's mother-in-law, who was ill with a fever when Jesus and the other brothers went to the house. Jesus went straight up to her, took her hand, and healed her. So immediate was her recovery that she at once began to wait on them.

What! A matriarchal old lady acting as a servant! Surely her usual role would be to boss her daughter and granddaughters and any other women to hand into doing the menial tasks . . . she was an old woman.

No. She had touched the hand of God and received the healing spirit. It is well known that those who receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit have an urgent, lifelong desire, if not need, to serve their fellow men and women.

Returning to Capernaum, the Jordan, and events in the area, we know that Jesus and John the Baptist were related. Through family ties and the close friendship between their mothers, they must have met several times

during their childhood and teenage years. Their mothers would have told them about the circumstances surrounding their pregnancies and births. John's father was a priest and was closely associated with the temple at Jerusalem, and we know that Jesus and his parents were practising Jews, with frequent visits to Jerusalem.

Oh yes! They would know each other's thoughts and activities; it would be of no surprise to Jesus to learn of John's lifestyle in the wilderness, his dress, diet, teachings, and baptisms in the Jordan.

Furthermore, John would have instantly recognized his cousin (and His Godliness) even before Jesus came for baptism. Surely he had heard of Jesus' miraculous conception and all the circumstances surrounding his nativity. He knew Jesus as the Son of God long before he saw him at the Jordan. Some people seem muddled about this. If John knew Jesus as the Son of God, why did he send his disciples to Jesus to ask if he was the one?

Just imagine John teaching his followers about baptism, the forgiveness of sin, and the coming of the Messiah. When he next said to them that the Son of God had come, they may well have demanded proof. So what would he say to them? "Go and see for yourselves"—and they did. And he told them to return and report what they had found.

Jesus would also know John's band of followers, including James and his brother John. Was Simon also one of them? There would have been a close friendship between all the fishermen on the shores of the Galilee.

Crudely put, Jesus allowed John to have his say and perform his baptisms. It was only after John was arrested that Jesus began his ministry. John's followers were disorganized and leaderless, and it takes no stretch of the imagination to believe that Jesus then took them into his group. After all, his teachings followed on from John's.

As an aside, his first miracle (at Cana) gives food for thought. His mother must have known of her son's miraculous powers before she told the servants to do as he directed. If there was the slightest doubt in her mind, she would not have exposed her son to possible ridicule.

While we are on the subject of miraculous powers, we will look at the curing of the leper. But before we do so let us remember that everyone has free will and there would have been no Jesus, no Christianity, and no Church if Mary had said "No".

The leper, an outcaste, came up to Jesus pleading on his knees for healing, saying "if you want to you can heal me". Jesus touched him and replied that of course he wanted to heal him and did so.

These few lines hide a great deal of topical information.

The leper faced stoning to death for approaching a non-leprous person. He must have been experiencing unbearable suffering (as is common in the later stages of the disease) to take his life in his hands and face an agonizing punishment. He was also absolutely certain that Jesus had the power to heal but not certain that he would wish to do so. He did not ask a question, he made a statement: "you can".

"Jesus touches him" and, in doing so, risks the heavy penalty of segregation for some time in order to prove that he had not become contaminated.

Where were the scribes etc. as witnesses to the law-breaking and calling for the punishments?

Jesus was spending some time preaching in synagogues around Galilee but then decided to return to his HQ in Capernaum. News soon spread, and crowds gathered to hear him and to be cured of their ailments. Such was the crush that it was impossible to get into the house, or leave it by the door. Some men, firm believers in Jesus' powers of healing, had brought a paralytic friend on a stretcher but, finding the door blocked, resorted to breaking a hole in the roof and lowering him down to Jesus. Of course, Jesus gave him back his full bodily functions, and the man went away singing our Lord's praises.

Blessed be Jesus for the healing; blessed be the healed man; and blessed be poor Peter who had to repair his roof

The tracing of ancestors, constructing family trees, is a very popular pastime these days. There is nothing new! The Israelites rated their genealogies very highly, and the Bible goes to great lengths to record the very long and venerable ancestry of Jesus, through both his mother and Joseph, his surrogate father.

Now this may answer a very puzzling action on Joseph's part. Why would any loving, caring husband subject a heavily pregnant wife, due to give birth at any time, to an arduous journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem just for him to participate in a census? True, he had to go. Caesar had ordered all males to register at their family seat, and he was of the lineage of David; but think of it, the road and the city would be crowded with registrees. Where would the poor woman seek privacy and some comfort?

But Joseph knew a thing or two. He knew that Mary would have a son and that he too would be of David's stock. The child would be born during the period of census, so would he also be required to be registered?

You don't just ignore an edict from Rome.

Now we turn to the man himself, a deeply religious Jew, well versed

Flowers, by Gordon Townsend
(Parish Art Group)

in the Torah and prophets, an assiduous annual pilgrim to the Temple in Jerusalem (complete with wife and son). Together with his wife he ensures that Jesus is brought up as a practising, knowledgeable Jew familiar with the synagogue, its rituals and priests.

He has the very important, vital role of caring for the infant and his mother. But in the Bible he has little more than a walking on part. He utters not one word and disappears from our view before Jesus' first miracle at Cana. Has he died?

Jesus is now a man and can look after his mother. Joseph's work is over and may he rest in heaven with all the other saints, bathed in our Lord's radiance, peace, love, and joy, now and for all eternity.

Amen.

Anon.

Living in Jesus

Listen to shouts from spiritual beings
Hear what they say with adamant feeling
All take on board the forgiving and past things
Look to the future with great supreme living

Chorus

Listening is the word to take in right now
Live it and breathe it and move on together now.

Time to get troops and spread the word all round
Time to move forward with Jesus around us
Love and wellbeing for all to spread around us
Healing and happiness to give all with us

Healing is the word to take in right now
Live it and breathe it and move on together now.

Love moving mountains, working together
Let us pray now for heavenly weather
Move all the people to Jesus and open
All of those souls towards Jesus our saviour

Love is the word to take in right now
Live it and breathe it and move on together now.

How do we do this—to begin with get better
Move to the Lord and pray for togetherness
Brainstorm ideas and connect to Jesus
Be guided the way he wishes to lead us

Linking is the word to take in right now
Live it and breathe it and move on together now.

Simplicity, love, sincerity, energy
All put in now will help us together
Find and open millions of minds
To guide the souls to Jesus to find

Simpleness is the word to take in right now
Live it and breathe it and move on together now.

Organizing, guiding, helping, and linking
Working with all to one goal in mind
Linking our souls to Jesus our King
Happily living in love to the end

Guiding is the word to take in right now
Live it and breathe it and move on together now.

The last thing to say to finish this song
Is to sing from our hearts to the praise of our King
Praying, believing, together as one
Creative and heavenly all churches in one

Belief is the word to take in right now
Live it and breathe it and move on together now.

Nicolas Castiglione (EG 410100)
nick@wealdenmarketing.co.uk

Peacemaking in the Year of Faith

by Fr Rob Esdaile, Parish Priest of Our Lady of Lourdes, Thames Ditton, Surrey

Pope Benedict has asked the Catholic community to live 2013 as a Year of Faith, inviting us to "rediscover a taste for feeding ourselves on the Word of God",[1] in the face of the many competing voices and values of our day and age. Of course, we always stand in need of renewal. But there is a particular reason for holding such a Year of Faith right now, for the Second Vatican Council began its work of renewing the Church fifty years ago. It is time, says the Pope, to rediscover the teaching of that great gathering.

Being Kingdom People

The theme of this year's Peace Sunday (20 January 2013)—"Blessed Are the Peacemakers"—certainly fits very well with the aim of the Year of Faith. It is taken from the seventh of the nine Beatitudes (Mt 5.9), with which Matthew begins Jesus' public ministry. It is a key text of Scripture. But what does it mean for us today? To understand the Beatitudes properly, it is important to see that they aren't instructions. Rather, they are descriptions of how "Kingdom People" are: poor in spirit, compassionate, gentle, thirsty for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peace-making—oh, and (uncomfortably) persecuted and spoken ill of. Seeking the Kingdom gets them into trouble. But signs of the Kingdom of God happen if (and only if) people dare to live that way.

Vatican II and Peace

If we ask what Vatican II has to say about peacemaking, the first thing to note is a trust in humanity. Those who gathered in Rome in 1962–65 had lived through the horrors of World War Two, while the shadow of the Cold War hung heavily over countries East and West. Yet, despite this, they remained convinced that God's Love is capable of renewing all things and that God's Will is a universal peace in which all are called to share.[2]

From this flow two further insights: the conviction that Christians are called to work for reconciliation (firstly, between the Churches, but then of the human community wherever there is conflict); and the urgent call to read "the signs of the times":[3] to interpret the events of our day

War Games,
by Tessa Darlison
(Parish Art Group)

and age, so that we can see where the Holy Spirit is touching people's hearts, opening up pathways towards peace. We Catholic Christians may not simply say that we're "not interested" in current affairs, because we believe that each person is our brother or sister and that the dignity of all matters.

At the end of Vatican II, the Council Fathers turned to the urgent task of fostering peace and establishing a community of nations.[4] Peace, we are reminded, "is more than the absence of war" and cannot be based on a balance of terror. It is a task that needs to be worked at constantly, a search for the Common Good, grounded in love and justice. In contrast, modern warfare cannot be regarded as an acceptable way of resolving conflict. Vatican II condemns both the targeting of weapons of mass destruction (notably nuclear missiles) on civilian populations and the wasting on the arms race of vast sums which could be used to help the poor. And the bishops insist that all must work for disarmament and the end to the arms-race.

Re-reading this teaching after nearly half a century, perhaps the most striking thing is how relevant it remains and how widely the Church's teaching on warfare is ignored, not least in the supposedly "Christian" West. So, once again, we are being called to conversion. Perhaps part of our own contribution to the Year of Faith could be undertaking to study Vatican II's teaching on peacemaking and then asking: What can I do to work for peace, in the spirit of the Council?

Certainly, we cannot do much alone. We need others to work alongside. And that is where the Catholic peace movement, Pax Christi, comes in—linking people who are committed to the work of making peace, providing resources, and fostering prayer and reflection regarding the meaning of the Gospel of Peace.[5]

Notes

1. Pope Benedict XVI, *Apostolic Letter Porta Fidei for the Year of Faith*, n.2

2. See Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, n.13 (end)

3. Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, n.4

4. *Gaudium et Spes*, Chapter 5, nn.77–90

5. For more details of the work of Pax Christi, see www.paxchristi.org.uk or write to Pax Christi, Christian Peace Education Centre, St Joseph's, Watford Way, London NW4 4TY (tel. 020 8203 4884).

Submitted by Sue Joy

Hawkwood

The following is a true account of something that happened to my late husband, Gerald, one Sunday morning in the 1970s. On that day I went to the early Sunday morning Mass with the two youngest of our six children. Gerald took the remaining four children to a later Mass

When they returned, Gerald looked decidedly unwell and shocked. The children went into the garden to play, while we sat down to have a cup of tea. Gerald told me what had happened.

On their way home from St Boniface Church, they came past the old Parish Church of St Nicholas, which stands in a churchyard. Along the side of the pathway leading to the church there is a small number of World War I graves. The children wanted to know about these different graves. Gerald started walking backwards, reading out the details to the following line of children. At one grave he said: "This man was called Hawkwood." "Here, sir", came the reply from behind him. Gerald turned round to where the reply had come from. A soldier was standing up, brushing off the long, dry grass from his World War I uniform. Gerald turned back and looked at the children. Clearly they had not seen or heard anything.

Later we had a Mass said for the soldier called Hawkwood and for all the other servicemen buried with him there.

Valerie Powell

STUFF

Hi! How are you? You got your STUFF with you? I'll bet you have. Men have stuff in their pockets, women have stuff in their purses. Of course, some women have pockets and some men have purses. That's okay. There's all different ways of carryin' your STUFF.

Then there's all the STUFF you have in your car. You got stuff in the boot. Lotta different stuff. And, you've got other stuff in your car. In the glove box. Stuff you might need in a hurry.

So—STUFF is important. You gotta take care of your stuff. You gotta have a place for your stuff. Everybody's gotta have a place for their stuff. That's what life is all about, tryin' to find a place for your stuff! That's all your house is: a place to keep your stuff. If you didn't have so much stuff, you wouldn't need a house. You could just walk around all the time.

A house is—just a pile of STUFF with a cover on it. You can see that when you're taking off in an airplane. You look down and see all the little piles of stuff. Everybody's got their own little pile of stuff. And, they lock it up! That's right! When you leave your house, you gotta lock it up. Wouldn't want somebody to come by and take some of your stuff. 'Cause they always take the *GOOD* STUFF!

So when you get right down to it, your house is nothing more than a place to keep your STUFF . . . while you go out and get . . . more STUFF. 'Cause that's what this COUNTRY is all about. Trying to get more stuff.

Stuff you don't want, stuff you don't need, stuff that's poorly made, stuff that's overpriced. Even stuff you can't afford. Gotta keep on getting more stuff. Otherwise someone else might wind up with more stuff. Can't let that happen. Gotta have the MOST STUFF. So you keep getting more and more stuff, and putting it in different places. In the closets, in the attic, in the basement, in the garage. And there might even be some stuff you left at your parents' house: baseball cards, comics, photographs.

So now you got a houseful of STUFF. And, even though you might like your house, you gotta move! Gotta get a bigger house. Why? Too much stuff! And that means you gotta move all your stuff. Or maybe, put some of your stuff in storage. Storage! Imagine that. There's a whole industry based on keeping an eye on other people's stuff. Or maybe you could sell some of your stuff. Have a yard sale, have a garage sale! Some people drive around just lookin' for garage sales. They don't have enough of their own stuff, they want to buy other people's stuff.

Now, let's talk about travelling. Sometimes you go on vacation, and you gotta take some of your STUFF. Mostly stuff to wear. But which stuff should you take? Can't take all your stuff. Just the stuff you really like, the stuff that fits you well that month. In effect, on vacation, you take a smaller "second version" of your stuff.

Let's say you go to Honolulu for two weeks. You gotta take two big suitcases of STUFF. Two weeks—two big suitcases. That's the STUFF you check onto the plane. But you also got your carry-on stuff, plus the stuff you bought in the airport. So now you're all set to go. You got stuff in the overhead rack, stuff under the seat, stuff in the seat pockets, and stuff on your lap.

And so you fly to Honolulu, and you claim your STUFF—if the airline didn't drop it in the ocean—and you go to the hotel, and the first thing you do is put away your stuff. There's lots of places in a hotel to put your STUFF.

Flint Knapper,
by Tessa Darlison
(Parish Art Group)

And so you relax in Honolulu on that basis. That's when your friend from Maui calls and says: "Hey, why don't you come over to Maui for the weekend and spend a couple of nights over here?" Oh, no! Now what do you bring? Can't bring all this STUFF. You gotta bring an even smaller version of your stuff. Just enough stuff for a weekend stay.

And as you're flying over to Maui, you realise that you're really spread out now, you've got stuff all over the world! STUFF at home, stuff in the garage, stuff at your parent's house (maybe), stuff in storage, stuff in Honolulu, and stuff on the plane. Supply lines are getting longer and harder to maintain!

Well, by the time you get home you're pretty fed up with your STUFF and all the problems it creates. And so about a week later, you clean out the closet, the attic, the basement, the garage, the storage locker, and all the other places you keep your STUFF, and you get things down to manageable proportions. Just the right amount of stuff to lead a simple and uncomplicated life. And that's when the phone rings. It's a lawyer. It seems your aunt has died . . . and left you ALL HER STUFF. Oh no! Now what do you do? Right. You do the only thing you can do. The honourable thing. You tell the lawyer to . . . *STUFF IT!*

by George Carlin
Submitted by Maureen Burgess

Parish Organizations
East Grinstead

Altar Society: Flowers – Margaret Pond [327002]

Art Group: Tessa Darlison [322562]
(self-help group, meets on Tuesdays, 2 to 4 p.m.,
in the Parish Centre, East Grinstead)

Catenians: Phil Pentney (Membership Officer) [327109]

Catholic Women's League: Brenda Crannigan [712947]
(meetings second Wednesday of the month,
October to March: 3.00 p.m., April to September: 6.00 p.m.)

Children's Liturgy (at the 10.30 Mass on Sundays)
and Parish Catechists: Sarah Hill & Eileen Lyons [317424]

Choir: Mary O'Sullivan [322959]
(practice is held at 7.30 p.m. on most Fridays at the church
in East Grinstead; children's practice as announced)

Christian meditation group:
Gabrielle Joyce [326118] and Les Whittaker
(Thursdays, 7.30 p.m., term time)

Friends of St Peter's: Sam O'Neill (contact school [321985])
(monthly meetings in members' homes)

Gift Aid Secretary: Debbie Brook [328215]

Gospel of Life Group: Les Whittaker [315484]

Guild of St Stephen: Jim Fitzpatrick [317177]

Justice and Peace Group: Sue Joy [315440]

Lifts to Mass: Peter Wells [811543]

Lunch Club: Ivy Pimenta [323240]
(third Wednesday of the month in the Parish Centre, East Grinstead)

Mothers' Prayers: Jane DeCaestecker [311232]
(first Friday of each month after the 9.30 a.m. Mass)

Parish Magazine: Klara King [321581]

Readers at Mass: Sue Wade [317246]

Saint Vincent de Paul Society: Peter Wells [811543]

Welcomers: Robert McInnes [327582]

Times of Services

Our Lady and St Peter, East Grinstead

Saturday Mass: Vigil 6:15 p.m.

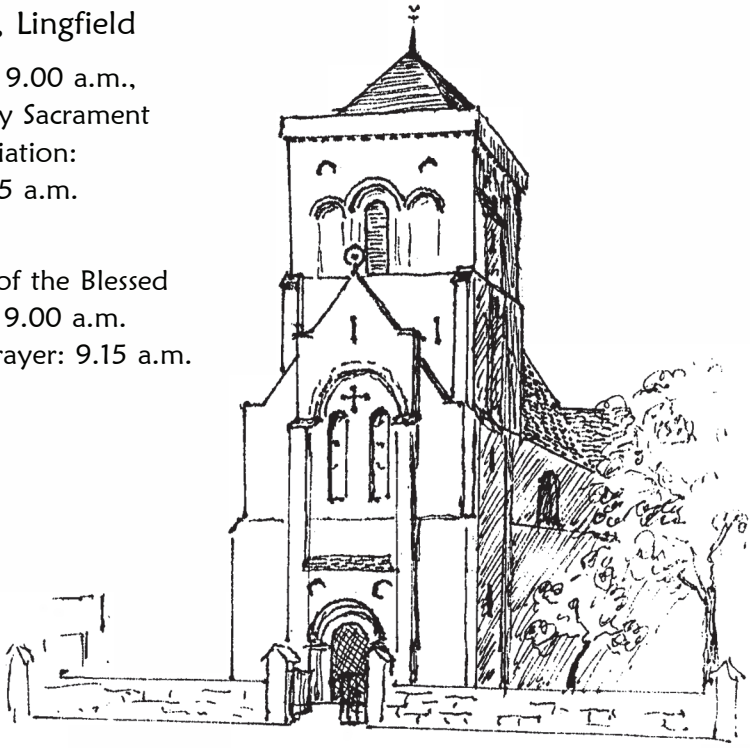
Sunday Mass: 10:30 a.m.

Weekdays: Morning Prayer: 9:15 a.m.; Mass 9:30 a.m.

Holy Days of Obligation:
Vigil 8 p.m. evening before the feast; on the day 9:30 a.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Saturday, 10 to 10:30 a.m. and 5:30 to 6 p.m. and on request

St Bernard's, Lingfield

Sunday Mass: 9.00 a.m.,
preceded by Sacrament of Reconciliation:
8.15 to 8.45 a.m.

Weekdays:
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: 9.00 a.m.
Morning prayer: 9.15 a.m.