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The JOURNAL

The newspaper of the Parish of St John the Baptist, Andover.
Including: St John Fisher, Whitchurch and
The Chapel of St Theresa of Lisieux, Farleigh

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30 Years On

The Journal is thirty years old. It seems absolutely no time at all since we went to Fr McKeever with a proposal to produce a parish magazine using our very latest BBC Archimedes computer fitted with up to the minute desk top publishing software. Since then, we have met on or around the last Monday of each month in order to have The Journal ready for publication on the first weekend of the following month.

In those early days we had to sit together while one would slowly dictate the articles as the other typed them out before finally printing the master copy on a dot matrix printer. We did have the odd disaster such as the evening when I set the printer going and went to bed. In the morning I came down to collect the finished work and found that there had been a paper jam in the printer; I had to start all over again. Photocopying was done in the parish office and that too had its problems as anyone who ever had to use a photocopier in 1991 will tell you. The magazine was then taken to the parish youth club to collate and fold. Later this task was taken on by the senior year of St John the Baptist School. Distribution of the magazine was through handing it out at the end of services in Andover, Whitchurch and Stockbridge or through St John the Baptist and Farleigh Schools.

Initially the magazine was an A4 sized document. When we started to produce the magazine on a Microsoft Windows computer some years later, we changed the format to an A5 booklet.

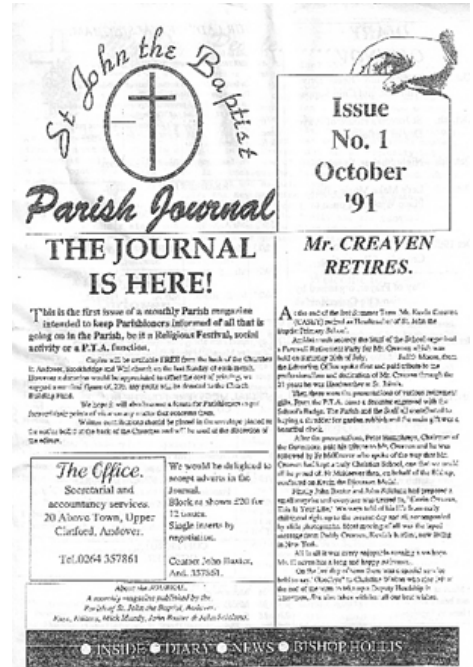
A look back through the copies of The Journal is like looking through a window and watching the seasons go by, reflecting the rhythm of parish life as the great religious festivals of the year mingle with the regular parish events, First Holy Communion being a chief example. The very first edition is a snapshot of parish activities of the time. We recorded the retirement of Kevin Creaven, the very first headteacher of St John the Baptist School. The activities of the various clubs and societies (many now disbanded) run by parishioners were reported on. Sadly, so many of the names that appear in that first edition are of parishioners who are now no longer with us.

What of the future? The pandemic forced the magazine to go online; this is to continue, which means it will no longer be available in hard copy. Distribution will be through email by the school and on the parish website. If you wish a personal copy to be sent to you, please contact us and this will be arranged. We are also prepared to print a limited number of copies for anyone who may not have access to the internet.

We are very grateful to everyone who has ever contributed an article to us over the years especially to John Newland who writes the regular film reviews and to Margaret Scicluna who reports on the work of the children at the parish school every month. We have fond memories of the delightful "Praying with Hector" reflections contributed by Pat Lavelle. A huge thank you also to Teresa in the office for taking over the photocopying of the magazine over the last few years.

It is hoped that everyone who has ever read a copy of our magazine has found it useful, informative and thought-provoking. We look forward to bringing it to you for some time to come.

John Baxter & John Scicluna



Joint Message For The Protection of Creation



Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Justin Welby issued a joint message in

advance of the Summit Conference on Climate Change, COP 26. We print the full message and pray that their words will have an effect on the world leaders gathered in Glasgow.

For more than a year, we have all experienced the devastating effects of a global pandemic—all of us, whether poor or wealthy, weak or strong. Some were more protected or vulnerable than others, but the rapidly-spreading infection meant that we have depended on each other in our efforts to stay safe. We realised that, in facing this worldwide calamity, no one is safe until everyone is safe, that our actions really do affect one another, and that what we do today affects what happens tomorrow.

These are not new lessons, but we have had to face them anew. May we not waste this moment. We must decide what kind of world we want to leave to future generations. God mandates: ‘Choose life, so that you and your children might live’ (Dt 30:19). We must choose to live differently; we must choose life.

September is celebrated by many Christians as the Season of Creation, an opportunity to pray and care for God’s creation. As world leaders prepare to meet in November at Glasgow to deliberate on the future of our planet, we pray for them and consider what the choices we must all make.

Accordingly, as leaders of our Churches, we call on everyone, whatever their belief or worldview, to endeavour to listen to the cry of the earth and of people who are poor, examining their behaviour and pledging meaningful sacrifices for the sake of the earth which God has given us.

The Importance of Sustainability

In our common Christian tradition, the Scriptures and the Saints provide illuminating perspectives for comprehending both the realities of the present and the promise of something larger than what we see in the moment. The concept of stewardship—of individual and collective responsibility for our God-given endowment—presents a vital starting-point for social, economic and environmental sustainability. In the New Testament, we read of the rich and foolish man who stores great wealth of grain while forgetting about his finite end (Lk 12.13–21). We learn of the prodigal son who takes his inheritance early, only to squander it and end up hungry (Lk 15.11–32). We are cautioned against adopting short term and seemingly inexpensive options of building on sand, instead of building on rock for our common home to withstand storms (Mt 7.24–27). These stories invite us to adopt a broader outlook and recognise our place in the extended story of humanity.

But we have taken the opposite direction. We have maximised our own interest at the expense of future generations. By concentrating on our wealth, we find that long-term assets, including the bounty of nature, are depleted for short-term advantage. Technology has unfolded new possibilities for progress but also for accumulating unrestrained wealth, and many of us behave in ways which demonstrate little concern for other people or the limits of the planet. Nature is resilient, yet delicate.

We are already witnessing the consequences of our refusal to protect and preserve it (Gn 2.15). Now, in this moment, we have an opportunity to repent, to turn around in resolve, to head in the opposite direction. We must pursue generosity and fairness in the ways that we live, work and use money, instead of selfish gain.

The Impact on People Living with Poverty

The current climate crisis speaks volumes about who we are and how we view and treat God’s creation. We stand before a harsh justice: biodiversity loss, environmental degradation and climate change are the inevitable consequences of our actions, since we have greedily consumed more of the earth’s resources than the planet can endure. But we also face a profound injustice: the people bearing the most catastrophic consequences of these abuses are the poorest on the planet and have been the least responsible for causing them. We serve a God of justice, who delights in creation and creates every person in God’s image, but also hears the cry of people who are poor. Accordingly, there is an innate call within us to respond with anguish when we see such devastating injustice.

Today, we are paying the price. The extreme weather and natural disasters of recent months reveal afresh to us with great force and at great human cost that climate change is not only a future challenge, but an immediate and urgent matter of survival. Widespread floods, fires and droughts threaten entire continents. Sea levels rise, forcing whole communities to relocate; cyclones devastate entire regions, ruining lives and livelihoods. Water has become scarce and food supplies insecure, causing conflict and displacement for millions of people. We have already seen this in places where people rely on small scale agricultural holdings. Today we see it in more industrialised countries where even sophisticated infrastructure cannot completely prevent extraordinary destruction.

Tomorrow could be worse. Today's children and teenagers will face catastrophic consequences unless we take responsibility now, as 'fellow workers with God' (Gn 2.4–7), to sustain our world. We frequently hear from young people who understand that their futures are under threat. For theirsake, we must choose to eat, travel, spend, invest and live differently, thinking not only of immediate interest and gains but also of future benefits. We repent of our generation's sins. We stand alongside our younger sisters and brothers throughout the world in committed prayer and dedicated action for a future which corresponds ever more to the promises of God.

The Imperative of Cooperation

Over the course of the pandemic, we have learned how vulnerable we are. Our social systems frayed, and we found that we cannot control everything. We must acknowledge that the ways we use money and organize our societies have not benefited everyone. We find ourselves weak and anxious, submersed in a series of crises; health, environmental, food, economic and social, which are all deeply interconnected.

These crises present us with a choice. We are in a unique position either to address them with shortsightedness and profiteering or seize this as an opportunity for conversion and transformation. If we think of humanity as a family and work together towards a future based on the common good, we could find ourselves living in a very different world. Together we can share a vision for life where everyone flourishes. Together we can choose to act with love, justice and mercy. Together we can walk towards a fairer and fulfilling society with those who are most vulnerable at the centre.

But this involves making changes. Each of us, individually, must take responsibility for the ways we use our resources. This path requires an ever-closer collaboration among all churches in their commitment to care for creation. Together, as communities, churches, cities and nations, we must change route and discover new ways of working together to break down the traditional barriers between peoples, to stop competing for resources and start collaborating.

To those with more far-reaching responsibilities—heading administrations, running companies, employing people or investing funds—we say: choose people-centred profits; make short-term sacrifices to safeguard all our futures; become leaders in the transition to just and sustainable economies. 'To whom much is given, much is required.' (Lk 12:48)

This is the first time that the three of us feel compelled to address together the urgency of environmental sustainability, its impact on persistent poverty, and the importance of global cooperation. Together, on behalf of our communities, we appeal to the heart and mind of every Christian, every believer and every person of good will. We pray for our leaders who will gather in Glasgow to decide the future of our planet and its people. Again, we recall Scripture: 'choose life, so that you and your children may live' (Dt 30:19). Choosing life means making sacrifices and exercising self-restraint.

All of us—whoever and wherever we are—can play a part in changing our collective response to the unprecedented threat of climate change and environmental degradation.

Caring for God's creation is a spiritual commission requiring a response of commitment. This is a critical moment. Our children's future and the future of our common home depend on it.
Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby

Call for Action

Later this month Glasgow will host COP26 (the Conference of the parties) a conference which could prove vital for the survival of the world as we know it. As you can read elsewhere in the Journal, Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Justin Welbeck have issued a joint statement on the importance of COP26. Meanwhile, some fifty religious leaders in the UK used the “Climate Fringe Week”, a virtual event taking place in Scotland in September ahead of COP26, to issue a joint declaration urging world leaders to go forward from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change adopted in 2015 committing the 196 countries to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.



They reminded governments of their commitments and of Article 17 of the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights to protect the environment, the biosphere and biodiversity, signed in 2005, which calls upon them to take the “urgent action needed to avert the loss, damage, and forced migration threatened by climate change.”

The signatories point out that “the burden of loss and damage falls most heavily on people living in poverty, especially women and children.”

They called on governments to “work together and with others to create a positive vision for 2050, adding that addressing climate change is not just an opportunity to stop burning fossil fuels, but also to achieve cleaner air and water, to reduce food wastage, to ensure a just and equitable sharing of the earth’s resources, and to protect the habitats we share with all other life on whose health we also depend.

They stressed the need for those in power to “understand the vital role they have to play at the Glasgow COP26.”

The faith leaders stated their commitment to respond to this challenge by reflecting deeply in prayer “to discern how to care for the earth and each other.”

This care, they said, includes making “transformational change” in their own lives and in the lives of their communities, being “advocates for justice” and calling on those who exercise power and influence “to make the transition to a just and green economy a priority and to commit to science-based targets that are aligned with a healthy, resilient, zero-emissions future.

“Across our doctrinal and political differences, we know that we must change our ways to ensure a quality of life which all can share, and we need to provide hope for people of all ages, everywhere, including future generations.

“Our collective energy and prayers will be with those working for a successful outcome,” concludes the Declaration whose signatories included Bishop Brian McGee, President of the Catholic Scottish Bishops’ Committee for Interreligious dialogue, and Bishop John Arnold, lead on the Environment for the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales.

Pope's Visit to Hungary

Devin Watkins of Vatican News reported on how the Pope had used his General Audience on 22nd September to reflect on his Apostolic Journey to Budapest and Slovakia, calling it a pilgrimage to the roots of prayer and hope.

The papal journey, which took place on 12-15 September, was characterized by the word “together”, said the Pope, since it showed that the Church breathes with “two lungs”—the Latin and Greek rites—while walking together with the Jewish community, other Christians, and the faithful of other religions.

“I would summarize it as follows: it was a pilgrimage *of prayer*, a pilgrimage *to the roots*, a pilgrimage *of hope*,” said the Pope.

The first stage of the journey, which took him to Budapest, Hungary, saw the universal Church gathered around the Lord's sacrifice.

“The holy people of God, on the Lord's Day, gathered before the mystery of the Eucharist, by which they are continually generated and regenerated,” he said. “They were embraced by the Cross that stood above the altar, showing the same direction indicated by the Eucharist, namely the path of humble and selfless love, of generous and respectful love towards all, of faith that purifies from worldliness and leads to essentiality.”

Pope Francis added that his pilgrimage of prayer concluded on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, framing the visit with adoration and popular piety. “Because this is what the People of God are called to, above all: to worship, to pray, to journey, to wander, to do penance, and in this to feel the peace and the joy that the Lord gives us,” he said.

Pope Francis went on to say that his pilgrimage was one which took him “to the roots”.

The encounter with the Bishops of Hungary and Slovakia, he said, allowed him to touch the roots of Christian faith and life in the region, which reach back to the 9th century.

“On several occasions I insisted on the fact that these roots are always living, full of the vital lymph that is the Holy Spirit, and that as such must be conserved: not like museum exhibits, not ideologized and exploited out of interests of prestige and power, to consolidate a closed identity.”

The third aspect of his Apostolic Journey, said the Pope, was that it was a pilgrimage of hope. He expressed his joy at seeing the hope in the eyes of young people in Košice, where many young couples with children joined the Pope for a youth encounter. “I saw hope in many people who silently care for and are concerned about their neighbour,” said Pope Francis, mentioning especially the Missionary Sisters of Charity who care for homeless people in Bratislava.

Pope Francis concluded his catechetical reflections offering his heartfelt gratitude to the bishops and civil authorities of Slovakia and Hungary, and to the many faithful who took part in his papal journey.

Father Anthony Chantry

This month, on 24th October, we recognise World Mission Sunday. Most of us are familiar with the red *Missio* boxes found in many households, and with the annual collection for the work of the missionaries. The Mill Hill Missionaries are the major channel for these donations, and the National Director for *Missio* is the Mill Hill Missionary Father Anthony Chantry.

A former General Superior of the Mill Hill Missionaries, Father Chantry was officially appointed as National Director in 2016. He was received into

the Catholic Church in 1975, and in that year he began his formation as a missionary priest with the Mill Hill Missionaries. He spent three years at the missionary college in Holland, and then spent a year gaining missionary experience in Nairobi, Kenya. He was impressed by the joy of celebrating life that, despite the trials and adversities, was so evident in the people.

He returned to St Joseph's College, Mill Hill, completed his formation and was ordained in his home parish of St Augustine's, Barkingside.

His first appointment after ordination was to western Kenya, to the quiet lakeside town of Kisumu. He spent nine years there and was the Chaplain for the youth of the town for six years. He has said that it was there he learnt the most valuable lesson as a missionary – that the people they serve frequently have more to teach and offer the missionary than the missionary can teach and offer them.

It was while serving in Kisumu that he had his first encounter with the work of *Missio*. He felt the town needed a small youth centre as a base for the training programme, and for prayer meetings and youth Masses. The diocese had no money to spare but the bishop recommended that he write a detailed application for funds to *Missio*. He was delighted when his request was granted, and the centre is still in use today.

His stay in Kenya ended in 1990 when he was sent to spend two years studying theology in Chicago. He returned to St Joseph's college where he helped to prepare students for the priesthood and mission. The college was expanding, receiving students from Africa and Asia as well as Europe.

South Africa was his next appointment, where he worked in the African townships surrounding the industrial town of Sasolburg. Driving through the endless rows of corrugated iron dwellings, along dusty windswept roads with very little else to offer, it was clear that such artificially created communities are more places of despair than hope, of violent conflict than peaceful coexistence. Yet once he had grown closer to the people, he discovered a resilience and strength of character which gave birth to hope.

He was elected General Superior of the Mill Hill Missionaries, spending ten years visiting the missionaries throughout the world and learning more and more about how they were serving the people among whom they lived. He was inspired by the selfless service of such diverse characters in what were often stressful and inhospitable circumstances.

He is conscious of the unique position of *Missio* as the Holy Father's charity. The Pope takes a very personal interest in its work. As the National Director he hopes that *Missio* England and Wales will always be known as a charity that enables the young churches across the world, to love and serve humanity, especially those in greatest need.





The Pope's Intentions

Each year, the Holy Father asks for our prayers for a specific intention each month. You are invited to answer the Holy Father's request and to join with many people worldwide in praying for this intention each month. From time to time, the Holy Father may add a second prayer intention related to current events or urgent needs, like disaster relief. The second prayer request will help mobilize prayer and action related to the urgent situation.

The Pope's monthly prayer intentions alternate between prayers for Evangelization and prayers for a Universal theme. . In this month of October, he asks us to pray for us all to take up the challenge to evangelize: We pray that every baptized person may be engaged in evangelization, available to the mission, by being witnesses of a life that has the flavour of the Gospel.

Reflection on the Pope's Intention

Evangelization often gets a bad rap. It's the song by our favourite musician that we always skip. It's the call we let go to voicemail. It's the kiosk in the store we have to walk by. We don't want to be rude, but we also are just so not interested. By 'bad rap', I mean the caricature of what evangelization entails that makes almost all of us cringe:

- approaching strangers ...
- peppering them with questions ...
- positing rehearsed logical proofs ...
- pushing tracts into their hands ...
- inviting them to come with us ...

and making that hard sell to share the good news of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We imagine the awkward places where this conversation could occur (hockey game concession line, adjoining bathroom stall chat, DMV waiting room), and we think "Nope, that ain't for me."

I can't blame you.

Some encouraging news: that's not evangelization.

Our call as believers of the one true gospel of Jesus Christ is about "proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God" everywhere, all the time, to everyone (Luke 8:1).

Being engaged with evangelization is about those with whom you interact, being able to observe that your life reflects your love of a just and holy God, and that you love your neighbours. Some of us share it loudly. Just as many do so more quietly. Some of us strike up conversations about it with strangers. Others, with long-time friends that we've lived life with, for years. Some of us never say much, but when we do, we mean it.

Pope Francis reminds us of this call this month and explains how we all have a "missionary mandate," "This missionary mandate touches us personally: I am a mission, always; you are a mission, always; every baptized man and woman is a mission. People in love never stand still: they are drawn out of themselves; they are attracted and attract others in turn; they give themselves to others and build relationships that are life-giving."

What describes your flavour of sharing the Gospel with others?

Jim Roach, M.Div, who is a Campus Minister at Saint Louis University

Nomadland

For its use of the wide-open landscapes of the American West this film deserves to be seen on the largest cinema screen you can find. The rest of it is more of a mixed bag. Lead actress Frances McDormand plays Fern, a middle-aged woman whose husband has recently died of cancer. As well, her Hometown (named “Empire”), stuck in the middle of nowhere, has been laid waste by the closure of the town's sole employer, a US Mineral Company. Set sometime after the 2008 Recession, Fern now lives in her camper van and travels from place to place doing seasonal work to earn a living.



That's pretty much the film. The story is episodic and at times, frankly tedious. What keeps it going is McDormand's central performance. Strong, resolute and determined, she portrays Fern as a woman utterly committed to her independence and right to live as she wishes. She will only engage with Society on her own terms – pragmatic, not revolutionary.

The timeframe of the film is around one to two calendar years, from Winter through to Winter. The film starts with Fern leaving Empire and heading out for seasonal Christmas work. After this she turns up at the “Rubber Tramp Rendezvous” (yes). This is an annual gathering of fellow itinerant nomads led by nomad guru, Bob Wells. This the strongest part of the film and feels most authentic, because it is. The Rendezvous does happen and for it Director Chloe Zhao did cast many real-life nomads as supporting actors. Since Frances McDormand is such a consummate actress, her scenes with these individuals don't jar and do feel believable.

By the end of the film, there's a sort of conclusion – or perhaps not. She meets Dave, a widower the same age, with a grown-up family living in the country. Dave goes home to his family and invites Fern to come visit. Eventually - and it is eventually - she does. Fern gets on with everybody and she's tempted to stay permanently when asked. She doesn't. She just can't emotionally. Back on the road Fern visits Empire once more and her old home, now derelict. In a final act of severing with her old, settled life she tells the Storage Unit owner where the remainder of her possessions are held to just throw them out. Final shot of her van driving on the road. Screen fade to black.

Much lauded on its release, it is Frances McDormand's rock solid performance as Fern that glues this film together and gives it life. Any lesser actress (perhaps any other actress) could not have made it work in the way it needed to. It's a picture of America and of those that have fallen through the cracks. It harkens back to those social realist films about the 1930s Great Depression, notably *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940). That film was about Mid- Western farmers forced off the land by the Dustbowl, this is about the uncaring nature of corporate capitalism (“the tyranny of the American Dollar” as Bob Wells says). Is it as good as *Grapes*? No. On its own terms, does it work? Yes.

John Newland

We need more cantors – do you have the confidence to sing in church on your own or with a very small group? You need to be able to sing in tune with a pleasant and fairly strong voice, and be able to read music to some extent. It's not easy but very fulfilling and is a great service to the Church. Full training will be given. If you think you can help, please contact Bruce via the parish office.

The Winchester Martyrs



Among the many English martyrs who died for their Catholic faith, five suffered in Winchester. Information from The Portsmouth Ordo reveals that **Roger Dicconson** (sometimes spelled *Dickenson*) was one of the priests hiding from the authorities and secretly celebrating Mass and the sacraments all over England.

He was born and raised in Lincoln, studied in Rheims and was ordained there in 1583. On returning to England, he first worked in Winchester but he was arrested and deported. He came back to work in Worcestershire before returning to Winchester in 1591, when he was again arrested while celebrating Mass. He was hung, drawn and quartered alongside Ralph Milner and Laurence Humphreys on 7 July 1591.

Ralph Milner was brought up in Flacsted, Hampshire. A practicing Anglican, he converted to Catholicism and was arrested on the very day of his First Communion. His imprisonment was somewhat lax since while under arrest it seems he still found the opportunity to do much charitable work in the county.

Laurence Humphreys was born in Hampshire in 1571. He converted to Catholicism at the age of 18 and worked as a catechist. Unfortunately for him, he fell gravely ill and while in a delirious state was heard to utter insults about Queen Elizabeth. He was condemned to death, and on the scaffold he made a public profession of faith.

John Slade was a native of Manston, Dorset and was educated at New College, Oxford, and became a schoolmaster. He was arrested in June 1582 and imprisoned along with Andover's martyr, Blessed John Body, whose feast is on 3rd November. They were tried in Winchester, and again in Andover in 1583, and from there John Slade was taken back to Winchester, where he was hung, drawn and quartered on 2 November 1583.

James Bird (sometimes known as Byrd or Beard) was born in 1574 in Winchester where his father held public office. He became a Catholic in 1584. James travelled to Rheims to attend the seminary but decided that he didn't have a vocation to the priesthood after all. He returned to England in 1592. The authorities suspected what he'd been up to and presented him with the Oath of Supremacy, an oath usually only required of men in a public office. When he refused to take the Oath or even attend an Anglican service, he was condemned to death. There is a rather strange story that as his father walked past James' severed head which was displayed on a pole outside the city gates, he saw his son's head bow down to him in reverence, whereupon the father cried out, *Oh, Jemmy my son, ever obedient in life, even when dead thou payest reverence to thy father. How far from thy heart was all treason or other wickedness.*"

The Winchester Martyrs are commemorated on 30th October.

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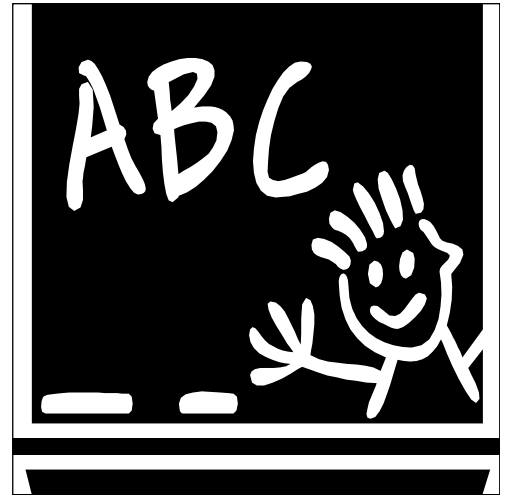
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From the School



As the new school year began, each class took part in CAFOD's national assembly, reflecting how, if we all work together, we can help to make a better world for everyone, a world that is more peaceful and just. The children wrote pledges for a better world, stating how they would be the hands and feet of Christ by taking action to make a difference.

This year, St John's is taking the first steps on an exciting journey to become a "Thrive" school. "Thrive" is a leading authority on the social and emotional development of children and young people, and the Thrive Approach can provide pointers to help create positive experiences to support children's wellbeing and to build emotional resilience. This year, all staff will take part in whole school "Thrive" training, so they can start working on "Thrive" objectives to support every child at every stage.

Years 1 – 6 have been invited to enter a competition to design a new logo for the school's Parent - Teacher Association, The Friends of St John the Baptist. The active and resourceful PTA has worked hard for the school for many years, buying library and classroom resources, funding experiences such as the Christmas pantomime, improving the outdoor environment, and holding jolly seasonal events. Now a simple, colourful, and clear logo, with some incorporated wording, will celebrate the PTA and the wonderful work that they do.

Year 5 were the first class able to go on a residential visit since the start of the pandemic. They spent three days and two nights in Ufton Court, Tudor mansion near Newbury. They left excited and bubbly, with perhaps some nerves for some. They returned with big smiles, tired eyes and plenty of washing!

Year 4's science topic this half term is Teeth and Digestion. As part of this topic, they have looked at the care of our teeth, carrying out experiments to find out how different liquids affect tooth enamel.

Year 1 carried on with the school tradition of decorating a pebble with their name and colours and images which represent them. The pebbles are kept in each class on their prayer tables and travel with the children as they move up through the school. At the end of Year 6, as they leave St John's for new adventures each child takes their pebble with them as a reminder that they will always be part of the family of St John the Baptist School.

First Holy Communion



In spite of the restrictions and constraints imposed upon us by the pandemic, 34 children from our parish recently received their First Holy Communion during two special Masses.

Mrs Teresa Lynam, in the Parish Office, had made careful plans to ensure the safety of all. We were blessed with fine, sunny weather on both mornings as families gathered in the church car park, before entering the church to find their allocated seats.

The Masses were simple, reverent and joyful. Each family group, led by the First Communicant, proceeded to the altar to receive Communion or a blessing, then returned to their seat to make their thanksgiving.

At the end of Mass, each family group was guided out by the stewards, after which all returned home to enjoy their own celebrations. Sadly, this year we were unable to have the traditional group photo with Father Austin and Deacon Michael, but no doubt many happy photos were taken later as reminders of a very special day.

All involved in the First Holy Communion programme offer our thanks to Father Austin for his kindness, help and support throughout the year, to Deacon Michael for his involvement in the Mass, to Mrs Pat Franklin and Mrs Fran Rae for the beautiful flower arrangements, and to Mrs Teresa Lynam for her unstinting, generous and very efficient help during the First Holy Communion programme each year.

Heartfelt thanks must go to the team of First Holy Communion catechists. This year's programme was disrupted by each "lockdown", but the catechists maintained an interest and encouraged the parents to persevere and to continue preparing the children for their First Holy Communion at home.

Pope's Letter to Syro-Malabar Bishops

With over 5 million followers, the Kerala-based church is the second largest Christian grouping in India. Pope Francis has written a letter to the bishops, clergy, religious and laity of the Syro-Malabar Church inviting them "to proceed to a prompt implementation of the uniform mode of celebrating the Holy *Qurbana*, for the greater good and unity" of their Church. The Syro-Malabar is an Oriental Catholic Major Archepiscopal Church based in Kerala, India. Holy Mass, which is called Holy *Qurbana* in East Syriac Aramaic and means 'Eucharist', is celebrated in its solemn form on Sundays and special occasions. Many in this parish will be aware that Syro-Malabar services are held regularly in the parish, and the celebration of the feast of Saint Thomas, who carried the Faith to India, is an occasion which is a powerful demonstration of faith and enriches the life of the parish.



In his letter dated 3 July, the Pope recalls the agreement unanimously reached by the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church in 1999 "and repeatedly endorsed in subsequent years – for a uniform mode of celebrating the Holy *Qurbana*, considering this an important step towards increasing stability and ecclesial communion within the whole body of the Church."

"The concerted efforts towards applying this auspicious development in the great Jubilee Year 2000 gave joyful confidence in your *sui iuris* Church to my saintly predecessor Pope John Paul II," he wrote.

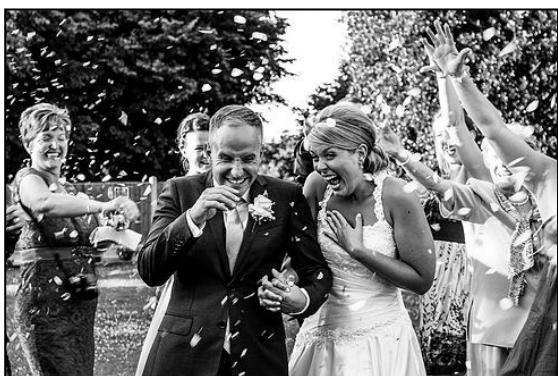
The Pope noted that notwithstanding some difficulties, which require ongoing discernment in the life of the Syro-Malabar Church, "the approved norms for the Eucharistic celebration have borne considerable fruit including evangelization in those places, especially the missionary Eparchies (*equivalent to diocese in the Western Church*) where the whole community has joined in peaceful and prayerful observance, interpreting the continuing consensus of the Hierarchy as a fruit of the Holy Spirit."

"I strongly urge the Syro-Malabar Bishops to persevere, and I confirm their ecclesial 'walking together' with God's people, trusting that 'time is greater than space' (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 222-225) and that 'unity prevails over conflict' (cf. *ibid*, 226-230)," Pope Francis wrote.

He said he takes the occasion of the recognition of "the new *Raza Qurbana Taksa* to exhort all the clergy, religious and lay faithful to proceed to a prompt implementation of the uniform mode of celebrating the Holy *Qurbana*."

Describing this process as necessary "for the greater good and unity" of the Syro-Malabar Church, the Pope called for "harmony, fraternity and unity" among all members of the Church as they work to implement the Synodal decision.

He concluded his letter assuring all of his closeness in prayer and invoking the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Holy Patriarch Saint Joseph and the Apostle Saint Thomas.



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Please pray for those who have gone before us in September

Mary Hanifin, John Mills, Peter Henley and John Hodge.

and for those whose anniversaries occur in October

Sir Ivor Stourton, David Curtin, Kate Wall, Philomena Ecclestone, Violet Mortley, Kevin Marchant, Anthony De Stefano, Michael Luxford, Agnes Smith, Margaret Fitzpatrick, Elizabeth Dean, Diane Clemas, Magdalene Ward, Edward Toland, Margaret Doyle, Gerrard McKeever, Joanna Stockley, Maisie Burnett, Colonel Plowden, John Bell, Rita Hinton, Winifred Bruen, Dora Burke, Francis Priestman, Catherine Wiltshire, Darrell Hide, May Blazic, William Hilleard, Marjorie Jeanne, Michael Hughes. George Platt, Michael Palmer, John Evans, Bartholomew Jarvis, Eddie Murphy, Catherine Morley, Peter D'Costa, Eric Smith, Edith Weal, Hans-Gunter Ziegler, Margaret Holmes, Eric Attrill, Anita Mutton, Nan Martin, Helen Greenwood. Alice McCumisky. Bert Bradbury, Brenda Millington, Alfred Coveney, Marguerite Freely, Arthur Cleary, Mr Murray, Sister Theresa, Tim O'Donne, Margaret Holland, Bill Murphy, Mary Holland, Dan Quinn, Bill Baxter, Tony Murphy, Sarah Macleod, Constance Antrobus, Julia Hardiman, Robert Henebury, Joan Mullins, Tony Reading, Thomas Scanlon, Mary Kelly, Adrian Kane-Smith, Simon Lytle, Francis Davis, Mary Bennett, Mariquita Radcliffe, Daniel Zalavolgi Hide, Joseph Ryder, Flora Wilson, Andrew Sharkey, Eric Ramsden, Dominic Gaughan, Lucy Sullivan, Patrick Copeland, Violet Mortley, John Byrne, Regis Boudreau, William Kilmartin, Alan Hamilton, Patrick Philips, Gonzales Rosa, John Patman, Anastacio Lopes, Martin Charlton, Dorothy Wisniewski, John Heeks, Josepha Wozniak, Mary Gittens, Kathleen Czyzewski, Lucy Talbot, Marguerita Hewitt and her son Nick Lynn, Marina Daniels, Phyllis Hancock, Mike Schiffer, Daryn Sutcliffe, Lydia Humphreys, Edward Minns, Elizabeth Judd, Mary Howell, Eileen Measures, Baby Finlay Christopher, Peggay Bray, Patrick White, Terence Fitzpatrick, Valerie Stratton & Oliver Byrne.

**During the month to come please remember in your prayers
the following who are sick:**

Patrick Pacini, Audrey Stephenson, Esmé Coveney, Doreen Burke, Rita Lane, Valerie Muir, Alan Daws, Tom Wilkins, Sam Hearn, Margaret Williams, Patrick Arnold, Allan Wickens, Di Mussert, Lisa Ramage, Christine Budden, Diane Cooper, Sheila Muir, Therese Ayres, Sheila Roberts, Mary Hathaway, Rachel McGarvie, Rosemary Gallagher, Eileen Dickie, Christopher Brown, Antoinette Thomas, Mervyn Owen, Kay Krauze, Michelle Taylor, Kay McGlynn, Canon David Caine, David Bull, Mary Bradley, Mary Wickens
and all those in need of our prayers.

If you know that anyone on this list is now happily recovered, or if you would like a name added to this list, please contact the editors.

PLEASE NOTE

Articles printed in *The JOURNAL* are printed in good faith and are not necessarily the views of the editors. Contributions must be accompanied by full name and address, which may be withheld on request. The editors reserve the right to amend all contributions. Please support our advertisers, they support us.

ENDPIECE

Many thanks to the various contributors to this month's *The JOURNAL*. The next edition will be 6th & 7th November. Contributions should be with the editors by Monday 1st November. Please leave contributions at the Presbytery or email them to: stjohnsjournal@googlemail.com