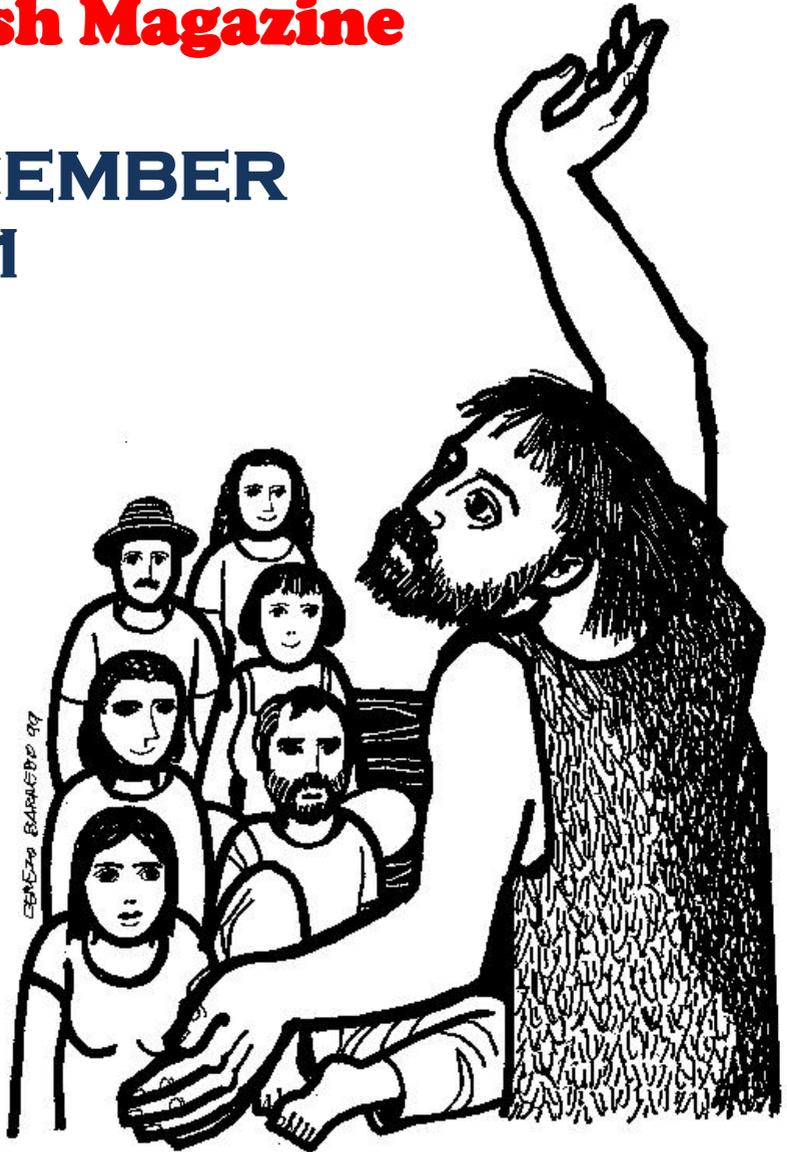


Saint Faith's Church Great Crosby Parish Magazine

**DECEMBER
2011**



Worship at Saint Faith's



SUNDAYS

11.00am SOLEMN MASS and Children's Church

1.00pm Holy Baptism (2nd Sunday)

6.00pm Evening Service and Benediction (1st Sunday & as announced)

On 'Fifth Sundays' there is one joint Eucharist for both congregations followed by a shared lunch – please consult the Diary of Events, website or notices for details

WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday 10.30am, **Tuesday** 9.30am, **Wednesday** 10.30am (1662 Book of Common Prayer in S. Mary's), **Thursday** 9.30am (Holy Days only), **Friday** 6.30pm, **Saturday** 12noon (or Midday Prayer, as announced)

THE DIVINE OFFICE (The Prayer of the Church)

Morning Prayer: 9.00am daily (except Thursday)

Evening Prayer: 6.00pm daily (except Thursday)

Night Prayer: 9.15pm Saturday (Vigil of the Resurrection)

Please consult the weekly sheets for any variation in times for the Daily Office

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

Fr. Neil and Revd. Denise are available by appointment to hear confessions or to talk about any matter in confidence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is always available in preparation for Christmas and Easter and at other advertised times.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK AND DYING

Please contact Fr. Neil at any time, day or night, if someone is ill and requires the ministry of a priest.

HOME VISITS to the sick and housebound and those in hospital

If you, or someone you know, are unable to get to church and would like to receive Holy Communion at home, or be visited in hospital or at home, please ring the Vicarage or another member of the Ministry Team. We are always happy to make home or hospital visits to the sick and housebound so please call us to arrange this.



From the Ministry Team

December 2011

Dear friends

Benedictus ('Blessed')

The familiar Benedictus is one of the three 'Gospel canticles' (the others are the Magnificat and the Nunc Dimittis), and features prominently in the daily service of Morning Prayer. So why is this prophecy of Zechariah so special?

As usual we need to understand its context in the gospel. St. Luke opens his account of the 'good news' with the story of the angel Gabriel's visit to a Judean priest, Zechariah, bearing the startling message that he and his wife Elizabeth are to have a son. Moreover this child, to be called John, is to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. Zechariah and his wife were, as the authorised version puts it, 'well stricken in years', and Elizabeth was in any case infertile. Zechariah might therefore be forgiven for being a tad incredulous. In fact he becomes speechless, literally and metaphorically; and Gabriel tells him that he will remain so until the child is born.

Luke goes on to tell us about Gabriel's annunciation of the Messiah's incarnation to Mary, and of how Mary then went to visit Elizabeth and Zechariah with her amazing news, which she expresses in the Magnificat, the Song of Mary.

Gabriel's first message is then fulfilled: Zechariah and Elizabeth's son, John the Baptist, is born. We can imagine Zechariah taking his baby son fondly in his arms, with an overwhelming sense of the miraculous. Having recovered his speech, he starts his famous prophecy with the words 'Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people'.

Then, in some of the most tender and beautiful language in the whole bible, Zechariah foretells his son's destiny. It is to turn the hearts of God's people, so that they can wait and watch for the new dawn, the new creation, that the Messiah will bring. God has set John apart 'to give knowledge of salvation unto his people for the remission of their sins.'

The prophecy of Zechariah contains a profound truth: it is that salvation through Christ, the ‘day-spring from on high’, demands a change of heart. And that change of heart has to be brought about in and through individual human beings. The mother of Our Lord put aside her doubts and fears to give herself, body and soul, as the human instrument of the Incarnation. And John the Baptist put aside comfort and wealth to become the human instrument whereby God’s, longing, age-old call for a change of heart among his people could be heard - ‘the voice of one crying in the wilderness’.

During the Advent season, it would be good if we could say the Benedictus as a daily prayer, to remind us that so often the work of the Incarnation cannot go forward without us giving something of ourselves. It is truly humbling to remember that if we can only change our hearts to seek and welcome Christ’s love and reconciliation, then others may be guided to do the same. There is, or at least should be, something compelling and attractive about the Christian life; for it is light and salvation, not darkness and condemnation that we seek in Christ, the new creation. And we seek these good things ‘through the tender mercy of our God – whereby the day-spring from on high has visited us; to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace’.

God bless.

Fred Nye

*Please pray for those preparing for their
First Holy Communion on 4th December*

**Thomas Dixon Lauren Dixon
Abigail Jackson Charlotte Jones
Gavin Jones Nathan Voce-Pascoe**



I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread,
he will live forever (John 6:51)

Bring Along a Toy, Please!

At the **11am Family Mass & Parade Eucharist on 4th December** there will be the usual offering of toys. Please bring along a new toy (unwrapped). These are given to needy families at Christmas. This service will be even more special this year as some young children will be making their First Holy Communion at this service.

Helping Woodlands



(Woodlands Hospice is one of the organisations which is supported by St Faith's)

Woodlands Hospice provides specialist palliative care needs for people with cancer and other life-limiting illnesses across North Liverpool, South Sefton and Knowsley and now cares for over 800 patients and their families each year and all care is provided free of charge.

The Hospice, situated in the grounds of Fazakerley Hospital, opened its doors to patients for Day Therapy in January 1996 (up to 100 patients per week). Services were extended to cover outreach services in 2001 and outpatient clinics in 2005 for patients with specialist palliative care needs. After a successful capital appeal, the hospice built a brand new 15-bedded inpatient unit comprising single occupancy en-suite bedrooms and admitted patients from June 2009.

Woodlands Hospice is a registered charity (number 1048934) and is not part of the NHS although some NHS funding is received towards services. With the development of the inpatient unit the hospice needs to raise over £2,000 every day from fundraising and donations in order to maintain the current level of Hospice services.

Crosby Support Group for Woodlands Hospice holds several fund raising events each year, one of the most recent being the Sunday lunch in St Faith's hall, followed by a Safari Dinner on the following Saturday evening. Many thanks for all who supported these two events.

You can contact the Hospice on 0151 529 2630 and Crosby Support Group on 0151 928 2770.

The Ig Nobel Awards

Chris Price



For some 21 years now, a body known as The Annals of Improbable Research has met to award their coveted prizes to recipients in the world of science whose researches and associated activities are, in the words of the originator and inventor of the scheme ‘wonderfully loopy’. To honour this noteworthy anniversary, we present a selection of past winners, culled from a splendid article in a recent *Daily Telegraph*. You are invited to read and wonder and surely to give thanks that there is still room in our gloomy and stressful world for such admirable eccentric dedication.

A UK-Mexico collaboration won recently for perfecting a method of collecting whale snot, using a remote-controlled helicopter.

Two Dutch researchers won for discovering that some forms of asthma can be successfully treated with a roller-coaster ride.

A team from Otago University, New Zealand demonstrated that, on icy footpaths in winter, people slip and fall less often if they wear their socks on the outside of their shoes.

In 2009 two researchers from Newcastle University (British scientists, we are pleased to say, traditionally fare well at the awards) revealed that cows with names yield more milk than those not given names.

The same team also dedicated themselves to electrically mentoring the activity of a locust that was being shown selected highlights of *Star Wars*.

Two researchers from the University of Minnesota won by conducting an experiment to determine whether people can swim faster in syrup or in water.

The University of New Mexico were honoured for discovering that professional lap dancers won higher tips when they were ovulating.

Marc Abrahams, the man who started it all, confesses that his favourites in the past have been British. ‘Very British, in fact. The study called “Courtship Behaviour of Ostriches towards Humans Under Farming Conditions in Britain” is one, and another is a medical report in *The Lancet*’ splendidly entitled “A Man Who Pricked His Finger and Smelled Putrid for Five Years”.

And finally, because this is a church magazine, it is only right to report that in 2004 the Vatican was a winner ‘for outsourcing prayers to India’.

Poems in Remembrance

The Final Inspection

The soldier stood and faced God,
Which must always come to pass.
He hoped his shoes were shining,
Just as brightly as his brass.

‘Step forward now, you soldier,
How shall I deal with you ?
Have you always turned the other cheek ?
To My Church have you been true?’

The soldier squared his shoulders and said,
‘No, Lord, I guess I ain’t.
Because those of us who carry guns,
Can’t always be a saint.

I’ve had to work most Sundays,
And at times my talk was tough.
And sometimes I’ve been violent,
Because the world is awful rough.

But, I never took a penny,
That wasn’t mine to keep...
Though I worked a lot of overtime,
When the bills got just too steep.

And I never passed a cry for help,
Though at times I shook with fear.
And sometimes, God, forgive me,
I’ve wept unmanly tears.

I know I don’t deserve a place,
Among the people here.
They never wanted me around,
Except to calm their fears.



If you've a place for me here, Lord,
It needn't be so grand.
I never expected or had too much,
But if you don't, I'll understand.

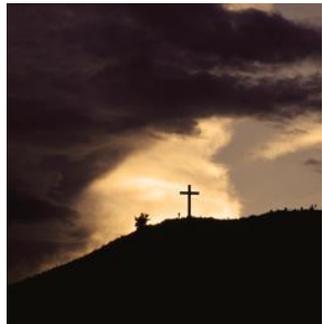
There was a silence all around the throne,
Where the saints had often trod.
As the soldier waited quietly,
For the judgment of his God.

'Step forward now, you soldier,
You've borne your burdens well.
Walk peacefully on Heaven's streets,
You've done your time in Hell.'

Author Unknown: poem supplied by Fr Neil

God and the soldier
We like adore
In times of danger
If not before.

The danger past
And all conflict righted
God is forgotten
The soldier slighted.



Festival of Remembrance

And now once more, flocking the silent air
Unnumbered petals drift in dying fall:
Each one a life lost and remembered.
They rest on heads, on caps, on shoulders
Where stand in rigid ranks the living
Solemn as statues to honour the dead.

Now heraldic trumpets pierce the silence;
Known words recall the fallen thousands;
Prayer and ordered music honour the long past.
Immaculate in stately ritual:

The young in uniform paraded line,
The old, weighted with memory,
Some who remember all that they have lost,
Others whose lives will yet be given
Where man's unyielding inhumanity
Defies the peace Christ also died to bring.

Behind the coloured panoply and pomp
War's haunting images still crowd the mind,
Stark in the mocking monochrome of evil.
Against a world of terror, greed and death
Is set only this night's fragile pageantry.
And as the echoes fade into the dark,
Trampled beneath the slow and marching feet
The crimson petals lie in soft reproach.

Chris Price

Festival of Remembrance 2003

Prompted by the BBC TV broadcast of the annual Albert Hall spectacular, featuring Bishop Nigel McCulloch and much moving and thought-provoking ceremonial.



Funny You Should Say That

A father was reading Bible stories to his young son. He read: 'The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city, but his wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt.'

His son, waiting expectantly, asked: 'And what happened to the flea?'

Some Feast Days in December

Nicholas, Bishop of Myra - 6 December

Nicholas was a fourth-century bishop of Myra in Asia Minor (southern Turkey). His reputation as a worker of wonders was enhanced by a ninth-century author of his hagiography and he is now best known through these stories. Many of them concern his love and care for children, how he fed the hungry, healed the sick and cared for the

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oppressed. He saved three girls from a life of prostitution by providing them with dowries and so developed the tradition of bearing gifts to children on his feast day, a practice appropriated by the Christmas celebrations. Nicholas is also one of the patron saints of Russia.

The Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary - 8 December

This festival in honour of the conception of the mother of our Lord is celebrated on this day in both the eastern and the western Church. This feast, which dates from the seventh century, acknowledges the preparation by God of his people to receive their Saviour and Lord, putting 'heaven in ordinary' and showing that mortal flesh can indeed bring Christ to the world.

Lucy of Syracuse - 13 December

Lucy was a native of Syracuse in Sicily. She lived at the beginning of the fourth century, when the Roman authorities were attempting to re-establish the worship of gods they approved. The emperor himself was the focus of one of the cults. Tradition has it that Lucy, as a young Christian, gave away her goods to the poor and was betrayed to the authorities by her angry betrothed, who felt that they should have become his property. She was put to death for her faith in the year 304. Her name in Latin means Light and, as her feast-day fell in December, she became associated with the one true Light who was coming as the redeemer of the world, the Light that would lighten the nations, the Light that would banish darkness and let the eyes of all behold Truth incarnate.

John of the Cross - 14 December

Born to an impoverished noble family near Avila in Spain in 1542, Juan de Yepes was brought up by his widowed mother and went to a charity school. He worked as a nurse and received further education from the Jesuits before entering the Carmelite order when he was twenty-one. Having distinguished himself at Salamanca university, he was ordained in 1567 and met Teresa of Avila soon afterwards. Small of stature, he made a great impression on her and she persuaded him to help with her reform of the Carmelite order. His labours brought him into conflict with the religious authorities, and he was even imprisoned for a period, yet these experiences prompted some of his finest poetry and mystical writing. In particular, he described the 'dark night' of the soul as it is purified in its approach towards God. After ten years as superior to several different houses, he again fell out of favour and was banished to Andalusia in southern Spain, where he died after a severe illness on this day in 1591.

Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury - 29 December

Thomas was born in London in 1118, of a family of merchants. After a good education he served as clerk to another burgess then entered the service of Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury. Thomas proved himself an excellent administrator and skilled diplomat. In 1155 he was appointed chancellor by King Henry II. For several

years king and chancellor worked harmoniously together in mutual admiration and personal friendship. As a result, the king nominated Thomas as Archbishop of Canterbury to succeed Theobald in 1161. From the start there was friction, with Thomas insisting on every privilege of the Church. The conflict worsened until 1164 when Thomas fled to France. Encouraged by the Pope he pursued his arguments from exile, sending letters and pronouncing excommunications. Three efforts at mediation failed before an apparent reconciliation brought him back triumphant to Canterbury in 1170. But the nobility still opposed him, and words of anger at court led four knights to journey to Canterbury where they finally chased Thomas into the cathedral, and murdered him on the steps of the altar on this day in 1170. Thomas was undoubtedly a proud and stubborn man, for all his gifts, and his personal austerities as archbishop were probably an attempt at self-discipline after years of ostentatious luxury. His conflict with King Henry stemmed from their equal personal ambitions, exacerbated by the increasingly international claims of the papacy, played out in the inevitable tension between Church and State.



The Christmas Tree Festival 2011

The Trees are Coming!

The 2011 Christmas Tree Festival is almost upon us. Building on the success of the first two events, in 2009 and 2010, some 45 trees, sponsored by local and national charities, will be on parade all round the church. Each organisation (including more than one associated with St Faith's) will be decorated and lit by representatives of the organisations concerned, and will be a focus for donations by the visiting public.

In addition there will be refreshments on sale throughout, together with sales tables, including the products of our church Jam Factory.

There are a number of scheduled special musical and other events throughout the week, and the festival promises to be even more colourful and successful than in the

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past. Please come as often as you can (admission is free!) to support the efforts of those who are working hard to put the show on, and of course the many deserving good causes on display. In these difficult times, this remains one of our most wide-reaching ways of offering something to the parish and the wider community and to show that we are not merely preoccupied with falling numbers and income!

The schedule is as follows:

Sunday 4th December

1.00 pm – 4.00 pm

6.00 pm – A service of celebration of Advent in words and music, with actor Andrew Lancel. Churches Together in Waterloo in attendance.

Monday and Tuesday

12 noon – 5.00pm

Wednesday

12 noon – 5.00pm

7.00 pm Carol singing with military band from 7.00 – 9.00 pm, supported by Services Family Support Group.

Thursday

12 noon – 5.00pm

Friday

12 noon – 7.00 pm.

Saturday

10.00 am – 4.00 pm, including a recital given by the Liverpool Saturday Morning Music School.

Each afternoon local schools will be performing between 1.30pm and 2.30 pm.



Andrew Lancel
(*'Coronation Street' villain!*)

More Pausing for Thought

I always read carefully anything written in my newspaper by Jonathan Sacks. Lord Sacks is Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth. In a recent article he in turn quotes a member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences who was charged to discover why it was that Europe, having lagged behind China until the 17th century, overtook it, rising to dominance.

Perhaps it was because Europe had superior weapons of war, or perhaps it was Europe's political systems, or its economic systems, but now '...we have realised that it was...your religion, Christianity. It was the Christian foundation of social and cultural life in Europe that made possible the emergence first of capitalism, then of democratic politics.'

Today, while Christianity is in decline in Europe, it is thriving in China. The number of Chinese Christians in church on a Sunday is greater than the total membership of the Chinese Communist party. Moreover, they are the young, upwardly mobile entrepreneurs for whom Christianity offers an ethical framework, a structured view of life and its disciplines.

Lord Sacks continues: '...as a non-Christian I find this fascinating. Europe is losing the very thing that once made it great, while China...is discovering it...What has China realised that the West is rapidly forgetting? That a civilisation is as strong as its faith...as people borrow more and save less, as they value present pleasures over future growth, so they begin to lose the beliefs and practices that made their society successful in the first place.'

He suggests there is an alternative: 'The West can rediscover what Jeremiah called 'the devotion of your youth.' He says that both Judaism and Christianity have shared over the centuries an astonishing capacity for self-renewal. It is happening to Christianity in many parts of the world.

'We are as strong as our faith,' he concludes, and even if it comes with a label 'Made in China', it is still worth buying.

Canon Raymond Lee

(summarised from an article in THE TIMES, Saturday 21st May 2011)

The 100 Club October Draw

1	70	Revd Denise
2	103	Paul Jones
3	28	Suzanne Pierce
4	92	Rev Martin Jones



Poems and prayers for the Advent Season

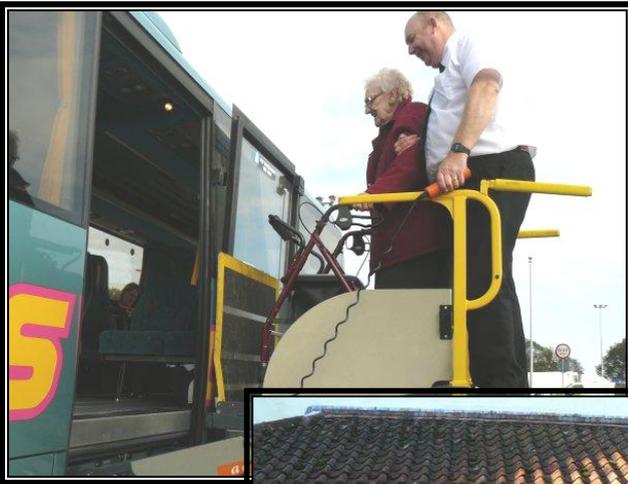


An Advent Prayer

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;
that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty
to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Advent 1955

The Advent wind begins to stir
With sea-like sounds in our Scotch fir,
It's dark at breakfast, dark at tea,
And in between we only see
Clouds hurrying across the sky
And rain-wet roads the wind blows dry
And branches bending to the gale



Images of Walsingham

**Pilgrims from the
United Benefice
joined with others in
October for a
weekend at the
Shrine of Our Lady
of Walsingham in
Norfolk.**





Entering into the spirit

Apart from the usual spiritual activities, they enjoyed a visit to a local distillery, where they sampled (and sniffed) the wares on offer

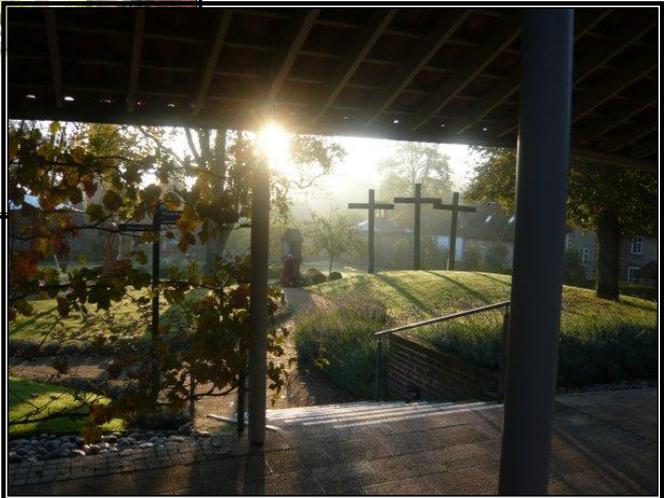




The Online Gallery



*More images of the
Walsingham pilgrimage*





We'll drink to that...!

In a break from the pilgrimage, the party visit a local distillery



A Golden Day

Mary and John Crooke celebrated their golden wedding anniversary at St Faiths'... and this time everybody had a drink!



Against great skies all silver pale
The world seems travelling into space,
And travelling at a faster pace
Than in the leisured summer weather
When we and it sit out together,
For now we feel the world spin round
On some momentous journey bound -
Journey to what? to whom? to where?
The Advent bells call out 'Prepare,
Your world is journeying to the birth
Of God made Man for us on earth.'

And how, in fact, do we prepare
The great day that waits us there -
For the twenty-fifth day of December,
The birth of Christ? For some it means
An interchange of hunting scenes
On coloured cards, And I remember
Last year I sent out twenty yards,
Laid end to end, of Christmas cards
To people that I scarcely know -
They'd sent a card to me, and so
I had to send one back. Oh dear!
Is this a form of Christmas cheer?
Or is it, which is less surprising,
My pride gone in for advertising?
The only cards that really count
Are that extremely small amount
From real friends who keep in touch
And are not rich but love us much
Some ways indeed are very odd
By which we hail the birth of God.

We raise the price of things in shops,
We give plain boxes fancy tops
And lines which traders cannot sell
Thus parcell'd go extremely well
We dole out bribes we call a present
To those to whom we must be pleasant
For business reasons. Our defence is
These bribes are charged against expenses
And bring relief in Income Tax.



Enough of these unworthy cracks!
'The time draws near the birth of Christ'.
A present that cannot be priced
Given two thousand years ago
Yet if God had not given so
He still would be a distant stranger
And not the Baby in the manger.

John Betjeman

Magnificat of Acceptance

My soul trembles in the presence of the loving Creator
and my spirit prepares itself to walk hand in hand
with the God who saves Israel
because I have been accepted by God
as a simple helpmate.

Yes, forever in the life of humankind
people will sing of this loving encounter;
through remembering this moment, the faithful
will know all things are possible in God.

Holy is the place within me where God lives.
God's tender fingers reach out from age to age
to touch the softened inner spaces of those
who open their souls in hope.

I have experienced the creative power of God's embracing arms
and I know the cleansing fire of unconditional love.

I am freed from all earthly authority
and know my bonding to the Author of all earthly things.

I am filled with the news of good things;
my favour with God,
faithful trust in the gentle shadow of the Most High,
the mystery of my son, Jesus,
the gift of companionship with my beloved kinswoman,
Elizabeth. who believes as I believe.
The place in my heart that I had filled
with thoughts of fear and inadequacy
has been emptied and I am quiet within.
God comes to save Israel, our holy family,



remembering that we are the ones who remember,
according to the kinship we have known...
remembering that we are the ones who remember
and that where God and people trust each other
there is home.

Mary Johnson

Advent Prayer

Like foolish folk of old I would not be,
Who had no room that night for Him and thee.
See, Mother Mary, here within my heart
I've made a little shrine for Him apart;
Swept it of sin, and cleansed it with all care;
Warmed it with love and scented it with prayer.
So, Mother, when the Christmas anthems start,
Please let me hold your baby - in my heart.



Sr. Maryanna, O.P.

Out of the Mouths...

After the christening of his baby brother in church, Jason sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong.

Finally, the boy replied, ‘That preacher said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, And I wanted to stay with you guys’

A **Sunday school** teacher asked her children as they were on the way to church service, ‘And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?’

One bright little girl replied, ‘Because people are sleeping.’

A **father was** at the beach with his children when his four-year-old son ran up to him, grabbed his hand, and led him to the shore, where a seagull lay dead in the sand.

‘Daddy, what happened to him?’ the son asked. ‘He died and went to Heaven,’ his Dad replied.

The boy thought a moment and then said, ‘Did God throw him back down?’

A **wife invited** some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, ‘Would you like to say grace?’

‘I wouldn’t know what to say,’ the girl replied. ‘Just say what you hear Mommy say,’ the wife answered.

The daughter bowed her head and said,
Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?

Walsingham 2011

Extracts from the daily diaries of three of the pilgrims from the recent pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham



Friday

Friday 14th October 2011 – it’s 7am and Reverend Martin Jones is wide awake and raring to go, resplendent in dog collar and cassock and, by association, so is Miriam (not in collar and cassock).....

We set off for St Oswald’s to make sure the church was set up and ready for our fellow pilgrims from St Faith’s and St Mary’s arrival in time for the 8.30 am Mass.

Everything checked, ready to go and we have an unexpected but welcome visitor – our priest-in-charge at St Oswald’s, Canon June Steventon who had come to church for Morning Prayer to find that Martin had forgotten to mention (or indeed ask if it was ok) that we were having our Pilgrim’s Mass! ‘Oh dear, I thought, what else has been forgotten...?’ The next thing I found had NOT been forgotten was my mother, Mona. Oh no, she was very much in evidence, as described in pictorial form in the magazine and website, usually aloft!



**Our Lady of
Walsingham**

A beautiful, intimate service then ensued, very much in keeping with the rest of the weekend – Martin asking that we all try and take ‘something’ from each sermon or service that we were to attend during our time at Walsingham. A phrase, a feeling, a memorable experience...such things many pilgrims have felt before and will again in the future.

Some of our fellow pilgrims ‘escaped’ as soon as they had taken Communion to ensure we were not to embark on our journey on empty stomachs – ham and cheese croissants with a cup of warm comfort to help us on our way. Many thanks to Gillian, Harry, John and Catherine.

The journey was largely (and gratefully) uneventful, our driver Dave being the perfect balance between being wonderfully polite, attentive and easy going without ‘trying to entertain’. We managed to do that all on our own... not least because Martin did actually get us to sing most of the 56 verses of the pilgrim’s hymn, albeit in instalments!

The Welcome in the Green Room by our usual host Jeremy was followed by the First Visit to the Holy House. I have now been to Walsingham several times, but I still experience a unique feeling each time I enter that place. Those wonderful words of that well known hymn ‘These stones that have echoed Thy praises are holy’ always have a special significance for me when I visit and I hope they always will.

Once settled in to our humble abode (and take it from me, the clergy abode is more humble than most) we made our way to enjoy our evening meal. Plenty of chat and ‘first impressions’ were shared over our supper and then afterwards. Some of us went to the local hostelry, whilst others joined fellow pilgrims from Rotherham (and other far flung places) to share in life experiences, expectations of the weekend to come plus many other (diverse) subjects! A full and exciting day came to an end, with joyous anticipation for the days ahead. We were not to be disappointed...read on...

Miriam Jones



Saturday

As first light dawned the windows in our room were streaming with condensation. It had been cold overnight and later as we walked through the village the similar appearance of other windows took me back to the days before double glazing and the beginning of winter. Little did we know that at the other end of the day the thoughts of Christmas would be brought right back into the forefront of all our minds at the evening service. However, we returned to the Shrine and to the chapel of the Guild of

All Souls for our 8 o'clock service. For me a service at this time is generally from the Book of Common Prayer but this was in the modern idiom and it was for me the most moving of the visit. The intercessions were compiled from suggestions made to our reverend leader and they represented the thanks and wishes of our selves and those of our companions and as such mean a lot to us all.

After breakfast (by the way the food here is very good) we went to the chapel of the Holy House to begin our tour through the stations of the cross. The last time I visited the stations of the cross was in Jerusalem almost 20 years previous. Then the Via Dolorosa was heaving with people, much I guess as it was in the time of Jesus; however many were there not for the most charitable of reasons as I had cause to persuade one of them to remove his hand from a pocket. Today at Walsingham the difference was extreme – we were in a warm sunny garden with the masses here singing a variety of hymns to suit each stopping point combined with a gentle prayer from Martin. This reliving of Eastertide proved a very emotional event for many.

In the afternoon a group of 20 of us had an enjoyable visit to a whisky distillery about an hour's drive away. Then on returning the whole community went to evening mass where we were reminded that Christmas is not far off with a sermon based upon "Mam I want a new bike" with the moral being that we do not need all the high tech paraphernalia because our faith is sufficient.

After dinner we settled down in the ground floor lounge for an evening's entertainment - but unfortunately "Strictly" had finished; but just as we were getting settled who should come in but the four ladies of St Paul's Rotherham, who the night before had provided a most inspirational evening, and the current evening proved the night before to be no exception. Whilst Norma was making bobbles out of scraps of old wool for the children's fancy dress, we heard how they had managed to increase the congregation of St Paul's even whilst being without a vicar. They had done this by engaging children in plays depicting stories from the bible, hence Norma's current task and this had resulted in over 35 families attending for that particular service which was now a regular event. Joyce on the other hand had over the last 12 months looked after and mothered over 30 foster children – most of them teenaged boys. Her stories were heart-rending and indeed inspirational and in this company we ended the second day.

John S Watkin



Sunday

By the time Sunday morning came around I had completely recovered from any disappointment I may have experienced upon arrival in Walsingham when I had found

that I'd not been allocated my wonderfully named room of two years before: 'The Angel of the Fiery Furnace'

Perhaps it was no longer necessary to have such a potent reminder of the way to behave each time one entered one's private quarters.... Nonetheless, the absence of fiery furnaces and en-suite facilities was almost compensated for by the location of a room which was directly opposite the shower room so: - easy to dive across as soon as you realised the bathroom had been vacated.

It being Sunday morning I decided that I would indulge in a little relaxation and so made myself a cuppa in one of the various kitchenettes. An extra twenty minutes in bed with my cup of tea and a chance to reflect on the previous two days of sunshine, services and the social companionship of fellow pilgrims.

Having taken a little longer with the early morning tea I found that most of the residents of my corridor had already gone to breakfast so I then had the added luxury of the bathroom to myself without feeling I was keeping people waiting. I didn't think I'd been that long but, by the time I approached the dining room, a search party (if Bill Tudhope can be referred to as a 'party') had been launched. Before I could be too overwhelmed by the concern of my fellow travellers I realised that I was only required because David needed me to sign the cheque to pay our bill!

It is the tradition to attend the 11o'clock Parish Mass at St Mary's in the village which meant more time to stroll around the grounds and the village, to read, take a quiet visit to the Shrine church or even squeeze in a little more browsing and shopping before church. I think this is one of the features of the Walsingham trip that people most enjoy: the choice of free time to spend alone or to keep the company of others, doing just as you feel. It is not a luxury frequently afforded to us in the course of our daily lives.

A leisurely stroll in the sunshine down the village street to St Mary and All Saints, Little Walsingham for a Mass on the 29th Sunday of the year gave us another opportunity to be thankful for this lovely place and our chance to be there. St Mary's is a very light, bright and beautiful church and the home congregation are well accustomed to the pilgrim 'invasion'. Something else to appreciate though as I fumbled with three separate service books was the informative clarity of our regular Sunday service sheets at St Faith's! The sermon that morning was most apposite, centring upon Matthew's Gospel 'rendering unto Caesar' etc etc. Doubtless more will be heard from this source in our forthcoming Stewardship campaign.....

Pre lunch drinks and a Sunday roast – no cooking, no washing up – perfect.

The final two services of the week-end are the Sprinkling and blessing with the waters from the ancient well after which pilgrims are asked to sit quietly and reflect. There is then the offer of afternoon tea and finally, the procession of the Blessed Sacrament with Benediction

The Sprinkling is a simple but touching and very effective service I think and it felt right to go and sit quietly in the grounds straight afterwards. It was then that perhaps one of the most significant things about the week-end occurred for me. The bench I went to sit on was already occupied by an elderly gentleman who was reading his paper. There were a couple of children nearby who were trying to make a tally of all the ladybirds in the surrounding flowerbeds. After five minutes or so the gentleman looked up from his paper and made a comment about the counting system the children were using; they seemed to have managed to rise from 36 to 932 in the space of a couple of seconds! I couldn't help but smile and reply and conversation developed from there.

This man had flown to Norwich from Edinburgh. His wife had died just 3 weeks before. It had always been her intention to visit the Shrine but she had never done so and her death had actually occurred on the 24th of September, the day which commemorates Our Lady of Walsingham. After the funeral arrangements and before returning to face the daunting task of sorting and ordering which follows a death, he was here to grieve and give thanks for their life together. Our conversation ranged over many topics - it meant I missed the afternoon tea and the final service; the procession walking along the paths around us – but that didn't matter, it seemed more important to talk and to listen. If anyone hears of a forthcoming play by a writer named McShane on either BBC radio or TV which features a ghost story, Robert Burns and an unusual gathering of The Burns' Society then please let me know; it's by the son of my friend of that Sunday afternoon.

The bell tolled for the end of the service, Mr McShane and I shook hands, I completed my job as 'key monitor' to return all room keys to reception, Mona was hoisted aloft and aboard and we were off: not quite back to reality, as I recollect the conversation taking place in some quarters on the journey home... but that's another story!

Maureen Madden



Magazine Matters

As mentioned in earlier issues, we have reluctantly decided to start charging for the printed edition of 'Newslink' as from next month's magazine. Ever-increasing church expenses, together with falling income, mean that we can no longer afford to give

away our magazine, and in charging for it we are falling in line with the majority of church magazines, including our sister publication at St Mary's.

We will ask for **75p** per copy, or a payment of **£9** per year. All but a few of our readers receive their copies through the noble efforts of our team of deliverers who, for many years, have handed out magazines in church or at home addresses to those on their delivery lists, and thereby also kept in touch with their 'customers'. When they deliver this December 2011 issue, the team members will be asking each reader to be ready to make a payment (on the spot or in the New Year!), ideally for the year's subscription, so that they can continue to receive their copies.

A fair number of readers access *Newslink* through the free online edition, and anyone wishing to get their magazine this way will be put on the growing list of those who receive an email each month when the new edition (in full colour, and often with extra pictures or features) goes online. There will be loose printed copies at the back of church as previously, so that those who prefer to do so may buy regular or occasional copies there – and of course anyone who chooses not to remain on deliverers' lists may opt out or use this occasional method.

We hope readers will understand the reasons for this development, and the need to help us close the gap between our income and our expenditure – and we look forward to welcoming you all as paid subscribers in 2012.



“Encore!”

The Saturday Recitals series for 2011 finished officially on the 24 September with a flourish from Fr Neil, Gregor Cuff and Melanie Harvey but we had another organ recital for the Patronal Festival (again, courtesy of Fr Neil). We were also lucky to have a couple of “early season” concerts in March and April.

The figures for the main season (April – October) are:

Total income (net): £2,715 (2010: £3,030; 2009: £2,892)

Total attendances: 1,373* (2010: 1,712; 2009: 1,639)

* Unfortunately, we do not have the attendance figures recorded for four recitals but, if the figures were broadly similar to last year's, this year's attendance figure should be increased by about 340. The average weekly income figure has dropped to £114 (2010: £144) but the average attendance figure is notionally about the same as in previous years (80).

The reason for this year's slight drop is not yet clear but we may get a clue with the comments from the feedback sheets. It may be that there are just so many events on each weekend that people are being more selective, especially in these difficult economic times. If you missed the opportunity to comment and wish to do so, the form can be downloaded from our website.

Nevertheless, the recital series was very enjoyable and it was particularly encouraging to see so much talent in our young people. Geoff Dunn, our hard-working Parish Office Manager, organized this year's recitals and a "thank you" to him for his support. Media coverage has been seen in the Diocesan e-Bulletin and the local Crosby Herald and, this year, we were given a boost on Radio Merseyside.

A very big "THANK YOU" must go to all the helpers, organizers and caterers who work so hard each week to ensure that everyone is welcomed and looked after. We very much appreciate the support of all our performers without whom the recitals could not take place!

Nest year, we are back to a more "usual" start so the recitals will begin on Saturday, 18 April 2012. There will be music at our Christmas Tree Festival so look out for that too. Please check our website for news and updates and the list of performers for the new series will be published in the New Year.

Thank you all for your support and we look forward to welcoming you back to our recitals again in 2012.

David Jones
Treasurer



"Silent Night"

Before I became a priest I was a producer of audiovisuals and videos. I did a series of audio cassettes with Thora Hird, Dora Bryan, Derek Nimmo and Kenneth Williams re-telling the stories of Jesus. I got to know Kenneth Williams and discovered that although he didn't go much to church he had faith in God.

I was asked to host a charity evening with Kenneth doing a selection of Christmas readings, interspersed with me asking him questions about his life and thoughts. Towards the end of the event which attracted a capacity crowd I put this well-worn question to him. "Here is a microphone. You have only one minute left to live. The whole world is listening to you. What would you say?"

He paused for only a moment and then with that familiar haughty look, head tilted backwards and nostrils flaring, he pronounced, “Nothing!” It wasn’t that he had nothing to say, for throughout the evening he was eloquent and witty and had the audience eating out of the palm of his hand. It was left to us to speculate on the reason for his silence.

In spite of his famously haughty demeanour there was a humility in his answer. I suspect that the refusal to say anything was the realisation that when we come face to face with our Maker our words dry up. So much of our pontificating turns to drivel at the prospect of how God will hear it. An encounter with God summons silence. In the psalms He speaks, “Be still and know that I am God.”

It is our Christian faith that tells us how God doesn’t wait until our death to meet with us. He does it through becoming the “Holy Child of Bethlehem”. Entering our world he has become one of us “from the womb to the tomb”. We celebrate all this through the carols we sing.

But the other way to react is to find a time to be silent. During this festive season carve out some time to be quiet – a walk, a sit in the garden, a visit to church, a gaze into the starry night. Compose yourself in silence on this year’s “Silent, Holy night” and let God look into your soul through the eyes of “Christ the Saviour”.

“Silent night. Holy night!
Shepherds quail at the sight,
Glory streams from heaven afar:
Heavenly hosts sing ‘Allelujah’,
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born.”



Peace be with you.

The Rt. Rev. James Jones Bishop of Liverpool

Christmas Worship at St Faith’s

Christmas Eve

6.00pm Christingle service

11.30pm Blessing of the Crib, Procession and Solemn Midnight Mass

Christmas Day

11.00 am Family Mass

December 26th: St Stephen, the first Martyr

10.30 am Sung Eucharist, followed by sherry and mince pies in the vicarage

The Parish Directory and Church Organisations



VICAR

Fr. Neil Kelley, The Vicarage, Milton Road, Waterloo. L22 4RE
928 3342; fax 920 2901

ASSISTANT PRIESTS

Revd Denise McDougall, 27 Mayfair Avenue, Crosby. L23 2TL. 924 8870
Canon Peter Goodrich, 16 Hillside Avenue, Ormskirk, L39 5TD. 01695 573285
Fr. Dennis Smith, 16 Fir Road, Waterloo. L22 4QL. 928 5065

READERS

Dr Fred Nye, 23 Bonnington Avenue, Crosby. L23 7YJ. 924 2813
Mrs Jacqueline Parry, 21 Grosvenor Avenue, Crosby. L23 0SB. 928 0726
Mrs Cynthia Johnson, 30 Willow House, Maple Close, Seaforth, L21 4LY. 286 8155

CHURCH WARDENS

Mrs Margaret Houghton, 16 Grosvenor Avenue, Crosby. L23 0SB. 928 0548
Mrs Maureen Madden, 37 Abbotsford Gardens, Crosby. L23 3AP. 924 2154

DEPUTY CHURCH WARDENS

Mrs Christine Spence, 52 Molyneux Road, Waterloo. L22 4QZ. 284 9325
Ms Brenda Cottarel, 6 Lawton Road, Waterloo. L22 9QL. 928 4275

TREASURER

Mr David Jones, 65 Dunbar Road, Birkdale, Southport PR8 4RJ. 01704 567782

PCC SECRETARY

Mrs Lillie Wilmot, Flat 7, 3 Bramhall Road, Waterloo. L22 3XA. 920 5563

PARISH OFFICE MANAGER

Mr Geoff Dunn 32 Brooklands Avenue, L22 3XZ . Tel & fax: 0151 928 9913
Email: sfsmparishoffice@btinternet.com

GIFT AID SECRETARY

Mr Rick Walker, 17 Mayfair Avenue, Crosby. L23 3TL. 924 6267

TUESDAY OFFICE HOUR: 6.30 – 7.30 pm (wedding and banns bookings)

Mrs Lynda Dixon, c/o the Vicarage. 928 7330

BAPTISM BOOKINGS

Mrs Joyce Green, 14 Winchester Avenue, Waterloo, L22 2AT. 931 4240

SACRISTANS

Mr Leo Appleton, 23 Newborough Avenue, Crosby. L23 3TU. 07969 513087
Mrs Judith Moizer, 1 Valley Close, Crosby. L23 9TL. 931 5587

SENIOR SERVER

Ms Emily Skinner, 1 Valley Close, Crosby. L23 9TL. 931 5587

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Sunday 11.00 am in the Church Hall. Angie Price 924 1938

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

Mrs Linda Nye, 23 Bonnington Avenue, Crosby. L23 7YJ. 924 2813

CHURCH CENTRE

1, Warren Court, Warren Road, Blundellsands

UNITED BENEFICE MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

James Roderick 474 6162

CUB SCOUTS

Tuesday 6.30 - 7.45 pm. Adam Jones 07841 125589

Thursday 6.30 - 7.45 pm. Mike Carr 293 3416

SCOUTS

Tuesday 8.00 - 9.30 pm. George McInnes 924 3624

RAINBOWS

Monday 4.45 - 5.45 pm. Geraldine Forshaw 928 5204

BROWNIE GUIDES

Monday 6.00 - 7.30 pm. Sue Walsh 920 0318; Mary McFadyen 284 0104

CHOIR PRACTICE

Friday 7.15 pm - 8.30 pm.

MAGAZINE EDITOR and WEBSITE MANAGER

Chris Price, 17 Queens Road, Crosby. L23 5TP. 924 1938

The **January 2012 'Newslink'** will be distributed on or before **Sunday, December 18th**. Copy by **Sunday, December 4th**, please (write early for Christmas) - but all contributions are welcome at any time.

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