

CROSSKEYS



The magazine for the Catholic Parish of St Peter and the Winchester Martyrs

A reflection on vocation

Deacon Tony Darlison was ordained by Bishop Philip Egan at Portsmouth Cathedral on Saturday, 8 July

As I write it is four months since I was ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons.

I am grateful for being asked to write this article, because it gives me the opportunity to reflect on this wonderful vocation.

As I started to think about what to write, the words "... she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart ..." (Lk 2:19,51) came into

Continued on page 8



Filled with the Spirit

Fr Mark Hogan explains his desire for everyone to be filled again and again

We are coming now to the end of our Year of the Holy Spirit here in the Diocese.

We've been trying to provide opportunities for you to experience Holy Spirit focused prayer times more frequently, and to enable you to grow in your knowledge and awareness of the person of the Holy Spirit, including the spiritual gifts.

I've been hoping that across the parish, through experiencing the Holy Spirit, we will become more aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst and that we will grow in the gifts and charisms of the Holy Spirit.

My deepest desire is that each and every one of us be filled with the Holy Spirit, and not just once but again and again and again.

Pope Benedict XVI, in one of his Angelus addresses, said: "Christ's entire mission is summed up in this: to baptise us in the Holy Spirit, to free us from the slavery of death, and to open heaven to us."

That's why Jesus came. This is the wonderful, life-changing Good News for you and me, and for us to share with others. Without the Spirit upon you, your life is Mission Impossible; with the Holy Spirit upon you it is Mission Possible.

What, then, does it mean for us to be

"baptised in the Holy Spirit"? Let's begin by looking at how John the Baptist uses the term at the beginning of Mark's Gospel: "I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

John is talking about Jesus.

Let's look a little more closely at that word 'baptize'. What does the Greek word 'baptizo' mean? How would it have been understood in the ancient culture?

Well, it didn't have the technical, narrow sacramental meaning that it does now. It was an ordinary word, meaning dip completely, in the sense of immersing, soaking or even submerging. Plato, in his symposium,

Wishing everyone a happy, peaceful, Christmas full of joy

Continued on page 2

Let us be ‘soaked in the spirit’

Continued from page 1

used it metaphorically to speak of being drunk (‘soaked in wine’).

What John the Baptist is saying in Mark 1:8 could be translated: “I have soaked you with water, but he will soak you with the Holy Spirit.”

If we turn now to the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, we find Jesus speaking to the Apostles: “And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, ‘you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now...”

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth...”

The last words uttered by someone are often seen as his or her most important words, and here Jesus talks about being baptised with (Greek ‘en’) the Holy Spirit. When Jesus says, “You’re going to receive power”, the Greek word for ‘power’ is *dynamis*, from which we get ‘dynamite’. This is explosive power. They will be baptised with the Holy Spirit and given explosive power, in order ‘to be witnesses’ to Jesus.

He is also speaking to you personally. You too will be empowered to make Jesus known, to bear witness to what he’s done in your life, to go out to the ends of the Earth and fulfil the great commission.

Then on the Day of Pentecost, following the original “novena” of prayer: “...they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy

Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

This Pentecost is the fulfilment of the promised baptism of the Holy Spirit. They are immersed in the Holy Spirit and become temples of the Holy Spirit.

And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

Now, why did the bystanders think that they had drunk too much wine? We’re not given the reason but maybe they were doing some of the things that people do when they’ve been drinking? Whatever it was, Peter, the Rock, in his first words following the experience of being baptised with the Holy Spirit and with fire, says: “These people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only nine o’clock in the morning.”

It’s incredible, really, and something we often skip over, that the first Catholic apologetic begins by telling the gathered crowds that the apostles aren’t drunk!

This contrast between being drunk with alcohol and being inebriated soberly with the Holy Spirit finds echoes in St Paul (“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit” – Eph 5:18) and the early Church Fathers, such as St Ambrose of Milan (“He who becomes intoxicated with wine staggers, but he who becomes intoxicated with the Holy Spirit is rooted in Christ. How truly excellent is this intoxication which produces the sobriety of the Soul!!”).

This drinking of the new wine of God, this imbibing of the Holy Spirit, is not meant just for those early disciples but for each of us today, as much as ever. Saint John XXIII spoke of “a new Pentecost”; the Blessed Paul VI went further, speaking of a “perennial Pentecost”.

This is what he said during a general audience in 1972: “The Church needs her perennial Pentecost; she needs fire in her heart, words on her lips, prophecy in her outlook. [...] The Church needs to rediscover the eagerness, the taste and the certainty of the truth that is hers [...] And then the Church needs to feel flowing through all her human faculties a wave of love, of that love which is called forth and poured into our hearts ‘by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us’ (Romans 5.5)” .

How and where do we open ourselves to this perennial Pentecost? St Ambrose, after discussing the two classic “places” in which one could receive the Spirit - the Eucharist and Scripture - hints at a third possibility, saying: “There is, too, the inebriation that follows on the penetrating rain of the Holy Spirit. We read in the Acts of the Apostles...of those who spoke in foreign tongues and appeared, to those who heard them, to be drunk on new wine.”

Alongside our personal encounter with the Lord through the Bible and the Sacraments, above all the Eucharist, each of us is invited, through prayer and an openness to the Holy Spirit – given to us in our Baptism for our own holiness and in Confirmation for the sake of others – to be filled, again and again with the new wine and the sober intoxication of the Holy Spirit.

If it’s not too irreverent, we might say that in desiring baptism in the Holy Spirit, we are looking to be “filled with the Spirit”, or “soaked in the Spirit”.

This Christmas, more than any other:

May Christ be food to us
And faith be our drink,
And let us joyfully taste
The sober intoxication of the Spirit.

(Splendor Paternae, fourth century hymn of St Ambrose of Milan).

New crucifix installed at Stockbridge

Ann Keenan tells the story behind the new crucifix at St Thomas More's

In April this year, just in time for our Good Friday and Easter Sunday services, a new crucifix was installed in our church, St Thomas More's in Stockbridge.

During recent re-decoration the old crucifix had unfortunately been damaged beyond repair. Our immediate reaction was great sadness, but we were encouraged to think of this as an opportunity to install a new crucifix of quality, a bespoke piece of art special to our church. The old crucifix was a standard item, that can be easily sourced from many Catholic repositories.

We asked our congregation for their thoughts, which were positive and encouraging, and then a brief was devised. It took longer than expected to find craftsmen with the necessary skills, an interest in the commission, and whom could work within our budget. We asked four artist craftsmen to put together a proposal for the new crucifix, after we had arranged for them to visit our church. One proposal stood out as it fully answered our brief.

The crucifix has been carved by Andy Peters, a Master Woodcarver, whose work can be seen in churches, including Bristol Cathedral. Andy also carves figureheads for traditional ships, and he was recently commissioned by the National Maritime Museum to carve a new figurehead for the Cutty Sark in Greenwich.

The cross has been constructed from oak, the corpus carved in maple, and the crown of thorns and nails carved from yew.

The crucifix was funded using a bequest from a deceased member of our community, and also a significant amount of money that our community had raised, pre-covid, with our social events.



The crucifix with its carver, Andy Peters.

Our brief to the craftsmen included St Augustine's vision of God – 'ancient but also fresh'.

We had found it interesting to read that on early crucifixes of the figure of Christ tended to be shown with the head upright, eyes open, and the arms out sideways, or slightly raised. We understand that early crucifixes tended not express the horror of death by crucifixion, but rather the nobility and gentleness of eternal life.

This was shown by the calm expression on the face and the relaxed attitude of the body. Contrast this with many crucifixes from the early Gothic period through the Renais-

sance where artists tended to focus on pain and agony.

Our craftsman has sought to use simple lines upon which the eyes can rest and reflect. Pain and suffering are emphasised by the prominent nails and crown of thorns, while 'the contrasting uplifting lines suggest an inner beauty, a permanence through faith and the coming resurrection'.

We hoped that the new crucifix would aid worship, inspire prayer, and help us to experience the presence of God. All feedback has suggested that this is certainly the case. The crucifix was blessed by Father Mark on St Thomas More's Feast Day, 22 June, this year.

Developing a culture of invitation

Allegra Matunda tells of more experiences from the Alpha courses

‘Could Alpha be a pivotal moment for you or someone you know?’

In more recent years, this has been the catchphrase you will see in most of our publicity. Alpha runs on a culture of invitation, *friends bringing friends* to a conversation about faith, life, and God which is authentic and unforced.

Just before a new season, we start a prayer campaign inviting all parishioners to pray for the next Alpha course. As part of this, we ask God to place on our hearts the name(s) of a person or people we could invite; from spouses to children to parents; from builder to hairdresser to postman; from friends to colleagues to strangers. Everyone is welcome whether they have faith or not.

The testimonies at Masses from both Alpha graduates and team are powerful because they are spoken from the heart and from personal experience. Many of those who stand up to share their journey like this have never done so. One person recently said, *“when I was asked to speak in Church of my Alpha experience, my first thought was ‘no I cannot do it, because I get stage fright standing to speak in front of people. I do not have to do this’. Then I thought this is God talking to me, giving me this opportunity to share my own experience and inspire others”*.

People were moved by those words because it takes courage to stand up there and share what can be quite personal; we are not used to speaking so publicly about our own faith. But we do this, first and foremost, to acknowledge God for who He is and what He has done and is doing in, for, and through us.

Secondly, we hope that people will hear, in our words, a prompting from God to come closer to Him; either for themselves or be spurred to invite



another. Who knows what God might do when, in faith, we take that risk?

Dani, who had joined an Alpha course in the parish a previous season, took that risk and decided to invite her mother Debbie to the next course. As a family, they had just suffered a great tragedy a few weeks earlier.

Here, Debbie shares her story...

‘I am not a cradle Catholic as I was not brought up in the faith and I had to discover it for myself. I was received into the Catholic Church in my late 20s but had meandered in and out of the Church with limited knowledge ever since.

In Autumn 2020, my daughter completed an Alpha course and strongly recommended it to me over Christmas. Then, at the beginning of January 2021, my son tragically died in his sleep at the age of 28 leaving our family bereft and grieving.

My daughter again invited me to join the Alpha course, both as a support and distraction from my grief and so, I went online and signed up!

The UK was still in lockdown and so Alpha was being run online. I attended my first session six weeks after my son’s death so you can imagine my state of mind at the time.

The sessions comprised of a large group meeting and greeting, then a video, then intimate small groups where we discussed what we had seen and shared our own stories. There was a lot of laughter and tears as we

were all very different personalities from very different backgrounds and religious beliefs and even disbeliefs.

The course culminated in a Holy Spirit retreat day, the main purpose of which is to learn more about the Holy Spirit, pray together, and ask God to fill us with His Spirit.

We all came together just before lunch for a time of prayer inviting the Holy Spirit into our lives.

I had been told that Allegra had a gift for knowing just what to pray for people and I’ve got to admit I was quite looking forward to this bit as it sounded exciting and a little scary all at the same time.

And so, the prayer time began. We started in song inviting the Holy Spirit to come upon us. And then Allegra started to share with several people what she felt God might be saying to them.

I had never been part of a prayer time like this where someone seemed to know someone’s personal, intimate details in such a way!

And then she called me by my name. I stopped still. She said *‘He is with me, but you are broken. I hold you in my hands and you will be healed.’* And then, she carried on sharing with other people, but I heard no more.

I could only see an image of bright light and of my son standing behind the shoulder of someone. I couldn’t see their face, but their arms were extended out and a dove with a broken wing sat in their hands. I remember feeling love, warmth, and joy as I sobbed my little heart out.

‘He is with me, but you are broken. I hold you in my hands and you will be healed.’

The prayer session came to an end, and we broke up for lunch which gave me an hour to compose myself

Continued on page 5

Was Alpha a pivotal moment in her life?

Continued from page 4

for the afternoon. I immediately left my house and went for a fast-paced walk as I was very agitated. Had I just imagined what had happened? Was I projecting my wants and desires into this situation because of my grief? Had I really just heard God talking to me? Me!

I hadn't really talked to God too much before. I had given thanks for things; said a few traditional prayers and even asked for a few sneaky things. But I had never heard a response, nor did I really expect one therefore I couldn't quite reconcile what had happened and I wanted to understand more.

When we returned after lunch, I asked those in my group what had just happened. Each seemed to have their own recollection of the prayer time! What was I to think? I knew I hadn't made it all up as some of it had been confirmed by others.

I can't say for sure that this was God speaking to me, but I have chosen to accept it for what it is. I hold comfort that my son is safely with God, and I trust that I will be healed in time...

If you come to Alpha, will you experience what I experienced? Absolutely not. That was unique to me and



therefore it cannot be anyone else's.

But what I can guarantee is that you will be filled with the Holy Spirit through the shared experiences of community: through laughter and sometimes tears, and you will learn more about our faith. No one knows what each person's individual journey will be like, but I would invite you to step forward and come find out for yourself.'

Allegra says:

'I didn't know Debbie or her daughter Dani at the time, nor did I know their story or the tragedy and grief that had befallen them only a few weeks' prior to the start of Alpha. I vaguely remember calling out Debbie's name, but I do not remember what I shared with her. I didn't even know that this was Debbie's experience of God during our Holy Spirit prayer time until she shared it with us at our Acorn Groups' celebration in July 2022, over a year later!'

What Debbie describes about me seeming to know personal, intimate details about another's life during the time of prayer is called a gift of 'Knowledge' or 'Word of Knowledge'. It is one of the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit as mentioned in St Paul's letters (1 Cor 12: 8, 1 Cor 13: 1-3 & v.8). It is an inspired ability, a gift of divine insight (knowledge) into a person's life or a situation that you couldn't have known by natural means (own knowledge).'

Was Alpha a pivotal moment in Debbie's life? Yes, it was!

Since her Alpha course, Debbie has continued to grow in her faith. She is one of our Alpha hosts and Acorn Groups' co-host. She is helping others grow in their knowledge and love of God and her catchphrase, *'the answer is yes; what is the question?'* inspires many of us to respond to God and see what He can do in and through us when we are open to Him and the Holy Spirit at work in us...

Could it be a pivotal moment for you or someone you know? You will only know if you take the risk! The next season begins on Tuesday, 20 February 2024. For more information or to register, please visit www.catholicwinchester.org.uk or email alpha@stpeterwinchester.org.uk

There have been several changes of personnel within the parish in the past few months and we welcome and say thank you to them respectively.

The new music team leader for the parish is **Alastair Ross**, a countertenor. He has a wealth of choral experience, having performed with 20 different cathedral choirs across the UK. His last post was leading The Choir Church Project in Portsmouth. Alastair's role is mostly focused on St Peter's, helping to sustain, build and grow our music team, and broaden participation.

Jonathan Stephens has been appointed pastoral co-ordinator for evangelisation

and joins Allegra Matunda and the evangelisation team. Jonathan will take over the leadership and development of Alpha in the parish and help lead other projects with that aim in mind. He is a Catholic convert, married with two school-aged children.

Meanwhile **Annette Parr** has departed after seven years as parish finance and property manager to begin a new role in educational finance. **Michaela Waterfield** has also given up her role as parish administration manager.

Meanwhile, housekeeper **Sarah Harfield** (pictured right) has recently completed 25 years in the role.



Music at the heart of the school

Headteacher **Louise Buxton** reports on musical activities

At St Peter's School we aim to engage and inspire children to develop a love of music.

It has a high profile throughout the school, being demonstrated not just by the high quality of music-making in the classroom but also in the range of musical events and opportunities that children engage with throughout the school year.

We aim to provide a curriculum that is practical and allows all children to experience the joys of making music, and so increase their self-confidence, creativity and sense of achievement.

We offer extensive extra-curricular activities where children can deepen and extend their learning and gain valuable musical experiences beyond those in the classroom. There is a



More than 200 pupils performed in school productions of Matilda.

wide range of instruments on offer. These may include violin, cello, guitar, drums and piano. Each week over 140 instrument lessons take place.

Many of our children go on to be part of our school band, along with con-

Continued on page 7

Little Fishes aim to nurture a sense of kindness, love and respect

'The children attending Little Fishes make a strong start to their education' (Ofsted 2023)

We welcomed the children at the start of the autumn term, some of them were excited, some of them apprehensive and some with growing confidence as they were at Little Fishes during the previous year. Whatever their experience of being away from their parents and home had been, the children have settled quickly and become a valued member of our Little Fishes' family.

We have welcomed families from all around the world this year, bringing a rich diversity to our pre-school. It has been a joy to listen to the children, who had no English language on their first day, develop a sense of belonging and grow in self-esteem, as they begin to communicate with staff and children, and join in activities.

Our planned activities started with an 'all about me' focus. These included the children looking in a mirror to paint a self-portrait and make a face out of collage materials. They have developed a sense of self and an understanding that they are all unique.

To create the feeling of belonging, parents were asked to send in photos of the front door of the family home. The children used the photo as a starting point to draw their house. The activity led to conversations about their fam-

ily, so developing a confidence in talking about people important to them and experiences. The excitement when the children recognised their front door was wonderful.

As we progress through the autumn term our new families had the opportunity in joining events such as St Peter's School bonfire night. As Christmas approaches our families will be invited to share their family traditions and celebrations, enriching the children's understanding of the world around them.

The "strong start" given to the children attending Little Fishes applies not only to the skills the children learn to be school ready, but the opportunities they are given to be curious about their world, to explore and try new things and experience and awe and wonder in their own unique way. We are looking forward to see them grow.



1973 Merry Xmas Everybody—Slade;

1974 Lonely This Christmas—Mud

Ofsted sings school praises for music

Continued from page 6

tinuing their instruments at secondary school.

'I have been learning piano at St Peter's since I was seven years old. I enjoy the piano as it allows me to be creative and I now have my grade 2. I enjoy playing a piece called 'Arabesque'. I play the flute in the school band. St Peter's School encourages everyone to get involved with music.' Anna (Year 6)

The children also have many opportunities to perform. The school choir performs at Winchester University's graduation in the cathedral each year. The spring concert, where children play solo or in ensembles, is a key annual fixture.

Another highlight is our annual production. This year two main character casts from our older classes and all our Key Stage 2 children performed the musical *Matilda*. Over 200 pupils danced, sang and acted in the four shows held in St Stephen's Church. Our wonderful PTA made a donation allowing us to have a professional sound system and scenery, while Mrs Postlethwaite rehearsed the children, attaining an amazing end result. The sense of collaboration and seeing the children's self-esteem grow makes this something that is valued by our school community. We need now to decide what the production is for next year!

'This summer we all took part in 'Matilda'. It was so exciting and we all had a chance to perform. My favourite bit were the dances and they were fun to do and to watch. Some people are so talented.' Emily (Year 6)

In our recent Ofsted, music was noted as being a highlight of what we offer our pupils.

'The teaching of music is a particular strength of the school, and a love of music is fostered across all years.' Ofsted 2023.

Mass with the travellers



Parishioners joined members of the travelling community at Micheldever on 8 July for Mass celebrated by Fr John Chadwick. Fr John is head of pastoral care with the Margaret Clitherow Trust serving marginalised communities.

Its website is www.margaretclitherow.org

Pictures by Mike Roe



1975 Bohemian Rhapsody—Queen and 1991 Bohemian Rhapsody—Queen

At heart of every vocation lies our ‘yes’

Continued from page 1

my mind. Perhaps Mary provides a holy example for all of us as we follow our vocations; in any case, she has kindly provided me with seasonal inspiration for this article.

The Angel Gabriel did not just appear to Mary (as in a dream, for example); he went in (Luke 1:28) to her house, un-announced, and stood before her - he interrupted her life. She was afraid and then confused (“how can this come about since I am a virgin?” (Lk 1:34)), but from the depths of her Immaculate Heart she gave her simple, pure and trusting “yes”. She knew what she was accepting because Gabriel had just told her, but what it meant for the detailed events of her life was yet to unfold. She pondered them in her heart, and so was prepared for her living martyrdom at the foot of the cross, and for the great out-pouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The word vocation comes from the Latin word *vocare*, to call. Every vocation starts with a calling from God, just as Mary was called by God by the message of an angel. At the heart of every vocation lies our “yes”, which, by God’s grace and Mary’s intercession, is pure and simple and trusting like hers. Like her, we know what we are saying yes to (in the case of the diaconate there are usually four years of formation, longer for the priesthood, and there is usually a period of preparation before baptism, marriage, confirmation, or religious consecration), but we do not know in detail how our vocation will unfold. We can follow Mary’s example, and occasionally ponder in our heart the treasure of the vocation we have accepted and how it is unfolding.

I suppose there are a variety of ways in which people are called, certainly not always by an angel. Those of us who are married know about falling in love with our spouse-to-be and realising that he/she might be “the one”. I know a priest who can barely



Deacon Tony Darlison, Bishop Philip and Deacon Francisco of the Bournemouth Oratory, on 8 July.

recall a time when he did not feel called to the priesthood and another who can recall the exact moment, in prayer before the Blessed Virgin, that he was called.

As to my own calling to the diaconate, I would describe it as a quiet but persistent thought that would not leave me alone. At first it did not seem very plausible since I had few skills relevant to pastoral ministry, but over the weeks and months of discernment, the Lord gradually showed me that it was not about ‘fit’ for the role (as in a job application) – He is the source of all natural ability and acquired skill and knowledge, and He gives whatever we need; no, He wanted me for His own reasons, and that was all there was to it.

My part was to say yes.

As to the unfolding, it is perhaps too soon to say much, but here are three early impressions.

During my formation, people would often kindly take an interest in how it was going. I found myself saying, “I am learning a great deal about the scriptures and Church teaching that I should have known already!”

The truth is that there was a very large gulf between my secular life, and the rather limited attention I had paid over the years to the Catholic Faith. Now I better understand that the Catholic Faith is not a jumble of disjoint propositions and practices

that we are asked to believe in; rather, it is rational, objective, coherent expression of the faith given to the apostles, handed down from generation to generation in the Church and formulated ever more beautifully and fully (see for example John Henry Newman’s *An Essay on the development of Christian Doctrine*) which we can, if we wish, spend a lifetime exploring.

Of course, whether or not we are called to understand Church documents, scripture commentaries and the like, we are certainly called to encounter the Lord and follow His commandments. To continue the seasonal flavour of this article, recall that the very first people to recognise the Incarnate Lord (apart from Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth and the unborn John the Baptist) were the shepherds, socially on the margins and probably illiterate.

In Luke’s account, they encountered Jesus not in scripture and doctrine, but in person, just as we do today in the sacraments.

My second impression is this. At baptism we are each anointed priest, prophet and king. As such, all the baptised are called as priests to intercede and make sacrifices for others, as prophets to proclaim truth by word and deed, and as kings to lead and bring healing and unity.

Continued on page 9

It is a deep joy

Continued from page 10

However, people justly request the love of the Church in a particular way from her ordained ministers.

It is a deep joy to represent the Church in this way and to respond to many devout requests; I treasure all of them.

One of my first actions following ordination was to bless a new care home. Since then, I have been asked to bless other homes, many devotional items such as rosaries and statues, and, above all, give the Lord's blessing to people and families.

Nothing could have prepared me for my first baptism (I recall thinking that if this had been the only fruit of four years preparation, it would still have been worth it). It has been a wonderful privilege to visit people in hospital, and especially to bring Our Lord in Holy Communion to Catholics, whose devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is a beautiful witness.

Finally, my third impression concerns the Sacred Liturgy. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) restored the Sacred Order of the Diaconate along with the 'minor' orders such as acolyte and lector, reasoning that, "... since the ministry of so holy a priesthood is something divine, that it might be exercised in a more worthy manner and with greater veneration, it was consistent that in the most well-ordered arrangement of the Church there

should be several distinct orders of ministers, who by virtue of their office should minister to the priesthood..." (Trent Session XXIII Ch II, The Seven Orders).

The Priest at Mass is in persona Christi (acting in the person of Christ). By serving the priest, even if largely ceremonially, deacons give greater honour to the priest and therefore to Christ.

Again, nothing could have prepared me for the first time I elevated the chalice of the precious blood with the priest holding the paten bearing the sacred host at the doxology. Being so close to the Eucharistic sacrifice has made me appreciate more deeply the priesthood of Christ and His holy priests on earth.

I am thankful every time I assist at Mass by performing the sacred duties of the deacon, especially reading the Gospel, and in the Eucharistic Rite.

May I conclude with a word of thanks to all those who have encouraged me, taught me, who helped prepare and celebrate a wonderful ordination Mass and, above all, prayed for me throughout this journey so far.

May I ask for you for your continued prayers for my ministry, and for that of Deacon Francisco of the Bournemouth Oratory, who was ordained with me and who will, God willing, be ordained to the priesthood next year. Thank you and may God bless you.

Oh when the Saints...



Liz and Tony Darlison.

November fittingly starts with the beautiful feast of All Saints, reminding us of the loving presence of the Church in heaven, and our hope to spend all eternity in unimaginable joy adoring God with His saints and angels.

Then, throughout the rest of November we remember and pray for those who have died, that our prayers may ease them into heaven, and we hope to be reunited with them one day.

One of those who we (Liz and Tony, the authors of this article) pray for is our beloved daughter Rachael, who died in 2021. We want to tell you about a little project she inspired – the Rachael Ward Saints Doll Project.

She loved the saints, and she loved painting peg doll images of the saints as children's presents.

So, some kind people at Catholic Mothers (<https://www.catholicmothers.co.uk>) organised a little project: 20 people each painted 20 peg dolls of a saint of their choosing. All the saints were posted to the organisers, then each member of the group received back a box of 20 different saint peg dolls.

Here they are in the picture – a great cloud of witnesses encouraging us by their example, and helping us by their prayers and teaching. In our house, this holy army has sanctified our hall during November. In homes with small children, they have been played with by little hands, prayed with by families, and inspired tender hearts. Those of you with keen eyes might be able to identify some of them. Happy saint spotting. All you holy angels and saints of God, pray for us.



1984 Do They Know It's Christmas—Band Aid, 1989 Band Aid II, 2004 Band Aid 20,

Graduation day...after almost 50 years

Two parishioners, **Julia Bray** and **Kay Fernandes**, recall their time at Coloma College of Education in West Wickham, Kent, and their recent graduation ceremony nearly 50 years later

Tuesday, 27 June 2023, 9am and 50 years since beginning my own teacher training, saw me and many other 65-95yr olds, specs, maps and mobiles in hand, drift into Logan Hall, University College London and join an ever-increasing queue, noisy with much chatter and squeals of recognition from long lost friends, writes Julia Bray.

As advised, I was arriving two hours before the graduation ceremony where past students were to receive honorary Bachelor of Education degrees, in recognition of achievement at the seven colleges which closed rather than merging into larger institutions.

A few wonderful alumni had been campaigning for degree status in recognition of the study and work involved in teacher training back in the 60s and 70s when it was customary to graduate with only a Cert ED, and for acknowledgement of the subsequent years of service and contribution to education.

A University of London representative had attended my Coloma College 2022 reunion and promised to do

what they could to arrange that recognition by the following year, and now that day had arrived!

Our early arrival had been crucial to allow time for us all to gown up, get our certificates, have our photographs taken and then grab a very necessary coffee and catch up with old friends.

As 11am approached, we took up our allotted seats in Logan Hall. The Zoltan Duo from the Royal Academy of Music played the processional music while the dignitaries arrived on stage. Vice-Chancellor Professor Wendy Thomson CBE gave the welcome address "It is my great pleasure to reside over today's ceremony to celebrate the long overdue recognition of your dedication and hard work as teachers."

The usual climbing up and down stairs to get on and off stage when receiving a degree while one's nearest and dearest did their best to photograph the moment, had been replaced, I assume for health and safety reasons, with us remaining in our seats. Individually we rose to applause as names were read out and a very nimble photographer hurried in and out of the rows and aisles taking the necessary photograph.

And then, now fully graduated, we filed out across the road and into the lovely Senate House for the very



Julia Bray.

welcome reception, still in our robes and having startled many passers-by wanting to know why we were all so much older than the usual graduate!

It was a delicious and unhurried lunch with many more photographs and conversations taking place.

Coloma College was a Catholic college with a chapel at its very centre. It had plenty of Irish students when I was there back in 70s, arriving partly to escape The Troubles for a while. They brought such fun and life with them and have been the instigators and organisers of our now annual reunions and Covid WhatsApp and Facebook groups.

A perfect day all round.

At the age of 18 I began my training to be a primary school teacher; 100 miles distant and away from home for the first time was a daunting prospect, writes Kay Fernandes.

I had always wanted to be a teacher and my school had a link with Mary Hare Grammar School for the Deaf where I enjoyed my work experience. This only confirmed that teaching children was to be my true vocation.

After much consideration I had chosen Coloma College of Education in West Wickham, Kent. My cousin had enjoyed her training there 10 years earlier. Coloma was established by the Sisters of the Ladies of Mary and the threads of faith were intricately woven into many aspects of my life there. The three-year course was rigorous, each student chose a main and subsidiary subject.

We also studied all subjects on the primary school curriculum and the psychology, sociology and philosophy of education.

We had a full timetable, attending lectures from 9am until 4pm daily. Teaching practice was approached with a mixture of excitement and trepidation and each student was assigned a school/class during one term out of the three terms that made up the academic year.

We would all pile onto one of a line of coaches at 6.30am with all our 'audio visual aids'. At that time there were no computers, printers, or photocopiers to help teachers prepare.

Anything that would help the children learn had to be

Continued on page 11

made by each trainee teacher and during each teaching practice I survived on a minimum of sleep. The bonus was the real experience of being in the classroom and engaging with children.

Each student had an assigned lecturer whose role was to observe you in the classroom, discuss your approach with the class teacher and grade your achievement. To this day I have a recurring dream of that person appearing at the back of the classroom with the obligatory clipboard and my heart in my boots!

At college I made lifelong friends. Our paths have gone separate ways, but we share many unforgettable memories and look forward to meeting up when we can. There were many students from Ireland and the fun we all had, any excuse for a party!

I left after three enriching years and began a varied and fulfilling teaching career. I've run pre-school groups, while living in Singapore I taught Japanese children English.

Back in England I was employed in primary schools and also taught the First Communion programmes in two parishes.



Kay Fernandes.

My favourite teaching subject is religion as it's a joy to be able to engage in a subject that means so much to me. As a teacher of religion comparative religions are also explored and this is so enlightening for myself and pupils alike. Encouraging children to understand, engage and respect other religions is a privilege and children have so much to teach us about acceptance and tolerance.

To my delight I found out recently that any teacher training college affiliated to London University was offering an honorary teaching degree to past students. I was eager to apply and be approved for this prestigious award after nearly 40 years of teaching.

I had a wonderful couple of days in London accompanied by my husband, cousin (who had also trained at Coloma) and her husband.

The ceremony was traditional, and I wore that gown and mortar with such pride. I feel blessed to have been a part of so many children's lives and experienced my career through my faith.

The words of Pope John Paul II expresses this so well. "The life of a teacher, as I know from personal experience, is very challenging and demanding, but it is also profoundly satisfying. It is more than a job, for it is rooted in our deepest convictions and values"

From primary to dance for older people

I attended Coloma College of Education from 1973 to 1976 and remember my time there as some of the happiest years of my life, writes Julia Bray.

On graduating in '76 with the then customary Cert Ed, my task was to find a job when there was a surplus of teachers, and training colleges were having to close.

I spent my first working year as a supply teacher in Division 5 (Tower Hamlets) of Inner London Education Authority, moving from school to school often several times within the same week! Quite the baptism of fire!

The following year I secured a post at St Mary Magdalene's a lovely Catholic Junior School in Willesden Green, where I stayed until I got

married a couple of years later.

Early married life included three years in Amsterdam where I sometimes worked as a supply teacher in both the International and the British schools.

However most of my teaching was with English as a Foreign Language, teaching Japanese children and their mothers and also their businessmen fathers after office hours.

Once returned to England, I realised my dream of studying dance at The Laban Centre in London. I had studied the art of movement and dance as my main subject while at Coloma College and was overjoyed to now study dance again as an art in itself and also in education, and went on to teach dance in secondary schools.

Back in London and with two young

children of my own I reverted back to occasional supply teaching and maternity cover in our local primary school, then once my twins were born we moved to Winchester.

Eventually the opportunity to use both dance and teaching skills arose once more as I co-led St Peter's Youth Theatre aka SPYT with Deb Falconer for seven years. We had so much fun producing and choreographing a variety of plays from *The Little Shop of Horrors* to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Nine years ago, and approaching 60 myself, I did a new diploma qualification: Leading Dance for Older People, and have since thoroughly enjoyed teaching this delightful age range and the opportunity to use some of the skills acquired at Coloma 50 years ago.

Fund-raising through the century

Parish archivist **John Thornhill** looks back at Christmas bazaars

When Canon John Henry King came to Winchester as parish priest in February 1923 he found the old church in a sorry state.

An attempt to build a new church in the early-1900s, using a legacy left by Fr Ignatius Collingridge, had failed. Not enough additional money was raised to cover the entire building costs. Now Canon King persuaded the bishop to build a new church using the legacy plus borrowing the shortfall.

The church opened in 1926 with a £6,000 debt. Almost immediately a committee was established to organise fund-raising events.

It decided that although activities such as jumble sales had their place, alone they would never wipe out the debt. More ambitious events were needed.

The first of these was a garden fete held at Wyke Mark, Weeke in June 1927, which raised £113. In October a whist drive and dance was held at the Guildhall. The year's events ended in November with a bazaar and sale of work held over three days in the old school rooms in St Peter Street. The rooms were seasonally decorated and a wide range of stalls were organised; all the stallholders and helpers being parishioners.

The success of these events was attributed to the advertisements placed in the local press welcoming all-comers. This was a lesson well-learned.

The venue for the following year's Christmas bazaar was moved to The Regent Hall in Jewry Street. Opened by the Mayor and Mayoress of Winchester, the list of patrons looked like entries from Who's Who. The advert listed stalls for fancy and plain needlework and knitwear (all produced by ladies of the parish);



A doll stall at the 1950 Christmas fair.

children's cloths; sweets; home produce; pound stall; tobacco; toys, plus side shows, teas, competitions, a children's concert. "All the fun of the fair – come and buy your Christmas presents". Open from 2pm to 10pm. Admission free. £163 was raised.

So began the era of St Peter's Church grand Christmas bazaars. By 1930, the event was advertised as "Bazaar & Fun Fair" and ended with a "capital dance at popular prices" until 1am. In 1938 the long worked-for day arrived – the debt was paid off and the church was consecrated with great ceremony in September by the now Bishop King.

The war years saw an end to large scale fund-raising until 1945 when a small Christmas fair was held at the church. Two years later, the fair was back at The Guildhall as big and vibrant as ever. The challenge now was to raise £10,000 for the renovation and extension of the Gordon Road school.

The people of Winchester obviously remembered the pre-war St Peter's fairs for they flocked to the event. It ended with an Old-Time and Irish dance organised by the St. Peter's Ceildhe Club. Overall, an outstanding success raising over £400. Each year, stalls aimed to out-do the

year before. The doll stall of 1950 run by the St Agnes Girls' Group, was titled "The Wedding of the Painted Doll". The dolls were beautifully dressed by the girls themselves.

A miniature wedding group, staged in front of a model of St Peter's Church, was the work of the Batchelor family – DC Batchelor made the model, Elizabeth dressed the wedding group and Nola (third from the left) was the "live doll". The little wedding scene was won in a competition by the Mayor, Cllr. Stanley Evans (the first Catholic mayor since the Reformation).

Each year different ways were thought up for stimulating interest in the bazaar.

In 1956 pictures appeared in the local papers of the three priests, wearing clerical collars and aprons, together in a kitchen mixing cakes. They had been challenged by the ladies to a cake making competition to be judged at the Christmas bazaar. Whether or not they won any prizes is lost to history!

Then there was the opening ceremony. In the early days, the "great and the good" had performed that

Continued on page 13

Have you ever had a God wink moment?



Firstly, let me explain what a God wink moment is; It is a time when we see an occurrence in our life or in that of someone we encounter, where the hand of the Lord at work is revealed to us.

At first it might seem to be a coincidence and many people would describe it as such. But to us, these personal touches don't just happen by chance. They're messages sent directly from God; it is in fact a wink from a loving Father who wants us to know He's watching over us all, His way of getting our attention.

In Acorn groups this past year we have been sharing our own God winks at the beginning of our meetings. And trying to allow ourselves to be more aware of such moments to be more open to considering such events, even small, seemingly insignificant ones as something intentional, as part of a divine purpose.

Our very small part in God's infinite plan but nonetheless important.

One of our Acorn group members Moira, recounts below one of her God wink moments as she was on

Continued from page 12

function but as the times became less formal, the organisers began to look elsewhere. In 1953 the Irish film star, Kieron Moore, performed the honours. A popular choice, he helped at the stalls and was mobbed by youngsters for his autograph.

Looking back, it's impossible not to be impressed by the enthusiasm, ingenuity, commitment and sheer hard work the people of the parish put into their fund-raising; especially into what in its heyday the *Hampshire Chronicle* called "the Premier Christmas Bazaar in Winchester".



Have you had a God wink moment?

the way to our annual retreat, which she felt goes to show there is often more to coincidence than meets the eye...

I was intending to drive to the retreat originally, but decided maybe I would take the train instead.

A young woman came and sat next to me on the train, and then asked me if I had a tissue I could spare. Luckily, I had a small packet to share with her.

I asked her if she was OK, and she said she was, but she had a nose-bleed. Then she pointed to a badge that passengers can choose to wear to show they are pregnant.

She had a hijab on, so I guess Muslim. I congratulated her and asked her a few questions. She then said that she was very concerned about her baby – she had arranged a check-up because she was worried it wasn't moving.

We talked about this and about her life – she was happily married and she and her husband and both their families were very excited about welcoming a new baby. So, the situation was a real worry, but she knew she had to try not to stress about it.

We chatted gently – obviously no good saying 'everything will be all right' but I tried to be comforting and encouraging...

Eventually I said that I was going to a prayer retreat, and I said that if it was okay with her, I would like to get everyone to pray for her and her health, and to light a candle for her.

She was so pleased and happy, she said she would love for us to do that. I told her to be assured that we would be holding her in our prayers and bringing her to God the whole weekend, and she should think of that whenever she was worried about what was happening.

We kept talking till it was time for her to get off the train.

I obviously will never know what the outcome was, but I do believe that I was meant to be on the train with her, just so she had someone to talk to in a low-pressure way, and so her face could light up when I offered prayers.

It wouldn't have mattered who it was on the train with her, but God put me in her way to try to help her a little bit.

Pope's message to young Catholics

Jo Donaldson reports on the summer events at world youth day in Portugal

From 1-6 August 2023 a group of young adults from St Peter's Parish were fortunate enough to be able to attend World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal.

We were part of a larger group of 50 from all around Portsmouth Diocese. World Youth Day is a worldwide encounter between young people and the Pope.

It occurs approximately every three to four years in a chosen country.

Having the opportunity to be in the same space as Pope Francis and to celebrate the youth of the Catholic Church was incredible.

There were dedicated Masses and Liturgies held by Pope Francis where up to one million young people were in attendance.

At the events, and around Lisbon, everyone was full of energy and enthusiasm! It was incredible to see so many different nationalities gathered together to celebrate.

Everyone was wearing their own country/diocesan variation of the World Youth Day T-shirt, and many were waving large flags for their country/diocese. The variety of flags and t-shirts was a reminder of the dedication each person had to their identity in Christ as a young catholic.



Messages of friendship.

It was noisy almost everywhere with people singing, dancing and chanting, happy to be gathered together for such a special celebration.

Due to the large numbers of people and the need to go through security, we often had to arrive really early (2-4 hours) before the event actually started. This meant that there was plenty of time to socialise with other attendees. We were able to speak to other young people who had travelled from all



Happy to gather for a special celebration.

over the world just to be there and encounter Pope Francis. It was incredible to hear their stories and get to know them.

Sometimes, in our parishes or in our immediate circles, we might feel as though young people are a minority in our Church or that we are alone in our faith. Coming to World Youth Day helped disprove that. It helped us to see that we are part of a family of millions of young Catholics worldwide, and while our own parishes might have smaller numbers of young people, the world doesn't!

Pope Francis' message to young people was to "go in haste to others, just like Mary".

He spoke about how, after the Annunciation, Mary could have focused on herself but instead she set out completely entrusting herself to God's plan: "The Mother of the Lord is a model for young people on the move, who refuse to stand in front of a mirror to contemplate themselves or to get caught up in the 'net'. Mary's focus is always directed outwards."

Pope Francis encourages us to arise and embrace those who are different, going out and spreading the good news to others; "now is the time to set out in haste towards concrete encounters, towards genuine acceptance of those different from ourselves." We are called to use our wonderful experience at World Youth Day to "arise and go in haste", just like Mary did.

Pacers tackle Clarendon Marathon

Sarah Layzell reports on a special group of running enthusiasts

In January 2021 as the world grappled with the challenges and uncertainties brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, the spirit of resilience and determination shone through in unexpected places.

Among the many stories of communities coming together during lockdowns, a tale emerged from the heart of St Peter's church, where a group of parishioners and St Peter's school parents found camaraderie and motivation in the simple act of running.

In the early days of the lockdown, a small group of individuals decided to take up running to combat the monotony and isolation of quarantine, and attempt to maintain their fitness among the gym closures at the time. What began as a solitary pursuit soon evolved into a small community of like-minded individuals.

The group started with a handful of members and slowly expanded to around 15 people, of whom at least five or six gather early every Saturday morning to enjoy a run and a chat, (Some are more able to chat than others and some are more chatty at the beginning than the end!) This 'spirited' group eventually adopted the name St Peter's Pacers.

What makes The Pacers special is not just their enjoyment of running, but the sense of togetherness and appetite for a challenge in their shared passion. Although individually many had entered various different races in various locations, this October, they took a bold step by competing as a team in the Clarendon Marathon, a gruelling 26-mile run that stretches from Salisbury to Winchester.

Their togetherness was further exemplified by the striking running vests designed by the talented Clare Gray. In a twist of bad luck - or poor customer service, the vests nearly didn't arrive in time for the race. Tom Gray



Tom Gray, Sarah Layzell, Neil Hickman, Thomas Prince and Millie Jones.



Mel Gori and Dominic Rowland, headed out to the delivery yard in Alton in search of the team apparel, eventually sweet-talking the security guard and rescuing the box from the back of a van just the day before the race. Proving that no matter the obstacles, St Peter's Pacers were a force to be reckoned with!

So, suitably kitted out in their St Peter's Pacers running vests, themselves a testament to the power of WhatsApp polls, three remarkable individuals, Tom Gray, Thomas Prince, and Tom Luker, set off for the start line in Salisbury early on the morning of 1 October. This intrepid trio of Toms conquered the full marathon, completing the entire, arduous distance.

Millie Jones, another member of the group, ran the half-marathon that began in Broughton, and the relay team, comprising Dominic Rowland, Mel Gori, Neil Hickman, and Sarah Layzell, joined forces to tackle the challenging 26-mile distance. Each member took on a leg of the race, contributing to the collective effort.

The parish had further representation on the day with Chris Ennis also running the marathon and many other parishioners serving as stewards or manning water stations along the way. All of them ready with a cheery wave, or startled look, as we ran past.

The Clarendon Marathon, known for its undulating terrain (to say the least) and tough competition, witnessed an impressive performance by the Pacers relay team who came 8th /50 in the mixed teams category.

However, the crowning achievement came from the exceptional Tom Gray, who demonstrated his incredible talent by finishing third overall with an impressive time of 3hrs 2 mins! Consequently, this meant Tom had the longest wait of all as he and many of the other Pacers remained at the finish to cheer their teammates in as they crossed the line.

And so to next year! The challenge has been set and the Pacers hope to return with a stronger, faster team to pick up the gauntlet - or baton, again.

The group meet every Saturday morning from about March – October. Start times vary between 6:30 and 7am to run 10 miles comprising of two five mile sections at an average of just under nine minutes per mile. To join or find out more, speak to one of those mentioned or leave a message with the parish office.

Preparing for a life of marriage

Pip Redding outlines the background to marriage preparation courses and Elise Horn (nee West) reflects on her experience of taking part

Marriage Preparation courses are run three times a year at the pastoral centre at St Peters Church.

The course material, training and support is supplied by Marriage Care, a charity which provides marriage preparation courses for couples marrying in the Catholic Church. All of the facilitators are volunteers and have undergone rigorous training with Marriage Care.

The course is for one day and is friendly, informal and welcoming with the emphasis on building and sustaining a healthy, loving relationship rather than focusing on the wedding day itself.

There are sessions on communication, expectations, the influence of early years and family of origin and more. Couples are given plenty of materials, resources and skills to take forward in their lives together.

The next course is being held on 27 January and there is currently space for one more couple to attend, the following course will be in June with another in October.

When couples plan their wedding at any of the churches in the parish they are given details of how to book on to a Marriage Preparation day. Further information about Marriage Care can be found at www.marriagecare.org.uk.

We were planning to marry in July 2023 in my childhood church in Winchester.

The priest told us we'd need to go on a marriage preparation day. My fiancé Freddy's not religious and was a bit nervous and a little sceptical about the whole thing. When I told my friends about the course, they were taken aback because they've never heard of anything like this.

The couple running the course were really nice and funny, and I knew of their family growing up, so we felt at ease. They used lots of different presentation styles throughout the day, so it made it fun and interesting, I'm a visual learner so that stuck in my mind as a way to help me listen actively.

Throughout the course, there was a real emphasis that marriage isn't easy or straightforward for anyone, and every couple will have issues; having problems in your marriage is normal. The course highlighted the importance of speaking to each other, especially if there's an issue. We realised we mustn't ignore the small things but speak about them openly and this will strengthen our marriage and help us build on our relationship.

We also realised that reflecting on our relationship is so important. We've been thinking so much about the wedding day itself, but now we see that we should also be thinking about what comes after, and the rest of our lives too.

Although it's a Catholic course aimed at people getting married in Catholic churches, there's so much in it that's relevant for every couple. I thought it was brilliant and spoke so highly of it afterwards to my friends! I think they were quite surprised! I'd definitely recommend it to anyone.



Freddy and Elise Horn.

'Lord, teach us to pray' – Exploring different forms of prayer.

One of the follow-ups to Alpha is a prayer course, led by Allegra Matunda, but anyone is welcome to join.

For us all, prayer can be challenge. How or why do we pray? Through these sessions, we will not only explore different forms of prayer, but we will have the opportunity to practise that way of praying, helping us grow deeper in faith as we encounter God through prayer. These six sessions will be **online** starting Monday, 15 January 2024.



Interested in joining? Contact Allegra Matunda email allegra@stpeterswinchester.org.uk or register here <https://forms.office.com/r/XF45AGJuKk>

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