



St John's Catholic Cathedral
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Portsmouth
Hampshire PO1 3HG

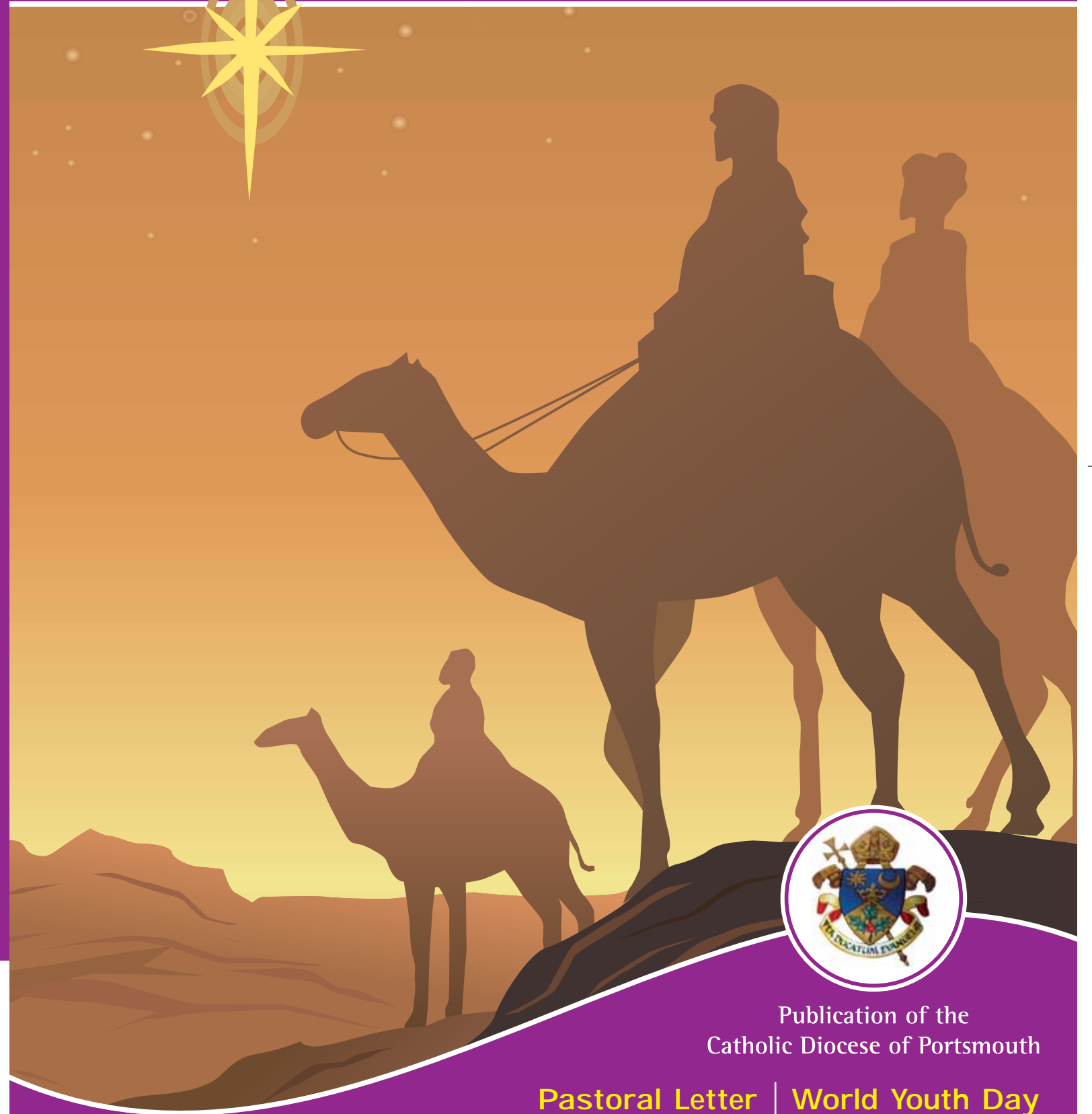
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PORTSMOUTH PEOPLE

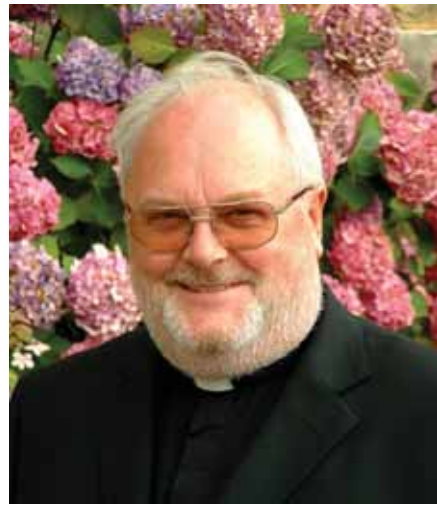
Advent 2008



Publication of the
Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

Pastoral Letter | World Youth Day
Movers and Shakers | Personality Profiles

Coming Towards



Fr Denis Blackledge

'And there, coming towards them, was Jesus' [Matthew 28.9]

Loving Lord,
I find those words so comforting.
They tell of the moment when you rose from the dead
And came to meet and greet your friends
Who were lost and frightened
And wondering what the future would be.
And here we are, once more, at the start of Advent -
Which simply means 'coming towards'.

A time of preparation and encouragement,
When you ask me gently to remember and reflect upon
Your many comings into my life and into my world.

When I stop for a few moments to ponder and wonder
At your constant comings into my life, Lord,
I begin to notice that you come
In all the events of every day,
And that there is no area or corner of my whole life
Where you do not come with your touch of affection,
Acceptance, loving kindness, compassion and care.

Loving Lord,
Just looking back over the past twelve months I begin to realise a little more clearly just how often I've been blind to and unaware of your comings.
It's hard to see you coming in pain or sickness,
Or grief or loss of any sort.
It's hard to see you coming in my weaknesses,
And foibles and mistakes, and in the bits and pieces
Of my life that just don't seem to fit together properly.
It's hard to see you coming not just into
The awkward and sinful parts of my life,

But also into the mess of our church and our world.

Because, Lord, I don't want to be praying in a selfish way
Which just stops at my own becoming a better person -
I want to be open to and part of
That bettering of a church and a world
Which so often forget you and your coming.

Loving Lord,
Help me, help us,
To be better welcomers of you
In your constant coming towards us.
Help us to be ever more aware
Of your initiative in our lives.
Help us to be aware of the fact
That you are always first in coming towards us
And that you give each one of us
The power of coming closer to you and to one another.
Help me, help us,
To make this Advent alive with your coming.
Come, and welcome, Lord.
Amen.

Fr Denis Blackledge SJ is Parish Priest, Corpus Christi Boscombe and Pastoral Co-ordinator, Bournemouth

© Denis Blackledge SJ

Journey of The Magi

A cold coming we had of it.
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter:
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.

Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor
and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of
shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns
unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high
prices:
A hard time we had of it.

At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.
Then at dawn we came down to a temperate
valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of
vegetation,
With a running stream and a water-mill
beating the darkness,
And three trees on the low sky.
And an old white horse galloped away in the
meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves
over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of
silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we
continued

And arrived at evening, not a moment too
soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say)
satisfactory.
All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen
birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this
Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our
death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old
dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

T.S. Eliot

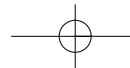


CHURCH IN FOCUS

With this issue we look at the
Mother Church of the Diocese:
St John's Cathedral



The next issue of
PORTSMOUTH PEOPLE
will be distributed at the end
of January 2009
and will contain 32 pages



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PORTSMOUTH PEOPLE

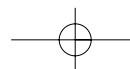


Advenire in Latin means 'to approach'. The whole action of 'approaching' carries reference to where you are starting from, where you are aiming to be and how you are meeting the challenges of getting there. It is from the word *advenire* that we get the word ADVENT. So, it seems only fitting to reflect on what a rough, uncomfortable and uncompromisingly cold time those three monarchs must have had some two thousand years past. And what better time than now to reflect on the words of T S Eliot (see opposite).

Modern-day Advent, you could justifiably argue, offers its own challenges reminiscent of but not necessarily identical to those of days of yore. We are besieged with reports of natural disasters, unavoidable catastrophes, financial crises, not to mention man's disregard for man. But we have been set a clear example to follow.

As we move towards Christmas, and what that implies for the Christian world, we approach the discovery, the start and the new unblemished beginning. And so it is that - with this re-launch of **Portsmouth People** - all those working on, associated with and responsible for the revival of the publication wish you a Holy Christmas and a Joyful New Year.

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Photograph and portrait: Pierre Bamin

Pastoral letter from Bishop Crispian

our Christian faith, both as individuals and as a community. As a result of extensive consultation, we now have our own diocesan Pastoral Plan. It is the implementation of that Plan which particularly concerns us now and some of its implications have far-reaching consequences for how we see and structure the diocese. Those consequences deeply challenge us.

Not the least among the challenges has been the establishment of 24 Pastoral Areas. Our aim and hope in setting them up is that they will help to make us more effective in deploying and making best use of the resources with which God has gifted us for our work of enhancing our Communion and strengthening our sense of Mission.

Although the diocese may look like a loose community of disparate and individual parishes, I make no secret of the fact that the long term aim of the emphasis on Pastoral Areas in the Pastoral Plan is that each Area should eventually become a parish. Contrary to the fears expressed by some, this does not entail the wholesale closing of churches but it does mean developing the collaboration and communion between the various communities in each Pastoral Area so that we can be both more united as a diocesan family and more effective in our witness to the Gospel.

Already three Areas have become canonically established parishes, and, whilst I am very aware that, for very good reasons, different parts of the diocese develop at different speeds, it is my wish - and the intention of our Pastoral Plan - that this should be the eventual pastoral structure of our diocese - 24 parishes - with priests and people working even more closely together for the spread of the Kingdom.

With this in mind, I will be visiting the leadership groups of all the Pastoral Areas in the course of the coming year to see where they are in terms of that long-term vision. These will be visits of encouragement for the future journey and of

commendation and affirmation for the considerable steps that have already been taken. Great progress has been made and I thank God for your generous commitment and fidelity to the Lord and his Word, which leads us into His way.

It helps us to experience anew the truth of Isaiah's words that the Lord is our Father; that He is the potter, we are the clay and we are all the work of His hand.

For these visits to the Areas, I will be accompanied by the appropriate Vicar General and by a member of the Department for Pastoral Formation. As well as dealing with questions about Pastoral Areas, I will be reminding you all of the centrality and importance of the Eucharist, without which we cannot be truly Catholic. In the light of that priority, I will also be affirming and emphasising the crucial role that has been played, and which continues to be played, by our priests and deacons, for, as St Paul reminds us, we are 'truly enriched by our teachers and preachers'. Priests are indispensable to the success of the Pastoral Plan because without Eucharist, Word and Sacrament, celebrated and preached, we cannot flourish. Never stop praying for your priests and deacons; treasure and value them as I do and implore the Lord unceasingly that He will continue to give us all the vocations to priesthood, to the diaconate and to the religious life that we need.

Today, we enter the great season of Advent with its wonderful sense of expectation and joy. As we begin to prepare, not only for Christmas, but for a renewed and enriched experience of the presence of the Lord among us now, listen to the Lord as He exhorts us to 'stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming...he must not find you asleep. I say to you: "Stay awake!"

I wish you every joy and happiness at this time and may God bless you all.

+Crispian

Advent 2008

'Be on your guard, stay awake'

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As part of my celebration of this year of St Paul, I have been spending some extra time re-reading and studying the pastoral letters he wrote to the communities to whom he had preached the Gospel. It is striking that he almost always begins his letters with words of love and affirmation. Today's excerpt from the Letter to the Corinthians is no exception. He writes: 'I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received through Jesus Christ...You have been enriched in so many ways... the witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you...'

After nearly 21 years in the diocese, I feel that I can write to you in a similar vein. It has been a privilege and a joy for me to be your Bishop and every day I thank God for His gifts to you and for the generous support and faithful response you have always given me as we have tried to explore the Gospel together.

In recent years, we have been trying to tease out how we can become even more faithful to the Lord in our witnessing to

Engagements for The Rt. Rev. Crispian Hollis, Bishop Of Portsmouth

December 2008

Monday 1:	St. Joseph's Cathedral, Swansea Mass 11.30 am re: Installation of Rt. Rev Thomas Burns as 11 th Bishop of Menevia
Thursday 4:	London - Bishops' Conference Overseas Committee Meeting am
Sunday 14:	Kingston Prison, Portsmouth - Mass 9.00 am St. John's Cathedral, Portsmouth - Advent Carol Service 4.00 pm
Tuesday 16:	Churches Together in Hampshire & Islands Church Leaders Meeting 4.00 pm
Wednesday 17:	Churches Together in Hampshire & Islands Church Leaders Meeting am
Sunday 21/22 incl.:	Clifton Diocese - Bishops' Meeting
Wednesday 24:	St. John's Cathedral, Portsmouth - Midnight Mass 11.30 pm
Thursday 25:	St. John's Cathedral, Portsmouth - Mass 10.30am Christmas Day



India's most famous World Peace Leader, His Holiness Sri Vasanth Gurudevji, recently met with Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican City. The Pope was presented with the World Peace Book as inspired by Gurudevji to teach and enlighten people on the subject of peace and to prompt individuals to learn from past sufferings.

This World Peace Book is for people of all faiths and includes quotations from religious Saints, political leaders and others including Lord Mahavira the Great Saint of Jainism and His Holiness The Dalai Lama. The World Peace Book, in a gold presentation case with an everlasting sandalwood fragrance, will be distributed free of charge to most of the 195 world leaders as well as peace activists and others.

The Call of Creation

Are you trying to live sustainably as part of your lives simply challenge? Would your group or community be interested in exploring our Christian responsibility to care for the earth? CAFOD has a brand new group resource all about discovering green issues in a faith context. The 'Call of Creation' toolkit includes liturgies and materials for workshops and discussions.

The toolkit is based on 'The Call of Creation', an excellent document from the Bishops of England and Wales, in which the Bishops urge us to respond as Christians to the cry of creation and think hard about how we live our lives. CAFOD Portsmouth is holding a Call of



(Photo: Eleanor Church)

Creation Training Day for anyone interested in sharing the toolkit and what they have learned with their own parishes, perhaps as part of a Lenten reflection group. The day will be held on Saturday 10 January 2009 from 10.30am - 3.30pm in St Joseph's parish hall, 171A St Michael's Road, Basingstoke, RG22 6TY.

To find out more or to book your place, please contact CAFOD Portsmouth on 012 5232 9385 or email portsmouth@cafod.org.uk



World Youth Day 2008



Lucy Vaughan-Neil reflects on World Youth Day in Oz

Our time in Australia was great. We spent a week at a Marist International Festival hosted by the Marist brothers at St. Joseph's School in Hunter's Hill. They took us out into the countryside to visit the retreat centre of the brothers where we had our own 'Olympic Parade'. It was wonderful to see how many countries were represented and how far the Marist community has spread across the world. We also enjoyed some excellent speakers including a South African bishop who spoke to us about his work in caring for adults and children with the HIV virus and those living and dying with AIDS. It was very moving to see his humility and compassion for the people he lived amongst and their obvious warmth towards him as a spiritual leader. Carol Wark was the main organiser of the whole event which had been prepared with great imagination and care, using very high tech computer graphics as visual aids during talks and services. Our ICT department would have been very impressed.

For the girls themselves much of the most immediate fun came from meeting so many other young Marists from places such as Australia, New Zealand, America, Italy, Zimbabwe and a number of the Pacific Islands. They were all in small discussion groups with a mix of fellow Marists and Charlotte Luxton joined the music group as well. They enjoyed what the different groups had to offer, particularly all that was culturally different or exciting, and were very willing to give of themselves in return. Many made friendships that they continue to foster.

The World Youth Day week (which followed the Marist week) was impressive and the girls themselves were surprised at the sheer number of young people who had gathered for this event. Wherever we were in Sydney - on buses, on trains, walking on the streets, in McDonalds (for the girls a fairly regular event to top up the WYD mass catering provisions) there were crowds of people with flags from all over the world, singing and enjoying the time of celebration. There was much going on at a deeper level too. The talks and homilies, notably of Pope Benedict himself, were important invitations for us all to be more open to the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. This was the theme of the WYD.

The girls were very happy to have been part of these amazing events and entered into the spirit of them with endless energy and great enthusiasm and humour. For my part I hope that the love and joy that so many there showed towards the Church and the Pope, and so towards faith and unity, will be an inspiration to them to seek the One at the heart of it all. As Pope Benedict XVI said, 'Do not be afraid to say "Yes" to Jesus, to find your joy in doing his will, giving yourself completely to the pursuit of holiness, and using all your talents in the service of others.'

Lucy Vaughan-Neil is Head of RE at The Marist Senior School, Sunninghill, Ascot



Priest's Profile



Born in Aldershot, raised and educated in Windsor (St Edward's and Windsor Boys), Steven Restori worked for Abbey National Building Society in mortgage, investment and assurance before entering St John's Seminary at Womersley just three weeks before his 21st birthday.

Having completed his studies at Womersley (1988-1993), Steven was then ordained to the Diaconate by Bishop Crispian on 3 July 1993. Following a parish placement (1993-1994) at English Martyrs in Reading, Steven went back into the business world to work for Guinness Brewing BG in planning and business development (1994-1996).

'That extra period working in business,' explained Fr Steven, 'gave me the welcome and added opportunity not only to understand a world and lifestyle beyond that of the priesthood but also to re-assess and confirm my vocation.'

Steven was ordained to the priesthood on 7 December 1996 at English Martyrs, Reading.

Between 1997 and 1999, Fr Steven served in Fareham and Portchester, for that first year alongside Canon David Hoppgood, before moving to Guernsey.

Fr Steven's father, Mario, was born in Florence. His mother is English. To this day mother and father live in the family home in Windsor. Steven's sister, Emma, is three years his junior. She is married to Zack, a marketing guru. They live near Oxford and have two young children: Luca and Max.

An engaging preacher with a wry, enigmatic smile and gentle manner, Fr Steven has been at the Cathedral for the past three years, once again working alongside Canon David. As Steven says: 'I enjoy Portsmouth and have welcomed the opportunity to work in the Cathedral parish tackling the many issues you find in a large, cosmopolitan town such as this.'

Fr Steven's moments of relaxation are spent indulging his interests in reading, film, cuisine, art & design and civil aviation. 'Despite my cultural background,' he commented, 'I don't speak a word of Italian. I tried tackling German once but that ended up tackling me. I then turned my attention to French ... The less said about that the better. I'd say I'm the world's worst linguist!' He smiled, wryly.

Fascinating Facts and Figures

In the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth there are 79 schools (56 voluntary aided and 23 independent) attended by approximately 27,500 pupils.

66% of the people living in the UK have no religious affiliation.

Middle names were once illegal in England.

There are more than 1000,000,000 Christians in the world today.

No word in the English language rhymes with 'month'.

There are 56 words in the Lord's Prayer, 297 in the Ten Commandments, 300 in the American Declaration of Independence and 29,911 in an EC directive on the export of eggs.

Terminology Databank

With this issue we launch a five-part series of ecclesiastical terms

Absolution	Forgiveness of sin
Abstinence	Refraining from eating meat
Advent	Period before Christmas, waiting for Christ's arrival
Agnus Dei	Latin: Lamb of God
Alleluia	Exclamation of joy
Amen	Expression of agreement
Altar	Raised surface at which the religious ceremony is performed
Antiphon	A chant or song of devotion sung in response at the liturgy
Assumption	When Mary was taken into Heaven (15th August)
Ave Maria	Latin: Hail Mary
Baptism	Act of welcome into the Christian community, the Primary Sacrament of Initiation washing away sins in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Beatification	First step to canonization
Benediction	Short service of prayer and hymns. Blessing of the congregation with the consecrated Host
Bible	Collection of writings including accounts, prophecies, letters, songs etc. divided into the Old and the New Testament
Bishop	Shepherd, Teacher and Leader of the whole Diocese, successor to the apostles, appointed by the Pope
Canon Law	The rules governing the life and mission of the whole Church, ordained and lay
Canonization	Official declaration as a saint
Candidate	Baptised person preparing to be received into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church
Cantor	One who leads the congregation in singing during a service
Catechism	Manual of Christian doctrine

FEATURE

Art & Faith



Tim Patrick reflects on the bonds between his work as an artist and his faith as a Christian

My art and my faith are to me inextricably linked and so, having been kindly asked by Justice and Peace to write a small article on the subject, I enjoyed the opportunity to write down my thoughts which I hope strike a chord with your own. In my work I try to visualise the feelings which are universally understood or shared among us. Vacancy or absence are to me implicit in spirituality - being in an empty church or cathedral where the void and sound of silence become a tangible feeling or space, the silence becomes overwhelming. It becomes something rather than nothing - a rare experience in the humdrum of contemporary life, and I suppose this is something I really want to explore in my work. The idea of a silent and benevolent God which I paradoxically find in an empty space - silence provokes thought, just as a beautiful panoramic does the same. Silence gives you time to think and, lost in thought, my mind turns to those greater questions and, more often than not, to God and prayer.

This is a theme I really try to communicate in my paintings; the figure is often out of context, lost in a void like space or suspended amongst abstract strokes and colours, particularly my recent piece, Limbo, where the figure is fraught with a quiet internal angst, pulling himself through this intangible painterly mess of colour and light. One of the ideas I was trying to communicate through this was the idea of a difficult faith - the void-like space is silence, but the figure is struggling with it, hence the title - an ambiguous state of mind.

I recently began working on Stations of the Cross, and found this served to reaffirm the spiritual element in my work, giving me the opportunity to express (particularly through the violent use of paint) the gravity of the Passion and weight of each scene.

In some respects, my relationship between art and faith is self-sustaining - which I hope it remains. My Christian faith and time for silence lends itself to inspiration, so long as I continue to express what it is I genuinely feel. Consequently, my work becomes a visualisation of what I feel, reminding me that for me Jesus manifests Himself in the silence and place of contemplation I am often trying to communicate. Essentially, they become a visual aid for me to hold in my mind's eye, where I am in my faith, as I hope it does for others.

Tim Patrick, a young Catholic artist of St Joseph's parish in Romsey, has exhibited twice at Romsey Abbey in aid of charity and, having studied in London and more recently in Florence, hopes to return to Italy in January. His work is predominately spiritual with strong Christian roots.

Visit www.timpatrick.co.uk

Quotable Quotes

'We trained hard, but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form up into teams, we would be reorganised. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganising, and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation'

Caius Petronius - later ordered by Nero to commit suicide for being a troublemaker

'Love God and do thy will'

St Augustine

'The English may not like music but they absolutely love the noise it makes'

Sir Thomas Beecham

'Two men look out through the same bars: one sees the mud, and one the stars'

Frederick Langbridge

'Sometimes I sits and thinks, and sometimes I just sits'

Satchel Paige
(US baseball player 1906-1982)

'J'y suis, j'y reste'

Comte de MacMahon (attrib.)

'On the Continent people have good food; in England people have good table manners'

George Mikes

'There have been many definitions of hell, but for the English the best definition is that it is a place where the Germans are the police, the Swedish are the comedians, the Italians are the defence force, Frenchmen dig the roads, the Belgians are the pop singers, the Spaniards run the railways, the Turks cook the food, the Irish are the waiters, the Greeks run the government and the common language is Dutch'

David Frost and Anthony Jay

FEATURE

Parsons Pointers

I was so glad to see that Portsmouth People would be back in November but just a little bit rattled to realise that it would be an Advent edition. Christmas does seem to creep up on us. Very soon we shall be practising the Christmas Music and generally preparing for the festivities. But.. and it is a big but, there are many who will be very worried this year. Worried about their homes and their jobs, worried about their bills and in many cases worried about how to keep warm.

The Christmas message is one of hope for the world. It seems to me that at a time when both the nation and its people have so many problems hope is in rather short supply. As we wait for God to come among us again as the Christ Child we are reminded that our first task is to love God. But the second, to love one's neighbour, is what Jesus said was like the first. Loving your neighbour is not always easy partic-

ularly when the neighbour is not at all keen about accepting anything from his neighbours however much he or she may be in difficulties. I think this year as we prepare for Christmas we really do need to keep an eye on those who might be having a tough time. In many little ways we can bring Christ's love into people's lives when they need it most.

For me this will be a very special Christmas. It will be the first Christmas for our great granddaughter who was born in May and who lives in France. We shall see her for the first time in November and that will be a great thrill. One wonders what the world will be like when she is my age! We need to do what we can now to make her future rosier precisely by living the Christian message of love and forgiveness. What better way to celebrate the season of Advent than to meditate on and act upon the needs of those around us. As

Christ transformed the world so, in a different way, will future events. We all need to think about that and do what we can - even if it's only reducing our carbon footprint. Ah, that reminds me! I must see about cavity wall insulation that my energy consultant son keeps nagging me about.

John worships at the Church of Our Lady in Fleet and is in the choir there. He is a keen ecumenist and is a former Chairman of the Diocesan Commission for Christian Unity. He has been a regular contributor to Portsmouth People for some years with his column Parsons Pointers.



John Parsons

Letters

Dancing with whales?

Recently made redundant, I am one of the casualties of the credit crunch. Thankfully, I do have savings and have decided to take a few months off to learn new skills and perhaps do something worthwhile.

I'm planning to travel to Costa Rica early in the New Year to take intensive Spanish language classes as well as Latin Dance lessons. Following my studies, I would like to remain in South America for a while and do voluntary work.

Part of the reason for me choosing Costa Rica is because Humpback Whales migrate there to mate each year from December to April. I would love to volunteer with an organisation involved with monitoring the whales, and wonder if you or the readers of Portsmouth People would have any ideas as to how to go about this.

V. S.
London

(Answers received will be duly forwarded. Ed)

Campaigning works!

A few weeks ago, on Friday the 3rd of October, thousands of people fasted, prayed and donated money for the Harvest Fast Day appeal of CAFOD. We are writing to thank your readers for their valued support. The funds are still being collected and sent in and we currently have a total of over £30,000. We are grateful for everyone's generosity particularly in the current financial climate.

We would also like everyone to know the good news regarding the climate change bill campaign. Parliament recently passed the bill with all three key changes put forward by CAFOD. This now involves the reduction of carbon emissions by 80% rather than 60%, annual milestones and including the UK's share of aviation and shipping. We would like to thank and congratulate the campaigners and MPs who played a part in this recent success. It is great to be reminded that campaigning works!

Yours truly,

Martin Brown & Lynda Mussell,
Diocesan Managers, CAFOD Portsmouth

Delighted

I am delighted you are reviving the letters page!

Dominica Roberts
Berkshire

Heartened and Encouraged

Thank you for the many communications of goodwill welcoming the return of Portsmouth People.

Ed.



Contributions to the Letters column warmly invited. Ed.

News and Announcements

YEAR OF ST PAUL



St Paul by El Greco

Pope Benedict XVI has declared June 2008 - June 2009 a Year of St Paul in celebration of the 2000th anniversary of the apostle's birth. It was in Tarsus in modern-day Turkey that St Paul is presumed to have been born between 7 A.D. and 10 A.D. The Liturgy Office has prepared a series of leaflets which offer a brief introduction to the letters of St Paul as heard at Sunday Mass. The Liturgy Office can be contacted at 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PL or on www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Scripture

THE GIFT OF SCRIPTURE

The Gift of Scripture is a teaching document of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, and of Scotland, on the scriptures to mark the 40th anniversary of *Dei Verbum*, the Constitution on Divine Revelation from the Second Vatican Council. Published by the Catholic Truth Society, The Gift of Scripture can now be downloaded from www.catholic-ew.org.uk

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Visit www.samaritanspurse.uk.com to find out how you can help meet the critical needs of victims of war, poverty, famine, disease and natural disaster while sharing the Good News.

St JOHN'S COMMEMORATIVE LEAFLET

The Communications Working Party at St John's Cathedral has produced an illustrated mini brochure to commemorate the Cathedral's 125th anniversary. To obtain a copy simply send an s.a.e. (8 1/2" x 4 1/4" at either minimum rate) to The Parish Office, St John's Cathedral, Edinburgh Road, Portsmouth PO1 3HG.

To view the Cathedral's website: www.PortsmouthCatholicCathedral.org.uk

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

At *Portsmouth People* we are endeavouring to establish a network of 'communication contacts' across our diocese. These people would be responsible (1) as a despatch point for distributing copies of *Portsmouth People* in their immediate locality and (2) as a local focal/generating point for features, articles etc. for onward transmission to the Editor.

Please contact the Editor if you can help: Editor@PortsmouthDiocese.org.uk

WRITERS FORUM

The Editor welcomes offers from suitably qualified and experienced wordsmiths interested in writing and/or sourcing appropriate copy for *Portsmouth People*. The forum invites suggestions for themes on which to work, with due authorisation, on behalf of *Portsmouth People*. The forum similarly invites contributions on any appropriate topic, although no assurance can be given that any submission will be accepted for publication and/or display and/or dissemination.

Portsmouth People offers no remuneration for contributions.

SNAP TO IT!

Portsmouth People welcomes photographs (hi-res digital) for its front cover. If you have or are prepared to take suitable photographs which could be used to build up the photobank, do please forward them to the Editor. Although full credit will be given for any photograph published, *Portsmouth People* can offer no remuneration for contributions nor enter into contractual discussion.

POPE BENEDICT XVI & GLOBAL CRISIS

Speaking to the Synod of Bishops in Rome recently (6 October), the Pontiff made an impromptu remark at the first meeting of the 244 fathers of the Synod of the Word of God to the effect that the current global financial crisis bears witness to the fact that people should build their lives on the more solid foundation of the Word of God.

AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

Staffan de Mistura, UN Special Representative for Iraq, is calling for a clause giving religious minorities a quota of seats on councils to be reinstated in the country's legislation. It is in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East that thousands of Christians live in fear of their lives. This last fact is nowhere more apparent than in the ancient city of Mosul (Iraq), home to tens of thousands of Chaldean Catholics and Assyrian Orthodox faithful, where a group linked to Al-Qaeda has begun a campaign to assassinate 'unbelievers'. To find out how you can help ACN visit: www.acnuk.org

The next issue of **PORTSMOUTH PEOPLE** will be distributed at the end of January 2009 and will contain 32 pages

News and Announcements

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 9 December, 7.30 pm. *Journey of the Magi* by T. S. Eliot. Join Springs Dance Company for this sparkling production of dance, theatre, song and poetry.

Tickets: £8 (£6 concessionary); £26 Family (2+2).

The Electric Tower, Onslow Street, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4SZ.

t: 014 8344 4789.
e: electrictheatre@guildford.gov.uk

(Submissions are invited for the *Calendar of Forthcoming Events* to be published in future issues of *Portsmouth People*. Ed)

ADVERTISE IN PORTSMOUTH PEOPLE

Display advertisements of a suitable and appropriate nature are invited for the forthcoming and subsequent issues of *Portsmouth People* (32pp, guaranteed print-run of 10,000). Rate card and full details are available from The Editor.

BBC STANCE ON RELIGION

Mark Thompson, DG to the BBC, suggests that Islam be treated with greater sensitivity by the media than Christianity because, since Muslims - numbering 1.6 million in Britain - constitute a religious minority, often from ethnic minorities, their faith should be given coverage different to that of more established groups. Mr Thompson, speaking in October at the annual public theology lecture of the religion think-tank Theos, went on to insist that the state broadcaster, funded as it is by the nation's tax payers, would be prepared to show programmes that criticised Islam if they were of sufficient quality. Challenged with Ben Elton's claim that the BBC would 'let vicar gags [and presumably rabbi gags] pass but not imman gags', the DG admitted that the BBC did take a different approach to Islam.

STEM CELL ROW

The Sunday Times reports that leading British scientist Colin McGuckin, professor of regenerative medicine at Newcastle University, is leaving the country to work in France after claiming that British science gives too much priority to embryo experiments over 'more ethical' alternatives: 'A vast amount of money in the UK from the Government has gone into embryonic stem cell research with not one patient having been treated, to the detriment of [research into] adult stem cells, which has been severely underfunded.'



UNICEF RECOMMENDS SOAPING UP

The simple act of washing hands with soap before eating or after going to the toilet would reduce, according to UNICEF, world-wide infant mortality rates from diarrhoea by 50%. Reports suggest that 5,000 infants (children under 5 years of age) die every day (i.e., 1.7 millions per annum) from diarrhoea-related symptoms. Half of these fatalities, it is claimed, could be readily avoided by simply washing with soap those hands brought into contact with infants.

THE RED MASS

Before the Reformation, the judiciary and legal profession gathered in Westminster Abbey to celebrate the Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit (aka the Red Mass) on the first day of the Michaelmas term. The practice was suspended during the Reformation but re-introduced in 1891. Since 1904 the Mass, organised by the Thomas More Society and attended by Catholic barristers, solicitors, policemen and those in associated professions, has been celebrated in Westminster Cathedral.



Lawyers gather in Westminster Cathedral for The Red Mass

(Picture by courtesy of The Diocese of Westminster)

COMING HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

It happens sometimes in families; an absence stretches into so many years that the absentee family member feels unable to make contact. The Catholic Church and its extended family are no exception to such estrangements and St. Joseph's of Romsey hoped that it's 2007 Coming Home for Christmas campaign would encourage estranged parishioners to make that first move. Husband and wife, Harry and Dawn Harrison, accepted that invitation and, here, Dawn tells their story:

'The morning of our return to St Joseph's found us nervous, feeling guilt and embarrassment at our absence from the church. Yet it was with pride and delight that we were introduced to, and received by the congregation. Neither explanation nor excuses were required; we were treated as 'special guests at a feast' and the icing on the cake was the especially warm welcome we received from Fr. George Lyons. Throughout the following months, the ongoing support of the congregation and Romsey's KIT Team encouraged our regular attendance at Mass and, eventually, an active part in parochial affairs. As we approach our second Christmas at St. Joseph's, we find ourselves on the 'welcoming' roster and enthusiastic members of the KIT Diocesan Team while I have recently joined the Musical Liturgy Group as an organist. This Christmas, as St. Joseph's relaunches its Coming Home for Christmas campaign, Harry and I look forward to offering returners the welcome and love shown to us by our spiritual family that ensured we not only came home for Christmas but that we stayed at home.'

Pastoral Area Profile

Young Brazilians bring new blood to Sacred Heart



As a result of his approach, two young Brazilian women missionaries arrived in September 2007. Carolina Andrade and Yonara Bandeira were both in their mid twenties. They gave up good jobs and boyfriends to become missionaries to England.

They set up a young adults group which has grown to about 30 people in their twenties and thirties from all over Bournemouth and Poole. They pray, study the scriptures, discuss their faith and socialise together. They also contribute to the music and liturgy at Mass.

Carolina and Yonara came up with a plan to develop the repository at Sacred Heart. The eventual aim is to operate a combined book, CD and DVD store and café seven days a week. The idea is that it would be a centre for young people to drop into at any time. Part of the plan is that the café/bookshop would be accessible from both the church and the street outside.

Carolina has now been replaced by a young man, Max Fausto, and the team is now being joined by a third Brazilian, Camilo. The mission is becoming a rolling programme.

'We thought there were no young people out there prepared to be involved,' says Fr Tony. 'Now we know that there are. What they needed was someone to lead them. Here were these inspiring young people witnessing to their commitment. It has lit up people's lives.'

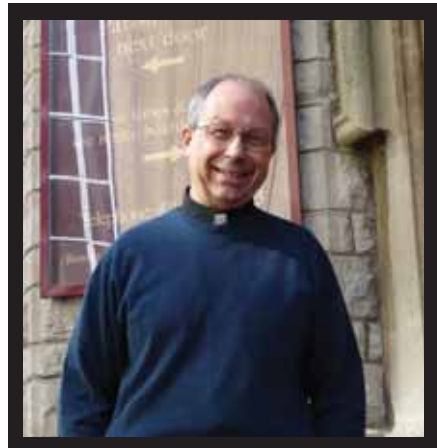
Colin Parkes spent his working life as a journalist. He started on the Reading Evening Post in the 1960's before moving into radio. Between 1990 and 2005 he edited news on BBC Radio 4, and is now a lecturer at the London School of Journalism. He is a parishioner at St Joseph's in Tilehurst, Reading.

For this issue our roving reporter Colin Parkes visits Bournemouth

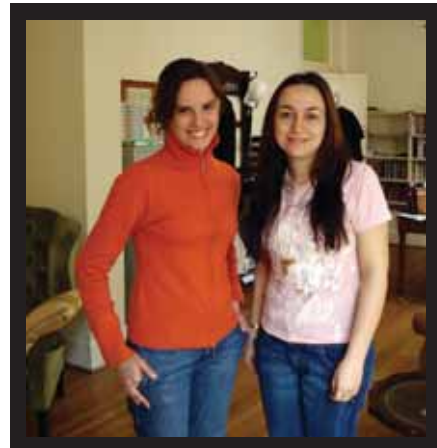
When Father Tony Pennicott arrived at The Sacred Heart in the centre of Bournemouth four years ago, he was disappointed.

He had hoped to see a good number of students among his congregation - there are thousands at the university and in the town's world-famous language schools. But there was the same shortage of young people as there is in many other churches. He decided to set up some form of 'outreach' to them.

Through a Brazilian parishioner Fr Tony heard of a group called the Shalom Catholic Community (www.shalomcommunity.info), whose main mission is to young adults. He was interested. 'The current wisdom is that life in the Church is in the New Movements. Everyone in the Old World seems rather tired in comparison.'



Parish Priest Fr Tony Pennicott



Shalom Missionaries Carolina Andrade and Yonara Bandeira

North & Central Hampshire Pastoral Areas

- Alton-Petersfield - Alton, Bordon, Greatham, Grayshott, Liphook ...
- Hampshire Downs - Winchester, Stockbridge, Alresford, Oliver's Battery ...
- North East Hampshire - Fleet, Aldershot, Farnham, Yateley, Hartley Wintney ...
- North West Hampshire - Basingstoke, Overton, East Oakley, Andover ...
- Three Rivers - Bishop's Waltham, Romsey, North Baddesley, Chandlers Ford ...

South East Hampshire Pastoral Areas

- Havant - Waterlooville, Horndean, Havant, Emsworth, Hayling Island ...
- New Forest East - Totton, Ashurst, Hythe, Holbury ...
- Pompey - Portsmouth, Southsea, North End, Copnor Bridge, Copnor ...
- Solent - Gosport, Park Gate, Fareham, Portchester, Wickham, Stubbington ...
- Southampton Central & West - Southampton, Shirley, Basset, Polygon ...
- Southampton East - Southampton, Netley Abbey, Hedge End, West End ...

Cheerful Fr Denis Thinks We're Great

If you are one of those people who think the Church in these parts is going to the dogs, Fr Denis Blackledge is the man to cheer you up.

Fr Denis, co-ordinating pastor for Bournemouth, is a Jesuit with a Friar-Tuck figure and a Lancashire accent who arrived in the Portsmouth diocese two years ago. Before that he had worked in Preston, Merseyside, Edinburgh, London, Blackpool and Stonyhurst College.

Some of the people who joined the church through it in the 80s are still deeply involved. The great thing is there are so many committed young families, and the laity take their role very seriously.

'I thought to myself: "If you can't make this place go, you can't do it anywhere!"'

Jesuits have a long history in Bournemouth. All the five churches in the Pastoral Area were built by the order. They are large and impressive places, dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and they still have a confident air about them.

'When I came, I found more people willing to give time and talent here than in all the other parishes put together. There's so much going on, and all self-propelled. Mothers' groups, toddler groups, two home prayer groups, SVP, UCM, CAFOD, APF. There's been an RCIA group going for 25 years. We call it 'Journeying in Faith' now.

All but Corpus Christi in Boscombe, where Fr Denis is Parish Priest, have now been handed over to the diocese, and for most practical purposes, Corpus Christi is part of the diocese also. 'While I'm on Crispian's patch, Crispian's my boss,' says Fr Denis.

Bournemouth is a favourite location for people to retire to, and there is a large elderly population. But this does not seem to impose an undue burden on the local clergy. Fr Denis gratefully points out that he has fifty Eucharistic Ministers visiting old people's homes.

An increasing proportion of congregations comes from overseas, which Fr Denis enjoys. 'It's enriching. It's a lovely integrated community in the school, the children round the altar on Sunday. It's a rainbow of the world.'



Fr Denis Blackledge meets regularly with his fellow priests in the Pastoral Area. (Left to Right) Fr Marcus Brisley, Fr Denis, Fr James McAuliffe, and Fr Peter Hackett SJ.

One Church, Four Easters

The Church of St Edmund Campion in the Castlepoint Shopping Centre in Bournemouth is also home to three separate Orthodox churches, Greek, Indian and Coptic.

'We celebrated four Easters this year,' says Parish Priest Fr Marcus Brisley. 'One group shared our own date, March 23rd, and two others celebrated the Feast on 25th April.'

South West Hampshire & Bournemouth Pastoral Areas

- Avon Stour - Bournemouth, Christchurch, Fordingbridge, Ringwood ...
- Bournemouth - Poole, Bournemouth, Charminster, Castlepoint, Boscombe ...
- New Forest - New Milton, Milford-on-Sea, Lymington, Brockenhurst ...

South Berkshire -

- Wokingham, Bracknell, Sandhurst, Crowthorne ...
- Thames Isis - Abingdon, East Hendred, East Ilsley, Milton, Oxford ...
- West Berkshire - Newbury, Thatcham, Upper Woolhampton, Pangbourne ...

Thames Valley Pastoral Areas

- Central & West Reading - Reading, Tilehurst, Whiteknights ...
- Great Park - Maidenhead, Windsor, Dedworth, Ascot, Cookham Rise ...
- Loddon Valley - Reading, Twyford, Twyford, Wargrave, Earley, Woodley ...
- North Downs - Wantage, Lambourn, Hungerford, Faringdon, Kintbury ...

Islands Pastoral Areas

- Bailiwick of Guernsey - St Peter Port, St Anne's, St Sampson, Sark ...
- Catholic Wight - Cowes, East Cowes, Newport, Ryde, Seaview, Bembridge ...
- Jersey - St Helier, St Brelade, St Aubin, St Peter, St Clement ...

Personality Profile



After the birth of three daughters (Jock's used to being outnumbered!) and various RAF postings including a tour in Canada, Sheila returned to work with the W H Smith Group and was appointed Head of Welfare. That post led to a number of personnel roles over a ten-year period including planning and implementing organisational culture change, after which Sheila joined Royal Mail: 'No, no uniform! While at Royal Mail Sheila held various responsibilities, all for people management and culture change, retiring as Director of Leadership Strategy.

For the past nine of those thirteen years Sheila has officially been retired whilst advising on personnel and management issues within the Diocese; being a Trustee of the Diocese; involved as a member of the Personnel & Budget Committees; chairing the Diocesan Communications Committee ... and spending what time she can with three grandchildren: a 12-year-old granddaughter and two grandsons aged 10 and 8.

'Yet despite my WRAF training in traffic control, despite Jock's military navigational skills to support me and despite my many years of driving, I still struggle to park the car straight!'

Born in Surrey and brought up in a children's home in Kent, Sheila was educated in Canterbury before being commissioned in the WRAF as one of the first female Air Traffic Controllers: 'It was while in uniform that I met my future husband Jock, an RAF navigator; perhaps there's something about uniforms!'

All family members live in the Diocese: one daughter is an Electronic Design Engineer, one a Chartered Accountant and the other a Deputy Headteacher. Sheila, who has lived in Bracknell, Didcot, Wantage and Abingdon, has been a parishioner in Ringwood for the past 13 years.

With this issue
BEHIND THE SCENES
takes a look at ...

The Trustee Communications Committee

The TCC exists to provide oversight and take decisions on behalf of the Bishop and Trustees in relation to the following:

- Policies and procedures for communication
- Defining the roles of those involved in communication
- Encouraging two-way communication
- Advising on appointments
- Encouraging and ensuring appropriate professional standards in all diocesan communications
- Diocesan website
- Diocesan computer network
- Portsmouth People
- Diocesan Communications Officer
- Diocesan Yearbook
- Any other matter relating to communications referred to the Committee by the Trustees with the prior approval of the Bishop

Of late the TCC has been involved in the appointment of an IT Coordinator (Leo Patrick), a Webmaster (Ana Dobeson) and now an interim Editor for *Portsmouth People* (Jay Kettle-Williams). *Portsmouth People* and the Diocesan Website are considered vital tools for implementing the Pastoral Plan. The TCC looks to exploit to the maximum the opportunities offered by both these forms of media in concert with the improved electronic communications under the tutelage of the IT Coordinator

Just a click away ...

With this issue of PP we launch a compendium of worthy websites:

www.theholymass.co.uk - a live recording of the Holy Mass	www.cathchild.org - The Catholic Children's Society
www.delasalle.org.uk - information for and about Lasallian people	www.cathud.com - for unattached Catholics to get in touch
www.millhillmissionaries.com - missionaries working in Africa and ASIA	www.dating4catholics.com - brings single Catholics together
www.insidethevatican.co.uk - Rome-based international magazine	www.franciscans.org - for information about the Greyfriars
www.i-believe-Jesus.com - a daily quotation relating to Christ	www.gschootheol.com - for distance-learning qualifications in Theology

(Submissions for 'JACA' warmly invited. Ed.)

Maltese Connections

In this issue of *Portsmouth People* we offer a 'community communications checklist' for Maltese nationals and others in our diocese with Internet access who are interested in matters Maltese:

Useful websites:

- | | |
|---|---|
| http://allmalta.com , http://www.searchmalta.com and http://www.di-ve.com | One TV - http://www.one.com.mt/ |
| Radio stations (selection): | Public Broadcasting Services Ltd (PBS) - http://www.pbs.com.mt/ |
| Bastjanizi FM - http://www.bastjanizifm.org | Radio 101 - http://www.radio101.com.mt/ |
| Bay Radio 89.7 FM - http://www.bay.com.mt/index.asp | RTK - http://www.rtk.org.mt |
| Calypso Radio - http://www.calypsoradio.com | Radju Hompesch - http://www.radjuhompesch.com |
| Campus FM - http://www.campusfm.um.edu.mt | Radju Kottoner - http://www.kottoner.com |
| Capital Radio 88.7 - http://www.capitalradio.com.mt/ | Radju Lehen il-Qala - http://www.radjulehenil-qala.com |
| Christian Light Radio - http://www.christianlightradio.com/ | Radju Luminaria - http://www.radjuluminaria.com |
| Energy FM 96.4 - http://www.energyfm884.com | Radju Malta - http://www.pbs.com.mt/radio/ra |
| Jazz Diaspora - http://www.jazzmt.com/ | Radju Marija - http://www.radjumarija.org |
| Lehen il-Belt Victoria - http://www.lbv104.com | Radju Prekursur - http://www.gozodirect.com/parish/xewkija/radio/ |
| Net TV - http://www.nettv.com.mt/ | Radju ta' L-Universita - http://www.vol.net.mt/unirad/front.htm |
| One Radio - http://www.one.com.mt/radio | |

Compiled by John DeBattista

(Similar 'Community Connections' compilations are welcome for other nationalities. Ed.)

WH: What, Where and Why



Wisdom House and the labyrinth

'No idea this was even here!' is the comment often heard when people arrive at Wisdom House Spirituality Centre in Romsey, housed in part of what used to be the junior wing of the La Sagesse Convent Junior and Secondary Schools which closed in the 1990s.

The Centre, opened in June 2007 with the remit to be open to people of all faiths and none, is one of the four main ministries of the Great Britain and Ireland Province of the Daughters of Wisdom (as the Sisters of La Sagesse are now more usually known in English-speaking countries). The others include a nursing home in Romsey for the elderly and frail, Marie-Louise House, Sophia Housing and Wisdom Centre in Dublin and Cregg House in Sligo for people with intellectual disabilities. All reflect the charisms of the founders of the Congregation, St Louis-Marie de Montfort and Blessed Marie-Louise Trichet, dedicated to serving those poor in body, mind or spirit.

The Centre offers a rich programme of talks and retreats. Aija Kaartinen from Finland recently led a day on Understanding and Praying with icons. Come the spring, Peter and Carol Clare will be using Peter's paintings as the inspiration for a day on the Green Man and a week's individually guided retreat. Other facilitators include Mary Dunn and Catherine Carberry, Christian poet Pat Marsh and Sr Pamela from the Shrine of Julian of Norwich. The Centre is available to groups and individuals for meetings or simply to take time out, perhaps staying for a while in the self-contained cottage of one of the Community's houses.

For further details: www.wisdomhouseromsey.org.uk or telephone 017 9483 0206.

Live Issues

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill



The Human Fertilisation and Embryology bill has been the important pro-life activity since the last edition of the **Portsmouth People**. In spite of the obvious humanity of a foetus after 12 weeks, who is able to move independently, practise facial expressions, and feel pain to some degree, our M.P.s voted to keep 24 weeks as the ordinary limit for abortion, now virtually on request. They also ignored mounting evidence of the harm abortion does to women, not only mentally, in increased

rates of suicide and need for psychiatric treatment for depression, but physically as well. They voted to allow human-animal hybrid embryos, although none of the cures scientists promised after being allowed to experiment on human embryos in 1990 are in sight.

Many members of LIFE or SPUC or the Pro Life Alliance, and Catholic parishioners in the Diocese, as well as other Christians, lobbied M.P.s or wrote to them. The Chairman of Reading and District LIFE even persuaded her M.P. to wear a 'precious feet' badge!

The bill was passed in the House of Commons in October, and now goes back to the House of Lords, but at least attempts to make abortion quicker to get, and impose it on Northern Ireland, failed.

It seems to be accepted that pro-life views affected the result in the Glasgow East Bye-election, where Catholic Labour

Party supporters did not vote for a pro-abortion candidate. It is well worth while, with the next General Election in mind, convincing M.P.s with a small majority that they cannot afford to alienate their supporters by voting for something that ends an innocent human life and harms a woman.

Dominica Roberts, from the parish of St. Joseph and St. Margaret Clitherow in Bracknell, is an active member of several pro-life groups. She joined the Pro Life Alliance when it started in 1997. Dominica has stood as a pro-life candidate in two General Elections and a European one: 'My share of the vote has gone up from minuscule to minute to tiny on a straight line graph which, if it continues, should see me elected at the age of 130'. Dominica and husband Tim have five children and twelve grandchildren.

Hints & Wrinkles

Getting the message across ...

We offer fifteen pithy pointers for readers

- 1: Reading from a text ensures that nothing is omitted but it does make it more difficult for you, the reader, to look at the congregation
- 2: Establishing eye contact with the congregation is important:
 - i: It engages the congregation with what you are reading
 - ii: It relates the congregation to you and you to the congregation
 - iii: It makes you raise your head which improves your voice projection
- 3: Avoid what may sound like a monotonous recitation by changing the pace of your reading and the pitch of your voice to befit the reading. Examples: Short sentences normally call for increased pace; direct speech (i.e., the words actually spoken by a person) normally demands a change in pitch
- 4: Practise in advance by raising yet moderating your voice without shouting, without sharpness of tone
- 5: Speak clearly, adjusting your voice to ensure all can hear (This may require rehearsal with a microphone and/or someone listening at the back of the Church)
- 6: Take pains to articulate (i.e., use your mouth) more than when you are speaking normally
- 7: Pause regularly at the end of the various sense groups i.e., before new themes/actions/points in what you are reading
- 8: Don't speak too fast: this is common when people are nervous
- 9: If you do feel nervous, take a few deep breaths five minutes before reading by pushing your stomach out as you breathe in through your nose and then out through your mouth as you relax. This is a practice used by professionals: it will oxygenate your blood and produce a calming effect
- 10: Speed of delivery (The right pace gives the right weight to what you are reading). You should aim to deliver between 10 to 15 words per 5 seconds (i.e., 2/3 words per second)
- 11: Do not fidget while reading. The congregation will concentrate more on what they are seeing than on what they are hearing
- 12: Appearance: endeavour to look smart but not necessarily formal
- 13: Allow your personality to come across but not to dominate: relax your face, don't look in pain, look comfortable, acknowledge the celebrant ...
- 14: Ensure you know when to come forward, what to do before you reach the lectern (e.g., halting before the altar with anyone else who may be reading, approaching together, acknowledging the celebrant, moving between lectern and waiting position, returning with anyone else reading, respecting the altar and returning to your pew)
- 15: Prepare in advance by: Reading out loud at home; Practising full, not necessarily deep, breathing; Checking the pronunciation of difficult or foreign names

© jlkw

Home is a Holy Place?

Homes can be messy places, noisy places, lively, joyous and even lonely places. But what about holy places? Hard to imagine sometimes, but our homes are the 'Domestic Church' where God comes into our lives day-in-day-out. Home is not just somewhere we leave on Sunday morning to go to Church. It is where we live the daily mission of the Church. At times this is easy to spot. At family gatherings, mealtimes, during prayers with children or perhaps in those quiet moments of refuge away from the world God can seem close. But he is there in every moment. Even, and especially, in the pain, loneliness, grief and worry that comes with daily life God walks with us. Sometimes, the trick seems to be finding Him there.

'Home is a Holy Place' is the name of a new resource pack prompted by the Bishops' Conference initiative 'Celebrating Family Life'. The pack contains a DVD, a booklet and a number of sheets aimed at aiding discussion around the theme of the title. The hope is that the material will help families to develop their spirituality and to find God in their daily lives. It takes three key themes for reflection:

Home is a Holy Place...
 ...because God is present there as love
 ...because relationships within the family reflect God's relationship with us
 ...because God's presence graces all creation.

The resource pack is free and we are looking for groups, families or parishes that would like to volunteer to try out the material in different ways. For example, you may wish to use some or all of it in family groups, bereavement groups, prayer or discussion groups, RCIA or with parents of children in sacramental preparation programmes. This list is not exhaustive and we are keen to try out the material in as many different ways as possible. Each home, and each parish, is unique and will use this material in their own way. It would be wonderful to think that we can support each other by sharing our experiences and giving advice on good ways to use this resource.

To view some of the material visit www.homeisaholyplace.org.uk or contact Keith Chappell t: 013 2983 5583 e: kchappell@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk who will be delighted to chat about the material and to pass on resource packs.

FEATURE

NOVEMBER BAMENDA COLLECTION BOOSTS DIOCESAN LINK WITH AFRICA!

Fr Ron Hishon writes:

A BIG THANKS to all who gave so generously on BAMENDA SUNDAY (Nov. 2nd) to support the Archbishop, priests and people of our twinned Archdiocese of Bamenda in Cameroon.



Did you see this year's 'Bamenda Briefing, which was distributed free to all Parishes? It had a good summary of our current activities and needs. If not, then go on line to our website at www.bamendaandportsmouth.com for all the details.

In recent years, this collection has resulted in more than £30,000 annually. In addition we are grateful to a number of schools and parishes who raise money to help Bamenda in different ways. Some adopt a hospital or Church or clinic or help sick children or those in prison.

We have been blessed too, with legacies from those who have remembered Bamenda in their wills. That is how we have been able to allocate more than £70,000 over the year.

Just one example of our work is our support for the new Church in Ndop (a large rural parish with fourteen Mass centres in which a number of our Portsmouth priests have served). They are struggling to build a large Church in the Main Mission, to accommodate the large and growing number of mass goers. A year ago, they had put up walls, but had no money for timber to begin building the roof (see picture one). In February we allocated them a grant of £3,000 to add to money they had raised themselves. Two months later, Matthias Muenyi, the chairman of their building committee, sent me news that the rafters had been put up (see picture two). In October our committee, realised that the rafters without zinc roofing would soon deteriorate, and agreed that a further £3,000 should be sent to them.



Jan. 08



Apr. 08

THIS IS JUST A SMALL TASTE OF WHAT IS HAPPENING IN OUR TWINNED DIOCESE.

If your parish, group or school would like to know more, why not ask for details or a Bamenda presentation for your parish, group or school - contact Fr Ron Hishon at: ronhishon@btinternet.com

Bamenda Priest Father Joseph Dufe survives shooting.

(Adapted from an article first published 9th October in L'Effort Camerounais, newspaper of the Cameroonian Episcopal Conference - see www.leffortcamerounais.com)



Please keep in your prayers Fr. Joseph Dufe, a priest of the Capuchin friary at Bambui (Bamenda), recently shot while on the road between Bambili and Bambui. Father Dufe, known for his preaching, narrowly missed death after robbers shot him on the head and thigh. He had gone to celebrate the Feast of the Ramadan with his Muslim friends in Bambui. When he was returning to his parish, he decided to stop just at the entrance to the Tubah District Officer's Office and inform his friends that he had already passed the danger spot at Mile 4.

Just as he was about to call, someone opened the door of his car, pulled him

out and started molesting him. Father had two cell phones and a wallet containing about FCFA 25,000 (about £30). Not knowing who his assailants were, he decided to fight back. The area was not lighted as a result of the blackout that had paralysed Bamenda recently. This only made a sufficiently bad situation worse. The three bandits engaged him in a serious fight and succeeded to overpower him. One of the bandits gave a command to shoot. The first bullet caught Fr Dufe on the thigh; the second caught the back of his head. It was at this point that Father Dufe surrendered and the thieves disappeared with his phones and wallet.

He managed to get back to the Friary, where the brothers rushed him to a local hospital where he spent the night. On the morning of October 1, the Shisong Hospital Ambulance came down to Bambui and whisked him off for treatment at the Shisong Catholic Hospital. Father Dufe, who is now able to talk, says he owes his life to the Almighty God who has given him a second chance on earth. Some of the bullets are still lodged in his thigh. In spite of his predicament, Fr Dufe attended Mass on Sunday, October 5 though in a wheel chair. The biblical allusion "Touch not my anointed and do my prophet no harm," applies here. This incident came barely days after armed robbers attacked four banks in Limbe (South West Province) getting away with huge sums of money. One person was killed from the cross fire between the robbers and the forces of law and order.

Fr Dufe's assailants are still at large.

FEATURE

A Broader View

Lawrence Fullick looks at matters international



At a time of crisis it is human nature to seek people to blame for whatever is going wrong. In a financial crisis it may be bankers, British or foreign, or governments, again ours or others. In a dispute between countries each side will have its supporters - Georgia or Russia, Israel or the Palestinians.

Should we feel obliged to take sides in such international issues? Some countries have a large body of supporters among exiles or co-religionists elsewhere - the pro-Israel lobby is a good example. But in that case the arguments are not clear cut. The Israeli government has behaved improperly towards Palestinians but criminal acts have been committed by Palestinians against Israel and its people with support or an absence of preventative measures by those in power in the West Bank and Gaza.

It seemed that the 1975 Helsinki Conference had created a permanent system of security in Europe in which boundaries were fixed for all time. Some later changes have been generally accepted - the unification of Germany, the division of Czechoslovakia and the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia into their component republics. With some exceptions such as the Bosnian crisis the greatest problems have come when lower tier parts of countries have wanted independence - Kosovo in Yugoslavia or Chechnia in the former Soviet Union. The problems are greater when a significant number of people in an autonomous part of one country want an independence, real or imagined with the support of a neighbour - Transdnistria in Moldova or South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia. The political status of many areas and their people is determined by quite random factors such as decisions on internal divisions of the Soviet Union under Stalin.

The Georgia-Russia dispute is particularly complicated. People regarding themselves as of different nationalities live together in areas such as South Ossetia and attract the support of national

governments seeking to score points against their neighbours. The role of outside bodies such as the OSCE, the EU or the UN is to engage in temporary peace keeping activities until a more permanent solution is found. There is a continuing debate about the idea of Responsibility to Protect, the extent to which outside parties may intervene to protect people whose human rights are denied.

It has been said that democracy is the least bad method of choosing rulers. The American tradition of everybody falling in behind a new President seems to be breaking down which can cause problems when the functions of Head of Government and Head of State are combined.

By the time this appears we will know the American election result and can consider whether the new president's administration is likely to help make the world safer. It is sometimes said that America has two administrations - the one in power and another of a different party waiting in universities. The choice of advisers is an important one for the new President. Let us hope that he makes that decision wisely.

Lawrence Fullick, a parishioner in Bournemouth, is treasurer of the Wyndham Place Charlemagne Trust, a charity which promotes discussion of international issues among people of all faiths or none.

THE CHANGING FACE OF KIT

KIT (Keeping in Touch) is a parish-based programme which started in 2004 as an offshoot of Portsmouth's Diocesan project 'Go out and bear fruit'. Its aim is to reach out to, welcome and keep in touch with all local Catholics, whether or not they go to church, through home visits and small group meetings. From such small beginnings, KIT is now developing into a national programme and KIT groups are beginning to develop in pastoral areas.

New faces

The KIT Diocesan Team, who meet on a regular basis in Romsey, have been delighted to see new faces popping up around the table during the past six months: Jane Taylor is an experienced catechist from Christchurch and has already made a great contribution to the KIT newsletter and the website; Harry and Dawn Harrison 'came home for Christmas' last year and you can read their story elsewhere in this issue of *Portsmouth People* (see page 9). The new diocesan officer for marriage and family life, Keith Chappell, now takes over from Kate Harris as KIT's link with the Diocese.

New website and email address

The KIT team invite you to click onto www.kit4catholics.org.uk where you will find the new KIT website. This project is still a 'work in progress' and will continue to improve over the following months. Feedback is welcome, so please let the team know what you think by contacting at enquiries@kit4catholics.org.uk.

New challenges!

Feedback from the parishes is presenting the KIT team with fresh new challenges. A good welcome policy has been highlighted as an essential tool for KIT to work and the article 'Coming Home for Christmas' by Dawn Harrison shows how this can make all the difference to returning Catholics. Ideas on welcoming are now becoming a part of KIT training workshops.

MOVERS and SHAKERS

We pick up on the enthusiasm and achievement across our diocese



L to R Katharine Ferguson, Veronica Bentley and Louise Birley

Sunrise Walk

Three Bracknell Forest wives took up the challenge to walk 6 1/2 miles around Windsor Great Park for The Thames Hospice Care Sunrise Walk. On the face of it no big deal apart from the Sunrise bit – they had to be at the start point at 5.00am! The sponsors had come forward in droves impressed by both the cause and the early start.

On the big day the ladies got less and more than they bargained for. Of the sun rising there was very little evidence. They were greeted by a howling wind, and torrential rain. Undaunted they set to the task and in under two hours completed their walk and between them raised over £1,000 for their charity.

TC's Pedal Power

The 38th Bournemouth Scout Group and the Avon Explorers are raising funds for their expedition to Uganda in 2010. This expedition, known as 'Nile 2010', is expected to cost in the region of £100,000 and one of the projects that the Scouts and Explorers will be involved in is building a vocational centre in Uganda (see www.nile2010.co.uk). Along with all the other 37 members of the expedition, Theresa Christison – known as 'TC' in the local scouting community – has been set a personal fundraising target of £2,500. So, TC (aged 11) has persuaded Mum Emma and her 4 sisters and brothers (Ryan age 13, Carlos age 9, Sasha age 5 and Jessica age 3) to undertake an unsupported sponsored bike ride from John O'Groats to Lands End next August.



The Bournemouth Bikers. Photograph by courtesy of the Daily Echo, Bournemouth

To support TC and her team in their worthy pedal-power project, online donations can be made at www.justgiving.com/emmachristisonnile2010

Starting on the 04/08/2009 the team hope to complete the journey in 24 days.



Giacomo Ghislanzoni

Giacomo, a year-nine student at St. Mary's College in Southampton, continues his skiing successes. His honours to date include:

- English Schools Squad 2004–2007;
- 1st European Indoor Championship 2008 in Manchester;
- 1st British Indoor Championship 2008 in Castleford and 1st Salomon Indoor Series 2008 in Manchester

Giacomo Ghislanzoni – European Indoor Skiing Champion

Shining Example

Ex-Mayor of Petersfield, Katie Pitt has been awarded the Benemerenti Medal, which, instituted by Pope Gregory XVI in 1832, is conferred on those who have exhibited 'long and exceptional service to the Catholic Church, their families and community'. Miss Pitt, a parishioner at St Laurence's Catholic Church for 77 years, continues to work tirelessly raising money for CAFOD every year and has long been a supporter of The Passage, a charity for the homeless in Westminster and also Vision Aid, providing eye-care in Africa. She helped start the PACT Christmas Day lunches in Petersfield and was formerly involved with the Social Concerns Committee for PACT. At St Laurence's she has been a member of the choir (even singing traditional Latin song years ago), a reader and a sides-person. She doesn't mind getting her hands dirty and has helped plant trees in the church grounds and with cleaning duties.



Miss Katie Pitt with her Benemerenti Medal with its ribbon made of the Papal colours.

Miss Pitt also designed and worked a large 'Four Seasons' tapestry which hangs in St Laurence's in memory of her late mother.

A former beautician for Lancome and Guerlain, Miss Pitt is well-known in the town and was Mayor in 1998-99, when she helped celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Cheshire Homes, the scheme that provided housing for the terminally ill, headed by Lord Leonard Cheshire. Miss Pitt was Lord Cheshire's first helper and used to scrub floors with him.

Parish Priest Canon Hetherington said, 'It is indeed fitting that the word 'benemerenti' means 'to a well-deserving person'. We are delighted for Katie, who has given so much of her time to the parish over so many years, and still continues to serve her community. She is a shining example to us all!'

Staff and Students Celebrate Exam Successes



Jez Graves (Drama teacher), Anthony Hughes, Maria Belcher, Alice Pitt, Joe Larvin, April Doyle.

In recent GCSE examinations four girls and two boys from St Peter's school in Bournemouth were among the top ten nationwide in two subjects.

Joseph Larvin, who had sat the GCSE Religious Studies exam, achieved one of the highest overall marks out of 67,731 candidates. Students Alice Pitt, Maria Belcher, Yasmin Burden, April Doyle and Anthony Hughes achieved top overall marks out of 60,878 candidates in the GCSE Drama exam.



Theresa, Ryan and Carlos Christison, pictured with Fr Denis Blackledge, are Altar Servers at Corpus Christi

Congratulations to TC and Ryan on having been recently received into the Guild of St Stephen.

FEATURE

Introducing The Year of Mark



Fr Jeremy Corley
(scripture lecturer at Ushaw
College) introduces the Sunday
lectionary year of St Mark

'They said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.' So ends the final verse of Mark's Gospel (16:8) according to the two earliest manuscripts. This ending is so shocking that at the proclamation of the resurrection at the Easter Vigil next Holy Saturday, this verse will be omitted from the account of the holy women finding the empty tomb. Later (on Easter Saturday and Ascension Day) we will read the two halves of the Long Ending of Mark's Gospel (16:9-20), added by a later editor to tell of Jesus' resurrection appearances. But why did Mark's Gospel originally end with these stark words: 'They said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid?'

Some suggest that the final page of the gospel got lost in transmission, and that Mark recounted a resurrection appearance of Christ, as in the last chapter of Matthew. Others propose that the end of Mark's Gospel was followed in the early Easter liturgy by a testimony to seeing the risen Christ by one of the first witnesses. Others again think Mark was issuing a deliberate challenge to his readers.

By tradition, Mark was 'the interpreter of Peter', recording the message given by the great apostle. Perhaps Mark wrote his gospel just after the martyrdom of St Peter, executed in the persecution of the Roman emperor Nero

around 65 AD. The Roman historian Tacitus (born around 56 AD) reports persecution of Christians as part of Nero's lawless and irrational activity.

After a destructive fire in Rome, says Tacitus, 'Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most amazing tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace....Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt' (Annals 15.44). If Nero's persecution is the context when Mark's Gospel was written, that would explain the bleakness of this gospel, with its great emphasis on the sufferings of Christ and his followers.

In Mark's Gospel the turning point comes halfway through (8:27-38), when Peter recognizes Jesus as the Messiah. But Jesus is not the conquering hero of much popular expectation. Instead, 'the Son of Man is destined to undergo great suffering; and his followers must also take up their cross. St Peter took up his cross literally, being crucified upside-down according to tradition. While James and John seek places at Christ's right and left (10:37), they run away at his crucifixion, and places on his right and left are given to two thieves or brigands (15:27).

It is easy to see why the early Christians of Mark's day in Rome would have been afraid of persecution. Our fears today are probably different: perhaps fear of economic hardship following the banking crisis, or fear of ill-health, or fear of unpopularity in a secular society. Even after finding the empty tomb, the holy women were frightened: 'They said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.'

So Mark's Gospel challenges us today. Are we, who believe in Christ's resurrection, still tongue-tied with fear like the holy women coming from the tomb? Or are we able by our words and actions to proclaim the Christ in whom we believe - the Christ whose message was brought to us by St Mark?

Stocking Fillers

Not socks! Hopefully not another toiletries bag with a set of smellies, razors and aftershave balm. And please, no more 'Little Books of...' which are always destined for the nearest charity shop. What's coming in your Christmas stocking this year? May we suggest a goat for £25 or an Emergency Basics Kit for just £15?

The new World Gifts Christmas Catalogue from CAFOD is now out and contains many different present ideas which not only make a huge difference to people who live in poverty, but also save us the effort of shopping. Perhaps you may consider handing a relative or friend a copy of the catalogue when they ask what you want for Christmas.

The gifts in the World Gifts Christmas catalogue include a School Starter Pack for £7 which provides pens, books, a uniform, school fees and even daily meals for a child in the developing world. Just think, instead of receiving yet more hankies or socks, you could have provided education for someone half a world away. For less than the price of a chart CD you could provide a vegetable garden; seeds, tools and horticultural training.

Maybe you want to consider raising money throughout advent as a parish to buy one of the larger World Gifts. £750 could provide the know-how and materials to build wells, water tanks, reservoirs and install pumps, pipes and taps to provide clean and safe water for a community. There is an A3 community fundraising poster with accompanying tokens to be added as the donated total increases, a 'thank you' poster and Powerpoint presentations on stories behind the gifts.

For more information on CAFOD World Gifts:
www.cafod.org.uk/worldgifts or
freephone 0800 14 000 14