

The new duplicator in the presbytery has enabled us to introduce a little colour into the pages of this Christmas "WINDOW". Our thanks to Fr Philip and Fr Simon (who took time off from his chicken duties to bring his diary up to date) and to Deacon David for responding to our requests for articles. We are delighted to have accounts of activities by the young people of the parish from Tommy Rowan and are grateful to Capleton for supplying the drawing to accompany Alice's piece about 'Proclaim'. One of us having spent some time reading the letters of the Blessed John Henry Newman for the sixth in our occasional series on his writings, we have seized the opportunity to include a couple of appropriate extracts from his correspondence elsewhere in the magazine. True to our principle of looking beyond the parish as well as into it, we were pleased to get reports of visits to places as distant as Brazil, the Holy Land, and Oscott. As always, we wish our readers a happy and peaceful Christmas. _____ **EDITORS**

THE YEAR OF THE EUCHARIST

Recently it was announced that our Bishops are organising a national Eucharistic Congress to be held in Liverpool in September. It's hoped that this will play its part in renewing our faith in the Lord, and of the gift he has given to his Church of the Mass.

Although a few will go to Liverpool from the parish, most won't have the opportunity.

So One of the fruits of the mission has been a renewed *Adoration Group* in the parish, and they have taken responsibility for promoting and organising Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament here. Obviously, adoration of the Eucharist comes from a deep understanding of what the Mass is, and who is truly present, and so the group came up with the idea of our parish having its own 'Eucharistic Year' to provide an opportunity for us all to dig a bit deeper into the mystery of the Mass.

Bishop Robert Byrne recently visited us to speak of how we can best prepare ourselves to celebrate Mass. In the coming months we'll have visits from a number of priests and religious who will speak about different aspects and effects of the Mass. Also, we'll have a number of conducted Holy Hours, and times of adoration for children and young people.

Hopefully you will be saying the prayer the group have written for the Year of the Eucharist each day, and to pray that it will be a blessed time for all of us. But also ask yourself whether you could be one of those *Adorers* who commit themselves to

a particular day and time, so that this precious gift will continue to be a rich source of blessing in our parish.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament



Daily adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in St Dunstan's is a great blessing that the whole parish benefits from. It's been running for a number of years now, and is something that many people beyond the parish—and not always Catholics—very much value.

Adoration, on most days, begins after morning Mass (10am on Tuesdays), and runs until 10pm. This is quite a commitment for any parish, and we are grateful for those people who support it, and especially those who commit themselves to a particular time each week, and so provide security for the Blessed Sacrament. I've no doubt that this tradition of Adoration is the reason that St Dunstan's is the only church in Kings Heath open all day. Indeed, many of the Catholic churches in our area are closed for much of the day because of security fears.

It's a gift worth treasuring then!—but for that we need people to commit themselves to adoration at some point during the week. _____ *Fr Philip Harrop*

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY (SVP)

Another busy year for the SVP in the parish. As well as hosting a Mass for the Sick and a buffet to follow towards the end of the Parish Mission, we've been doing what we can to help people in and around Kings Heath and Druids Heath who've fallen on tough times. In particular, lately, we've had two cases of women who have escaped violent and abusive relationships. And who have then found State support wanting, being told by DWP:

"Leaving your violent husband and going to a refuge counts as a change of circumstances so we'll stop your benefits. It will take several weeks before we can re-assess you."

Which leaves the lady concerned with no income for those several weeks.

So we help out with bags of groceries or a voucher for the food bank and by collecting her clothes and personal items from where she used to live.

But it's not only the people who're having a tough time financially. We also visit older people in their own homes and in care homes where they welcome an occasional bit of company.

We expect that there'll be more calls on our support in the near future, particularly with the rollout of Universal Credit and with the ever-increasing number of older people living alone, or among strangers. New members of the Conference would be more than welcome. If you'd like to join us – or learn a bit more about us – please contact me (I do "meet & greet" at the ten o'clock Mass on Sundays – Kingsfield Road entrance) or can be reached on 07855 824434 or by email at andygudge@blueyonder.co.uk.

Thanks as always to my fellow members of St Dunstan's & St Jude's Conference, in particular those two stalwarts Kathleen O'Gara and John Oakley, Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Thanks also to our priests and Deacon David for their help and encouragement.

And thanks, as always, to you, the people of the parish, for your support.

Andy Gudge

SVP Conference President

And the Angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the most High. (Luke 1:30-32)

Youth Club:

Youth group have celebrated a fun last few months. We had a session about mission, in which the young people thought about how they could do mission and help others, along with hearing some experiences from young leaders and how we had participated in mission throughout our lives. Following that, we went on to celebrate CAFOD Fast Day. The young leaders spoke about CAFOD and their work, and we had a cake sale to raise money, and encouraged the young people to donate extra to such a good cause. We have had a film night watching *Narnia* and saw how Aslan sacrificing his life is a clear representation of Jesus. We've had a games night playing pool, table tennis and party games. We had a trip to Al's Diner for a Milkshake and have spent the last few weeks preparing for National Youth Sunday. There was a beautiful youth mass celebration which everybody participated in through readings and song. It was a great way to celebrate the youth of the Church and get involved, especially since we are the next generation of faith. To come to youth club as a young person or to become a volunteer please call Tommy on: 075 5733 3670.

[See the photograph on the back cover.]

Christmas poetry through the ages

(15th Century: The Annunciation)

I sing of a maiden
That is makeles:¹
King of alle kinges
To here sone she ches.²

He cam also³ stille
Ther his moder⁴ was,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the grass.

He cam also stille
To his moderes bowr,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the flowr.

He cam also stille
Ther his moder lay,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the spray.

Moder and maiden
Was never non but she:
Well may swich⁵ a lady
Godes moder be.

¹ matchless and without a mate

² she chose for her son ³ as

⁴ mother ⁵ such



CREDO:
**A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CATECHISM OF
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

In our parish there has always been a programme of formation for people who were interested in learning about the faith. Traditionally, however, these talks, RCIA, ABC, have been aimed solely at those who were new to Catholicism and were requesting the sacraments of initiation. Following the Mission earlier this year, some existing parishioners asked for talks, open to everyone, that explored our faith and explained the teachings of the Church.

Under the title **Credo**, which is the first word of the creed in Latin—the profession of faith we make at Sunday mass—and which simply means, ‘I believe’, we began, in September 2017, meeting in the Conference Room every Thursday between 8.00pm and 9.00pm during term time. The discussions focus on the catechism’s four ‘pillars of the faith’: The Profession of Faith, i.e. what we believe; the Liturgy and Sacraments; the Ten Commandments; and Christian Prayer.

So far, we have examined topics such as why

we believe in God, what we mean by ‘heaven’, Jesus in his ministry, death, resurrection, the Holy Spirit, and forgiveness of sins. In the new year we will discuss the sacraments in more detail.

Although one of the clergy leads the discussion, as we journey in faith together, we hope to explore the teachings in the same way; therefore, anyone who comes is free to contribute their thoughts and experience; in fact, it is most welcome. If, however, you prefer to sit and listen, that’s fine as well.

As a foundation for the talks we follow a book called YOUCAT: Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church; in its foreword Pope Benedict XVI said the following:

“So I invite you: Study this Catechism! That is my heartfelt desire. The Catechism was not written to please you. It will not make life easy for you, because it demands of you a new life. It places before you the Gospel message as the “pearl of great value” (Matthew 13:45) for which you must give everything.

Many thanks to all who have already come to these well attended evenings, and I do hope many others will join us. _____ *Deacon David Fairbotham*

Kenelm Youth Trust Gap Year

Hannah Fair, who left Bishop Challoner Catholic College in July, has started a gap year working for the Kenelm Youth Trust at Soli House. Here is what she has shared of her experience so far:

“Through out my whole experience of secondary school, I knew when I reached Year 10 that I wanted to undertake a gap year with the Kenelm Youth Trust, and now 3 months in, it's already the best decision I've ever made. As a young person I was fortunate enough to experience retreat several times, visiting both Alton Castle and Soli House and being involved with School Chaplaincy. Coming back as a volunteer now is incredible, being able to work with so many young people on a weekly basis is amazing and I feel so lucky to have been given this opportunity. Training was great: myself and the team had weeks of getting to know one another and learning the activities, which was really fun, along with learning different ways to pray and talk to people. Then we had our first retreat and it was something I'll never forget and I enjoyed it so much! The team now feel like my family and having retreats in is coming to feel like the norm, and I'm still loving every minute of it. I've learnt so much already and have moved so far in my faith journey. So overall I'm really looking forward to the next few months ahead!”

Baby Loss Memorial

During the month of October, as a Parish, we commemorated the lives of babies who did not live to birth or beyond infancy.

An area was set up in the Church, inviting parishioners to reflect and leave a prayer intention, take a prayer card or helpline card for anyone struggling with baby loss. A rosary was said on October 27th which marked fifty years since the 1967 Abortion Act, and the intentions box, which was full to the brim, was included in that evening’s rosary.

The baby loss awareness initiative was organised through the charity, 'Life', which supports anyone facing a crisis pregnancy and those who have suffered pregnancy loss through miscarriage or abortion. It also provides a fertility programme for people experiencing difficulty conceiving.

If you would like to get in touch with ‘Life’, call 01926312272 or visit www.lifecharity.org.uk To speak with one of their qualified counsellors, the national helpline is **08088025433** _____ *Ellen Thompson*

[See photograph on back cover.]

THE PARISH SOCIAL COMMITTEE

During the Mission last spring there were lots of opportunities for parishioners to get together and chat—whether it was after the mission services, the morning masses, or during the social event on the last night. Inevitably a number of people have asked whether there could be more social events to build up our sense of community.

All the mission social events were devised by a coordinator who gathered a group of willing volunteers around her.

The coordinator—Mrs Mary Browning—agreed to take this role onwards, and to become chair of a Parish Social Committee. A good number from both St Jude’s and St Dunstan’s communities have joined her, and they have been putting together a programme of events that, they hope, will inspire all of us to get involved.

The first event was the Quiz Night in October at the Corks Club. This had a fantastic response, which led to a packed house, with parishioners from both St D’s and St J’s bringing both themselves and friends and neighbours. A big thank you, then, to all those in the social committee and beyond who put in a good deal of work and preparation into such a successful night.

[See photograph on the back cover.]

The purpose of these events is two-fold.

Firstly, to build up the social life of our parish. Many people have said they would appreciate events and social occasions which offer us chances to be together, and so get to know one another better, out of the context of Mass. Such things do strengthen that sense of belonging that is important in any community.

Secondly, it gives an opportunity to raise funds for the things we need to do. At St Dunstan’s, there is a huge amount of work that needs to be done on our building in the coming months as it reaches its 50th year. Also, St Jude’s will have building needs that require to be funded. The collections we have are there to fund the running of the parish—but we have to look beyond these for the bigger tasks. Both our churches now have a jubilee or fabric fund—but these will provide a fraction of what we need to do. So supporting these events won’t just be fun, but will sometimes provide a bit of support for the upkeep of our parish.

Social events aren’t very social if people don’t come! So do your best to support the work of our Parish Social Committee. _____ *Fr Philip Harrop*

MISSION BRAZIL

During August, Tommy Rowan the Lay Chaplain at Bishop Challoner, joined the Kenelm Youth Trust along with twenty-five other young people on a mission trip to Brazil. One of the group was Hannah Fair, who has just left Year 13 at the school. The Mission was two weeks in Brazil staying with host families. The team worked with children in a remote village, teaching English and other subjects. They also ran workshops on health, games, and arts and crafts and worked at renovating a building in the village. During the Mission, the team also had a chance for daily Mass, where they were joined by local children. This was a very memorable experience for everyone who took part in the mission. We would like to thank the St. Dunstan’s and St. Jude’s Parish community, who helped raise the money to fund the journey to Brazil.

[See photograph on the back cover.]

Christmas poetry through the ages

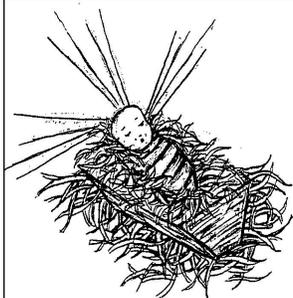
(19th Century: The birth of Christ by Christina Rossetti)

A holy heavenly chime
Rings fullness in of time,
And on his mother’s breast
Our Lord God ever-Blest
Is laid a Babe at rest.

How comes he soft and weak
With such a tender cheek,
With such a soft small hand?—
The very Hand which spann’d
Heaven when its girth was plann’d.

How comes He with a voice
Which is but baby-noise?—
That Voice which spake with might
“Let there be light”—and light
Sprang out before our sight.

And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished, that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger. (Luke 2:6-7)



Programme of Parish Social Events

As indicated in Fr Philip's article, our Parish Social Committee is planning a programme of events, at a variety of venues, which we hope will attract all age groups of our Parish community.

By the time you are reading this, we will have had our Singalong to *The Sound of Music* event—fun for young and old—at Bishop Challoner 6th Form Centre.

Other events being planned (further details of which will follow shortly) are:

- ◆ Saturday 10th February—a race night
- ◆ Friday 18th May—St Dunstan's feast day garden party
- ◆ Early July—hog roast and beer festival
- ◆ Saturday 27th October—Ceili to celebrate St Jude's feast day

Other ideas for future events include a day trip to Llandudno, a day trip to Chester for Evensong in the Cathedral (and shopping/visiting this lovely historic town), Parish picnic/Teddy Bears picnic—maybe in Stratford, Charlecote Park, Symonds Yat or Ross on Wye, a day trip to Harvington Hall, a day trip to Chester Christmas market. In the longer term, maybe a Parish pilgrimage to Padua, Venice and Assisi.

We hope there is something here for everyone. If you have any suggestions for events you would like to see planned, please do let us know, either by sending an email to dunstanoffice@btinternet.com or by leaving a note at the presbytery.

Finally, please do come and support these community events. _____ *Mary Browning*



Parish Visit to Oscott Sunday 12 November

As many will know, Oscott College is the seminary of the Archdiocese of Birmingham and is now one of only three seminaries serving England and Wales, where men are prepared for the priesthood and diaconate. A group of us were fortunate to share in Visitor Sunday thanks to Dolly Fitzpatrick organising this for us.

The college is housed in an impressive Grade II listed building which provides a wonderful example of the work of Augustus Welby Pugin and of Gothic Revival Architecture. Around the college are many images of Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom, and she presides over everything that is done at Oscott. She reminds us that our gaze should always be focused on Jesus and then those we are called to serve.

On arrival we were warmly greeted by seminarians—it is encouraging to note that these now number sixty-six—and immediately refreshed with tea and coffee and a splendid selection of cakes! This was then followed by a tour, which included a visit to the chapel, a film on life at Oscott, a visit to the college museum and an interesting Q & A session with some of the seminarians. We then

shared in a very beautiful Sung Evening Prayer led by the community.

The college museum was founded by Pugin as both a means of preserving and displaying his diverse collection of religious items and also as a means of education, as the visitors are brought into a deeper appreciation of the faith which inspired them.

It is the chapel that is the heart of the college and I found it a place of real peace, designed by Pugin to create a glorious visual and spiritual experience for all who enter.

The most lasting memory for myself is of the seminarians who welcomed us. These included Kevin and Bob who have been spending time with us at St Dunstan's. As I spoke with many of them, I felt that we had a shared focus of becoming the person, in the light of faith, that God has created us to be. For them their journey is the priesthood, to become a bridge to others in their meeting with Christ and their love of the heart of Jesus was very evident.

St John Vianney, Patron of Parish Priests, please pray for all our priests and seminarians.

Sue Allen

SIFA FIRESIDE: TEN YEARS ON

I can't believe that it is almost ten years since the SIFA and Fireside charities came together to form SIFA Fireside. It all started long before that in the early 1980s when SIFA (Supporting Independence from Alcohol) was opened and the Sisters of Charity of St. Paul the Apostle, who were and still are based in Selly Park, set up Fireside.

Originally SIFA was set up to help people who had serious issues with alcohol. They employed many more fulltime staff than Fireside but had little experience of working with volunteers.

Fireside on the other hand initially operated out of St Martin's in the Bullring before moving to Bromsgrove Street opposite the wholesale markets. Here Fireside grew from being not much more than a soup kitchen to reaching out and providing many more services to those who sought our help

Since becoming SIFA Fireside, we have had to grow and change to meet the ever increasing numbers of homeless who seek our support. Today, SIFA Fireside works seven days a week with some of the most vulnerable adults in our society: those experiencing homelessness or who are vulnerably-housed. Many of the people we work with – our clients – have complex mental and physical health problems, some have addictions, and all are socially excluded. We run a daily drop-in service, where each month we provide, on average, **3,404 meals, clothes** for over **100** people, and **429 showers** for our clients. We are the Hub at the heart of several likeminded organisations who also work with our clients. In addition, we provide Well Being sessions where clients can access primary nursing clinics twice a week, weekly formal mental health triage surgery, a weekly vision and eye care clinic, and access to both dental services and a podiatrist (foot and ankle specialist).

Despite many funding cutbacks both nationally and locally over the past five years or so, SIFA Fireside has survived. During this period our most important asset has been our staff and volunteers who—with their friendly faces, eyes that can see, ears that do listen—seek to help their fellow man. But this would not be enough without the generosity of parishes like St. Dunstan's and St Jude's,

who have continued to support us both financially and with supplies of food and clothing.

So on behalf of SIFA Fireside I would like to thank all in our Parish who have contributed in any way to the support of SIFA Fireside over many years. _____ *Roger Browning*

Congratulations!

Catherine Sugrue celebrated her ninetieth birthday on 12 June with her family and friends. The eldest of seven children, she was born in Gortagown Co. Kerry and grew up in the idyllic village of Sneem. She moved to London at the age of 23 and one evening met her future husband, whom she had known in Ireland, at the Bamba, a popular venue for live Irish music in the 1950s and 60s. They moved to Birmingham, where two of her sisters lived, and were married by Fr Kelly in St Dunstan's Church Hall on 30 May 1953, the first couple to be married in the new building.

Mrs Sugrue is still a keen Aston Villa fan, having been to the FA Cup Final in Wembley in 1957. She regularly spent Friday evenings in the Bingo Hall on York Road. She is well known in the parish for her support of Gaelic Football and every September, she and her husband would be side by side in the lower Hogan Stand at the All Ireland Final.

She is continually surrounded by her family and friends and loves to see people coming up the path to visit her. She has had an amazing ninety years and has been a stalwart member of St Dunstan's parish for much of that time. On behalf of our readers, we extend hearty congratulations to her.

Editors

Have you heard this one?

Q. What do you get if you cross an insect and a flower pot?

A. Ants in your plants.

* * * * *

Q. What happened to the cat that ate a ball of wool?

A. It had mittens.

* * * * *

Q. What do you call two turnips in love?

A. Swede-hearts.

* * * * *

Q. Why did the robber have a bath?

A. So that he could make a clean getaway!

FINDING THE HOLY IN THE HOLY LAND

A visit to the Holy Land with the Amos Trust

Looking out over the Palestinian hills near Bethlehem, I could just catch a hint of blue. It was the Mediterranean sea on the horizon of a peaceful landscape reminiscent of biblical times. However, also in the distance were forbidding high walls behind which were Israeli settlements.

I was with a group visiting Palestine with Amos Trust, a Christian organisation committed to supporting initiatives working for justice and peace in Palestine/Israel.

We were on the land of the Tent of Nations, an organic farm owned by a Christian family who have owned the land for a hundred years but which the Israeli military is trying to take from them to build more settlements. Their water and electricity have already been cut off and olive trees bulldozed by the military. They refuse to give in; have installed tanks to collect fresh water and built solar panels. They carry on with their farming and also peace building workshops, children's summer camps and work camps attended by local people as well as those from around the world. But what caught my attention and which I found humbling and inspiring was the way this group and others that we visited were dealing with their experiences of being harassed and victimised.

Since the building of the massive wall which separates the West bank Palestinian Occupied Territories from Israel, the population has been subjected to more and more restrictions such as restrictions on right of movement, shortage of electricity and water, demolition of houses and destruction of olive groves to clear land for the building of the wall and for settlements. They cannot leave without a special permit and must pass through military checkpoints.

This has created so much stress and suffering.

Organisations such as the Holy Land Trust in Bethlehem, led by Sami Awad, explained to us, "We are trying to encourage hope in a hopeless and helpless situation."

In a refugee camp outside Bethlehem, children and teenagers entertained us with traditional

dance; they are encouraged to involve themselves in art and drama and crafts to raise their self esteem and develop a pride in their culture.

We visited an arts and theatre centre in Jenin refugee camp and in Hebron met a couple of very brave young Christians from USA who are supporting children as they pass through a military checkpoint on their way to school, and who try to intervene when armed soldiers are interrogating youth in the street.

When I visited the Holy land with the Parish seven years ago, it was wonderful to be in the land of our Lord and to immerse myself in the many beautiful churches we visited.

However, at that time, we sensed the darkness simmering beneath the surface which pilgrims might not always be aware of.

On this occasion, I felt privileged to meet these Christians who are trying to live out the values and example of Jesus. They now only number one per cent of the population of Palestine/Israel and often feel abandoned and forgotten by the rest of the world.

I left feeling inspired by the words of Dououd Nasser from the Tent of Nations:

"The message of peace and love that started from Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago should continue to shine out from here. Our journey for justice will continue with faith, love and hope, carrying our cross, refusing to be enemies, transforming our pain into a positive energy that is able to change hearts, lives and build a better future." _____ *Gill Myall*

[See the photograph of the message from the Tent of Nations Christian community on the back cover.]

There have been any number of debates concerning abortion: it is a highly emotive subject. I remember one discussion on the radio that ended in silence when one of the participants said: 'We must remember that a foetus is not a potential human being but a human being with potential.'

[Thanks to the parishioner who sent in this recollection of a thought-provoking moment. _____ *Editors*]

THE WRITINGS OF BLESSED JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

VI: THE LETTERS

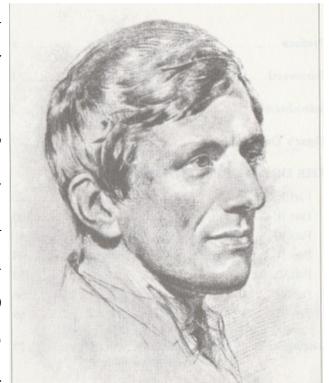
Throughout his life, John Henry Newman was a prolific letter writer. The 20,000 extant letters—eventually collected and published in thirty-one volumes—stretch from 6 December 1811, when he wrote to his aunt about the approaching Christmas holidays from school, to 2 August 1890, when he wrote ten days before his death to arrange a meeting with a niece on a visit from Australia. Many, like these two, are addressed to family members or close friends; many relate to business, such as the running of Birmingham Oratory or the establishment of a Catholic University in Dublin; many are in response to people seeking spiritual advice; some are formal communications to newspapers or eminent holders of high office in church or state. Fr Dessain, a priest at the Oratory who began the task of editing this mountain of material, summed up one aspect of Newman's activity as 'an intense apostolate by means of letters'.¹

Like other notable letter writers in the nineteenth century, Newman was diligent in the preservation of his own correspondence. In 1863, he informed his sister Jemima that he stored copies in 'pigeon-holes', where 'they stand year by year from 1836 down to this date'; and 'from time to time', he worked at 'sifting, sorting, preserving, or burning' what he had accumulated. He advised Jemima to 'write on good paper', because 'some of my Mother's of 30 years since break under my hands like tinder, on the very opening of them'; and he confided to her his belief that 'a man's life lies in his letters'.²

Indeed, his own letters open a window onto the most significant moments of his long life: his acceptance of failure in the university examinations at Oxford as part of God's plan for him in 1821; his sense of being 'honoured inexpressibly' when he was awarded a fellowship at Oriel College (13 April 1822); his conviction that 'God has work for me yet' in the account of his recovery from a serious illness in Sicily (16 July 1833); an early intimation of his eventual withdrawal from the Oxford Movement and the Church of England—'I would be a Romanist, if I could. I wish I could be a Romanist. . . . But I cannot' (17 November 1834); his

critical decision to move to Littlemore and establish a community there—'But it is all a dream at present. I shall do what I *can*, and I cannot say what I *shall* do, because I do not know what I *can*' (13 April 1842); the honest relation of his protracted journey towards Rome and the painful analysis of his present state of mind, which he knows will 'distress' his old Anglican friend and colleague, John Keble (8 June 1844); the culmination of that journey in a brief note to his sister—'This night Father Dominic the Passionist, sleeps here. He does not know of my intention, but I shall ask him to receive me into what I believe to be the One Fold of the Redeemer' (8 October 1845); and the moving farewell to the man to whom he feels an overwhelming debt of gratitude—'Do not let me pain you, My dear Keble, by saying this. Let me not seem rude. Let it be your comfort, when you are troubled, to think that there is one who feels that he owes all to you, and who, though, alas, now cut off from you, is a faithful assiduous friend unseen' (14 November 1845).

The course of his life after his reception into the Roman Catholic Church, with all its achievements and disappointments, is also charted in the letters: the decision to set up an Oratory in Birmingham and



[Newman in 1845]

engage in 'active work' among 'those classes which at present are anything or nothing' (21 February 1847); the building of the new Oratory in Edgbaston (15 May 1851); the writing of the *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*—'with so much suffering, such profuse crying, such long spells of work' (25 June 1864); his initial reluctance to accept the 'quite transcendent and unparalleled' honour of a Cardinal's hat (2 February 1879) and the reflection that it is a providential means of clearing his name of 'former calumnies'—'I have ever tried to leave my cause in the Hands of God and to be patient—and He has not forgotten me' (11 March 1879).

Touching personal moments abound in the letters,

such as his meeting with Keble and Pusey after many years—‘There was something awful in three men meeting in old age who had worked together in their best days . . . once so united, now so broken up, so counter to each other’ (16 October 1865); and his poignant sense of losing a vital connection with the past at the death of his sister—‘What I miss and shall miss Jemima in is this—she alone, with me, had a memory of dates—I knew quite well, as anniversaries of all kinds came round, she was recollecting them as well as I . . . now I am the only one who knows a hundred things most interesting to me’ (26 February 1880).

The letters also contain many insights into his personality and the abiding values by which he lived. For example, as a young man he confided to his eldest sister, Harriet, that he had seen cause to change his mind in some respects—‘and I may change again. I see I know very little about any

thing, though I often think I know a great deal’—but that he trusted in God’s grace to help him ‘keep steadily in view that I have set myself apart for His service for ever’ (21 March 1826). The playful side of his character comes through at the start of a letter to an old friend—‘Knowing your disputatious power, I am not sure you will not be able to deny that I *am* in Cambridge, in spite of the post mark—but you must let me assure you that I am here, and it shall be a reserved point to discuss when I see you again’ (29 July 1861). And there is his curt put-down of a snobbish priest who had invited him to come to Rome and preach to a more educated congregation than he could hope to find in England—‘Birmingham people have souls; and I have neither taste nor talent for the sort of work, which you cut out for me: and I beg to decline your offer’ (25 July 1864)._____Editor

¹Quoted by Joyce Sugg in Chapter 9 of *John Henry Newman in His Time*, edited by Philippe Lefebvre and Colin Mason (Oxford: Family Publications, 2007).

²All quotations from Newman’s letters are from *A Packet of Letters: A Selection from the Correspondence of John Henry Newman*, edited by Joyce Sugg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

Veterans

We are those who, from the shelters,
 Heard the bombers overhead;
 Then through smoke- and ash-filled mornings
 Cleared the rubble, mourned the dead.
 And we are those who flew the Spitfires
 Weaved our youth across the sky.
 Sortie after weary sortie,
 Watched our comrades burn and die.

*Oh we were younger then and bolder
 We so fearless, we so strong
 Now we’re frail, and decades older
 Now we sing a quieter song.*

We are those who, mid-Atlantic,
 Through the seas and seething foam,
 Dared the storms and braved the U-boats;
 Brought the convoys safely home.
 And we are those who hit the beaches;
 Early morning, early June
 Lads from Swansea, Glasgow, London
 Gone to God by afternoon.

*Oh, we had fire and we had glory
 Blazed our trail across the sun
 Guardians of our island story
 Now our tale is almost done.*

We are those who went to Burma,
 Miles inland from Mandalay
 Held the jungle, at Kohima,
 Won tomorrow, lost today.



And we are those who came to Belsen,
 Saw what we’d been fighting for
 Gazed upon that Hell in horror,
 Thanked sweet Christ we won the war.

*Yet still we sang, through pain and sorrow
 Conscience clear and voices true
 Who brought to birth this brave tomorrow.
 Now you are us, and we are you.*

Andy Gudge (Spring 2017)

The Curate's Diary

A friend told me that Andrew Lloyd Webber is on the look out for a new musical plot. I have a title in mind, 'The Lone Curate: a comedy in three acts'. I'll write the lyrics and I'm sure Sir Andrew will write a melody or two. If not Andrew Lloyd Webber, I wonder if the BBC would like to come and film a new documentary?

Here it is, the next instalment of the Curate's diary.....

29th June – Solemnity of Ss Peter and Paul

The Parish Priest is away so it's going to be a busy day saying Masses. I return after one Mass to a message in the Office asking if I can retrieve a chicken from the Sixth Form Centre. Does she fancy a day out or is she just interested in further studies?

29th July – St Martha

The Postman tells me he has left a parcel on the big table in church. He seemed a little shocked when I replied saying, "oh, you mean the Altar, the place of sacrifice where heaven and earth are united." Never miss an opportunity for catechise people I say!

30th July – 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Suitcase all packed and ready for the off after the 11.00am Mass. Realised at the petrol station, having filled up, that the Parish Priest still has my debit card. Never mind, I can sneak onto the sanctuary and quietly ask him at the Sign of Peace and get it. Wasn't going to be that simple!

14th August – St Maximilian Kolbe

People around the Jewellery Quarter seem alarmed to see two priests walking the streets with a seven-foot processional cross in tow and trying to fit the said cross into a small Toyota Aygo car. Chuckle Brothers eat your heart out!

3rd September – 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

A spider the size of King-Kong is spotted by Our Lady's Altar. A kind parishioner comes to aid of the curate and sweeps the said beast out of the church. It clearly didn't like the outdoors as it crawled immediately under the presbytery door and into the house. No sleep tonight then!

17th October – St Ignatius of Antioch

A sad day in the presbytery. Words cannot express the sadness at the loss which has occurred in the chicken run. House curtains drawn and black to be worn.

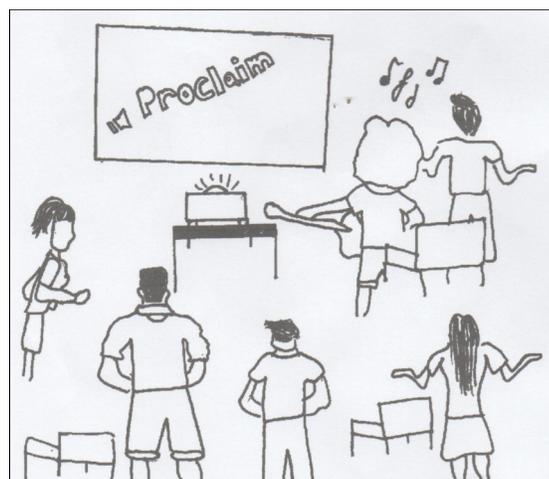
3rd November – St Martin de Porres

A delivery of three large boxes containing crates has arrived at the presbytery. Is my accommodation to be changed or am I moving on to new surroundings? Fr Philip hasn't mentioned anything.....time will tell I suppose.

18th November – Saturday Memoria to the Blessed Virgin Mary

Must remember in future, when collecting the eggs from the chickens to put them in the kitchen straight away and not in my pocket. The time for finding the egg is not when you're about to anoint a patient in the QE Hospital. Thankfully the family saw the funny side.

Hi my name is Alice,
I came to Proclaim 2 sessions ago. The last few weeks have been great fun. Proclaim is a youth oriented group led by the Bp Challoner lay Chaplain, Tommy Rowan, and BCYS's Vicki Chatten. It is open to 14-18 year olds. You start off with an icebreaker/game and then go into the start of the session. Every session has meaning, so for example one was about choices. The first session I went to was about idols where we made what was worshipped before God out of playdough. I really enjoyed this session as it felt good to share what I do with my spare time. The second session was about the rosary and we made rosary beads out of twine. Overall I really enjoy going to Proclaim. I have made new friends who are older than me and I have grown in confidence. The things I have learnt from Proclaim I have put into practice at primary chaplaincy retreat.



All Saints is an Eco-Church What does it mean?

On Sunday 2nd July, we were awarded the Bronze Award in the Eco Church scheme promoted by A Rocha UK. Eco Church is a project run in partnership with Christian Aid, the Church of England, the Methodist Church, and Tear Fund. We are one of the first churches in Birmingham to gain this prestigious award, and are now taking steps to move on to the more demanding Silver and Gold Awards. We found out more about what this involved at an After Church Conversation on Sunday October 15th, when Valerie and David Edden of Selly Oak Methodist Church came to speak after our morning worship.

The Award involves four aspects of the life of the church:

- Worship and teaching
- Buildings and land
- Local community engagement
- Lifestyles of the congregation

You may be wondering, What is the point of an Eco Award and what has it got to do with the Christian faith?

To answer this briefly, I turned to some words from Pope Francis, addressed to every person living on this planet. He asks:

What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? (Laudato Si, 160).

He states the widely accepted fact that climate change is one of the principal challenges facing humanity today, one acknowledged by almost all world leaders at the Paris Conference in November 2015. We face a crisis of pollution and waste, scarcity of water, loss of species, decline in quality of life and breakdown of society, as a result of our 'throwaway culture' and particularly our dependence on the fossil fuels of coal, oil and natural gas. The results are already being suffered around the world in droughts, storms and flooding, which are likely to get more serious in the lifetimes of our children. Christians believe the earth is God's creation and we are entrusted with its care—as do all the major world faiths. The Eco Award is a challenge to congregations to put this belief into prac-

tice in their personal and community lives.

A second question that may come to mind is, What can we do ?

There are many ways to reduce these effects by making small changes to our everyday lives. I will list just a few:

Reduce, reuse, recycle—buy things to last, reuse where possible and recycle what you cannot reuse.

If you drive, think twice about using the car, share lifts and consider buying an electric car next time.

Energy at home and at work—use energy-efficient lighting and heating, minimise the use of paper and disposable items—recycle.

Challenge our Councillors and MPs to take climate change more seriously, e.g. by improving public transport and cycling facilities.

All these will contribute to gaining a Silver Award not only for individual churches but, more importantly, to a cleaner, safer world for all people.

Ruth Tetlow

All Saints Church

Early Bird Masses

Following the success of the 'early bird' Masses during the recent Mission, which were followed by breakfast in the Conference Room, Fr Philip suggested that St Dunstan's celebrate Mass at 6.45am on Holy Days of Obligation, and offer parishioners tea/coffee and toast afterwards.

We tried this on the Feast of the Assumption, and again on All Saints' Day, and a reasonable number of people took advantage of attending Mass before going off to work, business, school, shopping or housework. The chance to have a hot drink and a slice or two of freshly made toast was much appreciated by those who came into the Conference Room after Mass, giving them the opportunity to meet up with old friends and have a chat.

We hope it will become a regular part of Parish life—please come along! *Denis Thomas*

Christmas poems through the centuries

(17th Century: Henry Vaughan)

Awake, glad heart! Get up, and sing,
It is the Birth-day of thy King,
Awake! awake!
The Sun doth shake
Light from his locks, and all the way
Breathing perfumes doth spice the day.

Awake, awake! hark, how the *wood* rings,
Winds whisper, and the busy *springs*
A consort make!
Awake, awake!
Man is their high-priest, and should rise
To offer up the sacrifice.



For a son has been born for us, a son has been given to us, and dominion has been laid on his shoulders; and this is the name he has been given, 'Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace' to extend his dominion in boundless peace, over the throne of David and over his kingdom to make it secure and sustain it in fair judgement and integrity. (Isaiah 9: 5-6)

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, suddenly some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east asking, 'Where is the infant king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' (Luke 2: 1-2)



PARISH ADORATION

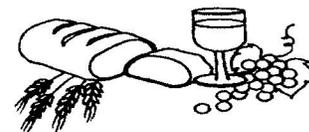
The idea for a Year of the Eucharist came out of a discussion with Fr Philip about the falling numbers visiting the Adoration chapel. Was this just a practical security issue or could it be a symptom of something more complicated: that many parishioners seem unaware of the reality of Jesus' presence in the tabernacle? If only more parishioners realised what the Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist meant, would not the problems of falling numbers be solved overnight? If we all really felt the reality of Jesus' presence in the Blessed Sacrament, how could we keep ourselves away from our church where we have the privilege of Adoration for twelve hours nearly every day?

What is the Eucharist except our Bread from Heaven, feeding our souls on our journey home, until we see Jesus face to face forever? What, therefore, is the Adoration chapel if not a symbol of heaven itself, where we can be in the Eucharistic presence of Jesus now, share with him all our sorrows and be filled with his peace and joy?

When we see Adoration in this way, then we understand better the words of Jesus after the Last Supper, the night on which He had given Himself in the Eucharist to his disciples for the first time: "Could you not watch one hour with me?" Just as the disciples were called to the Garden of Gethsemane after the Last Supper, so we are called to Adoration after Holy Mass. The words that Jesus spoke to his disciples then, echo down the centuries to us now.

Time spent in Adoration, however, does not change God. Ultimately, it changes us. We cannot spend time with the Lord in Adoration without feeling his healing touch. We cannot spend an hour in his silence without rediscovering some peace in our hearts.

The Year of the Eucharist, therefore, is not only an opportunity to rediscover the beauty and privilege of receiving Holy Communion and to realise how Jesus loves us in the Mass. It is a chance to rediscover how Jesus' presence can fill our days and how we can accompany him as he works and waits for a world that needs his love more than anything. _____ Elizabeth Sudlow



Venite Adoremus

Some reflections on adoration before the Blessed Sacrament

Over the 25 or so years we have been blessed with Eucharistic Adoration in our parish, I have been privileged to spend many hours with the Lord. I can never thank him enough for all I have received from Him during that time; far in excess of my small offering. Do come and spend an hour with Him. He is waiting for you. _____ *An Adorer*

The silence of prayer is like a Eucharistic silence, a silence of adoration, a silence in God. . . . This is the real anticipation of the silence of God that we are all called to know. _____ *Cardinal Robert Sarah*



ST JUDE'S FEAST DAY

St Jude is commonly associated as the Patron Saint of lost and hopeless cases, but neither of these factors were present as we celebrated the Patronal Festival on 28/29th October. On Saturday, a Day of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament was well supported, during which parishioners were encouraged to pray for Vocations to the Priesthood. Following Solemn Mass on Sunday, a period of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament concluded the liturgical celebrations. Afterwards, many parishioners stayed behind to enjoy the variety of refreshments, including a glass of wine or two, to celebrate the Patron Saint. Not only was St Jude celebrated in the liturgy, but also socially afterwards. *Fr Simon*

FATIMA STATUE IN ST DUNSTAN'S SCHOOL

On 20 October 2017 there was a mass and blessing of a new statue of Our Lady of Fatima dedicated to the memory of Liz McGuire, who died in April after 26 years of service as a teacher at St Dunstan's School.

My dear Mr Hutton

I have nothing to write to you about, but I am led at this season to send you the religious greetings and good wishes which it suggests. . . . I know how honestly you try to approve yourself to God—and this is a claim on the reverence of any one who knows or reads you. There are many things as to which I most seriously differ from you but I believe you to be one of those to whom the angels on Christmas night sent greetings as 'hominibus bonae voluntatis' and it is a pleasure and a duty for all who could be their companions hereafter to follow their pattern of comprehensive charity here . . . When a man is really and truly seeking the Pearl of great price, how can one help joining oneself in heart and spirit with him?

Most truly Yrs John H Newman

[Richard Holt Hutton was a Unitarian who intervened on Newman's side in the controversy with Charles Kingsley that led to the writing of the *Apologia pro Vita Sua* in 1864. He was increasingly sympathetic to Catholicism and wrote a short biography of Newman in 1891. Newman's generosity of spirit shines through his Christmas message to a man with whom he differed 'seriously' on many points of belief and practice.]

The Oratory Decr 29. 1872

"Glory to God in the highest ; and on earth peace to men of good will."



Editors

Miriam & Bob Wilcher
179 Alcester Road South
Kings Heath
Birmingham B14 6DD
Telephone: 0121 444 3568
E-mail: robertwilcher@binternet.com

Editorial Committee

Mary & Roger Browning
Bernard Davis
Dorothy Thomas
Dawn Feeney
Nikki & Grace Stewart

Photographs

Top left: The Baby Loss Memorial (See p. 3)
Top right: The Youth Club (See p. 2)
Middle left: Fatima Statue at St Dunstan's School (See p. 14)
Middle right: Message from Christians at the Tent of Nations (See p. 7)
Bottom left: Bishop Challoner members of the Mission to Brazil (See p. 4)
Bottom right: St Jude's Quiz team (See p. 4)