St Pancras



Easter issue - April 2026

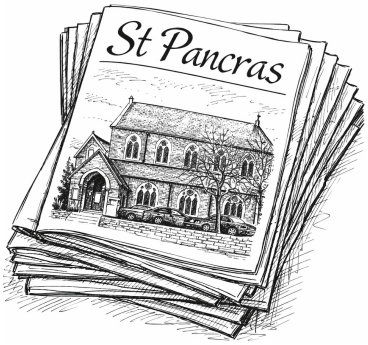
St. Pancras Parish Magazine, Easter 2026

Also available at *http://www.stpancraschurch.org.uk/*



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Editor's note:

As this issue goes to print, it seems only fitting to offer a word of sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to its pages. In particular, those who have submitted something for the first time.

A reminder, too, that material for the next issue should be submitted by Sunday 13th September 2026, to st.pancras.magazine@outlook.com

Tilly Rampley

Front cover: Resurrection, 1635, by Bartholomeus Breenbergh.

Back cover artwork:

The painting on the back cover, titled The Passion Flower - Passiflora caerolea.The passion flower is symbolic of the Passion of Christ. The radial filaments represent the Crown of Thorns. The three pronged stigma indicates the three nails. The petals refer to the ten faithful Apostles. The five anthers represent Christ's five sacred wounds and the central vertical element represents the pillar to which Christ was tied before He was scourged.



St. Pancras Roman Catholic Church is part of The East Anglia Catholic Diocesan Trust.
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Strumming Harps

By Father Joseph

Pottering along the local high street, amidst the bustle of shoppers and buskers, street preachers, charity collectors, and those simply idling away a few minutes with friends, it often seems that for all the buzz generated by the energetic preoccupations of hunting for bargains, hurrying to meetings, and gossiping about the day, many people are remarkably bored. Perhaps they are, perhaps they are not; it is difficult to be sure. But what is sure is that, even on the faces of those who are strolling by leisurely, as opposed to those caught up in the frenetic chase of daily life, only occasionally is it possible to detect any real signs of animation or delight. If they are doing one of the things they most enjoy – and various surveys suggest an increasing number of people list shopping as a leisure activity or even a hobby – why do they seem to enjoy it so little?

Maybe this is unfair. Maybe that look of boredom is, in fact, the expression of an unostentatious and profound inner peace which remains undisturbed by all the comings and goings of the shopping centre. Well, maybe. Whatever the reality, we, as a race, seem intent on the pursuit of the novel. Certainly in the West this craving is fed by our consumer society's very clever advertizing strategies. We, none of us, like to admit that we are persuaded by what we see on the screen or in magazines, but merely recognizing a brand name or a corporate identity can nurture a sense of familiarity, and thereby inspire confidence in a product or a person. After all, the familiar is almost invariably less threatening – and, as a result, usually more welcome – than the unfamiliar. It is often said that people are reluctant to move out of their comfort zones but, given how uncomfortable some people's zones are, it might be more accurate to say that people tend to be afraid of moving out of their familiar zone.

Many of us would rather keep to what we have and to what we know than risk losing our sense of security for the sake of something untried, untested, and unknown. So, trusting to what we, perhaps subliminally, absorb from advertisements and from the recommendations of peers, we fuel our common hankering after the new by rewarding those manufacturers and retailers who spend so much time and effort on attracting our attention with their ever-updated products, and allow ourselves to be persuaded that by buying their goods we have somehow improved the quality of our lives. The circle becomes a relentless upward spiral of spending and of social competitiveness. Or perhaps that should be a downward spiral. Internet opportunities, and the immediacy of the various social media, help to bring about what, anecdotally at least, seems to be a correlation between the increasingly rapid availability of goods, entertainment, and communications on the one hand, and, on the other, a continually diminishing attention span. Once upon a time huge tracts could be memorized – for example, the great tales of former eras such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Iliad, the Odyssey, and our own Beowulf – and handed on to successive generations.

Nowadays it seems as much as most of us can do to remember where we put the car keys. But with our decreasing capacity for remembering – with our making shallow, as it were, of our faculty for attentiveness – has come a heightened demand for diversions that will flit across the surface of the pools of our minds, make a brief splash, and leave an ineffective ripple in their wake. Does this, one wonders, account for the perennial popularity of detective stories in films and in television series? The complexity of conspiracy theories is intriguing because they lead us a dance and fool us into believing that we are thinking. Yet police stories as well as convoluted and intricate political plots, lead us only as far as the end of the twisted lane. Once there, we have nowhere else to go, and re-watching – or, in the case of books, re-reading – is barely worthwhile.

Once we know who did it, our desire for novelty has been sated. We turn off, or put down the book, and go in search of the next galvanizing thrill, or, in the case of horror stories, white-knuckle rides, and extreme sports, we seek out the next rush of adrenalin. As with any habit, the more we do something, the easier it is to do it the next time. Or, to put it another way, the more we surrender to an impulse, the harder it will be not to surrender the next time. Over time, the pools become more and more shallow, and it takes less and less effort to produce the surface ripples. Is it any wonder that those who are so attuned to the immediacy of electronic forms of communication and entertainment find it so difficult to stop, to be silent, to spend uninterrupted time exclusively in the company of their own thoughts with no intrusions from the outside? At the same time, the irony is not lacking that sees more and more people going on retreats, and searching for quiet places, simply to be. 'Be still and see that I am God,' (Ps 45:11). At a moment of great distress, as Jezebel was seeking him out to put him to death, the prophet Elijah hid in a cave but was called to the cave mouth and told to stand before the Lord and listen to His voice.

A storm-level wind that broke the rocks passed the mountain, followed by an earthquake, which in turn was followed by a great fire. But the Lord was not in any of these cacophonous classical elements. Only when the prophet heard the whistling of a gentle air did he know that he stood in the presence of the Lord, and he covered his face with his mantle (3 Kgs 19:9-13). To hear the voice of the Lord we must be still. To hear His gentle calling we must shut off the discordant sounds of the godless world around us. To be at peace in the presence of the Lord we must turn our backs on the distractions of this world, for even those things around us which are in themselves good, or at least morally neutral, are still not God, and do not necessarily lead us to God. As one saint has put it, 'He who wishes for anything but Christ, does not know what he wishes; he who asks for anything but Christ, does not know what he is asking; he who works and not for Christ, does not know what he is doing,'[1]

1 From the Maxims of St Philip Neri.

The peace that passes all understanding (Phil 4:7), the peace that this world cannot give (Jn 14:27), is only to be found in the company of the living God. It is not a happiness that comes with excitement or with an adrenalin rush; it is not the happiness of physical pleasure or material comfort; it is not something that comes with personal, financial or emotional security. It is not even the happiness that comes with a sense of achievement or accomplishment, or of personal fulfilment. It is not a happiness that can be satisfied with any passing thing. Indeed, it is not a happiness at all, at least not in the sense that most of us ordinarily understand that word. The peace of God is something altogether different from anything that we can attain through the media of our five senses or of our emotions. Rather, the peace of God may perhaps best be described as a form of ballast in the soul, something of substance that is present deep down within us and that serves to keep us on an even keel even when the waters around us are choppy.

It is something that remains undisturbed by the tribulations of this life. Such peace does not guarantee that we will never again experience upset or affliction, but it is something which, in such moments, we can nevertheless seek out in our inmost depths, to which we can return, whenever we suffer any distress of mind or body. To the minds of this restless world such a form of peace may seem humdrum, unexciting, or quite simply dull. It does not seem to meet our craving for the next exhilaration. Yet, ironically, it is precisely because we look in all the wrong places for a sense of satisfaction that we have continually to accept that what we have found so far has not satisfied us and that, therefore, we must go in search of something else instead. But, as St Augustine discovered, 'You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts shall not rest until they rest in Thee.'2 Most of us have, perhaps, never experienced such a peace, or if we have it has probably been only fleeting. As a result, we do not know what to expect from such a state of being; we cannot imagine what it will look or feel like in eternity. If people in general expect that heaven will consist of a state of inactivity, where angels sit on clouds and strum harps endlessly, then it is no wonder that Christianity is not an attractive proposition. Once again the devil has taken a kernel of truth, namely that the state of beatitude will involve great peace of mind and body, and twisted it into something that must inevitably appear boring.

The truth is that whilst we can know certain things about heaven as a state – for example that we shall be like God because we shall see Him as He really is (1 Jn 3:2), that every tear and sorrow shall be wiped away (Apoc 21:4), and that there will be much rejoicing over every soul that enters heaven (Lk 15:10) – none-theless we cannot imagine what heaven will be like, we cannot picture it. And the reason for this is that we can only see reality through the filter of time, and time, to make use of the most basic definition, is simply the measure of change. But in eternity there is no change. As a result, whatever activity or state we suppose heaven to consist of, we can only envisage it as something that goes on forever and ever, always the same and, therefore, something that sooner or later will saturate us with the spirit of ennui. In fact, heaven – whatever it actually turns out to be like – will be wholly different from anything our finite and time-bound minds can imagine. However, what we do know is that God dwells in an eternal present, that with God – we might say, in God – there is no future and no past. In other words, eternity is not something that stretches infinitely backwards to some unfathomable origin, nor will it extend before us to some distant time or place beyond our mental horizon. In heaven there will be no future and no past: there will be only an eternal present. And because there will be no future – because there will be no possibility of change, no potential for change – heaven will consist of the actual: the fulness of the here-and-now, the perfection of the present moment, the completion of all that is. Nor must we think of this actual as something desiccated or dead.

On the contrary, this eternal moment, far from being the unchanging stagnation that we might fear, will be the unconditional, the immeasurable, the ecstatic, the defi-nitive experience of life itself. Only when we encounter this fulness of life will we appreciate that it, and it alone, can truly satisfy us; only then will we properly value the idea of an eternal present; only then will we be glad that such a moment will never pass away…except that we shall be too engrossed in that moment to think any such things!

2. Confessions, I i (I).

The Passion Fruit and the Passion of Christ

by William Rampley, aged 15

I had read before about the connection between the passion fruit and the Passion of Christ, and when I saw the drawing on the back cover of this magazine — my mother being the editor means I sometimes get to see things a little early — it brought it back to my mind, and I thought it was rather interesting. The passion fruit comes from South America, including Brazil, where it had been grown long before European missionaries arrived. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Spanish and Portuguese missionaries, many of them Jesuits, travelled there to teach people about Christianity. This was not always easy, as language and culture were very different. It was here that the passionflower became surprisingly useful. The missionaries noticed that the flower seemed to reflect parts of Christ's suffering during the Crucifixion, which is known as the Passion. For instance, the ten petals and sepals were said to represent the ten faithful apostles (excluding Judas and St Peter). The crown-like filaments in the centre were thought to resemble the crown of thorns, the five stamens the five wounds of Christ, and the three stigmas the nails used in the Crucifixion. Even the tendrils were said to look like the whips used during the scourging. Because of this, the flower was given the name Passiflora, referring not to emotion, but to the suffering of Christ. In this way, the flower became a simple but effective way of explaining the story of the Passion. Rather than using only words, the missionaries could point to something people could see and understand. Over time, the fruit became known as the passion fruit, and the name has remained ever since. I think it is rather remarkable that something as ordinary as a flower could be used to explain something so important. It makes one realise that even in nature, is a reminder of deeper things, if one takes the time to notice them.



1. When and where did modern greyhound racing start?
2. Which country won the race to land the first man on the moon?
3. But do you know name and country of the first impact (unmanned) landing on the moon?
4. When was the first recorded bicycle race in history and where did it take place?
5. How long (metres) was the race and who won?
6. The TT Races are an annual motorcycle event. But where are they held and what does TT stand for?
7. When and where were the first modern Olympic Games held?
8. When and where were the very first Olympic games held?



9. What was especially noteworthy about these early games?
10. Which is thought to be the top race track (cars) in the UK?
11. Which film is famous for it's chariot race?
12. What is considered to be the world's oldest swimming race?
13. Who were the first to row across the Atlantic from New York to England?
14. What do the "Castlebar Races" actually refer to?
15. Who ran the first Marathon?
16. What was the reason for this and how far did he run?
17. Who was considered to be the swiftest deity in Greek mythology?
18. And the fastest mortal?



19. Where do the World Snail Racing Championships take place?
20. What are the starters words?
21. Who told the famous fable, the Tortoise and the Hare?
22. Which two famous clipper ships raced from Shanghai to London in 1872 and who won?
23. What famous boat race first took place in 1829?
24. What is the most famous running race in the world today?
25. Which family name is associated with Blue Bird cars?

Answers on p 19

Response to Music – The Music of Lent



Mim MacMahon

Pieces discussed:

Richard Farrant – Call to Remembrance

Richard Farrant – Hide Not Thou Thy Face

Richard Terry – Richard de Castre's Prayer to Jesus

Franz Liszt – Via Crucis introduction "Vexilla regis prodeunt"

As I write, the season of Lent is a few days in, and I haven't, I will confess, yet come to grips with it. This year, for me, Lenten privations are made more meaningful, and also more difficult, because for the next few days I will be on a special diet prior to a medical procedure; so cheese, which I had given up, is one of the few things left on the diet list that is approved for me to eat. Awkward. Lent comes, also, in my favourite season – the very early spring. Returning light and the opening of spring flowers bring a lift to the spirits, strangely in contrast with privation and sorrow for sin. Part of it, though. So, through the years, my personal response to Lent has been through listening to, and performing, the music proper to this season. It is actually my favourite music of any type. It is rich, austere, poignant, majestic, and just beautiful. And not miserable or depressing.

Sad, yes, but sadness is different. Minor keys proliferate, it is true, but quiet exultation is there also. My old friend from schooldays, the hymn "Forty Days and Forty Nights" starts grimly enough, but culminates in "the eternal Eastertide." The hill is climbed, the summit reached. There are so many old friends. Isaac Watts's searing meditation on the Passion, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"; "O Sacred Head." But we are getting too far ahead; these pieces are for Passiontide, not Lent. My Lent began many years ago, but has travelled with me through the years. I met Richard Farrant, composer of my first two picks, in the church choir I belonged to in the early 1990s. I've only ever sung his works in the context of Catholic liturgy. Richard Farrant him-self – well, it's complicated. He was born Catholic, because, in 1525 every-one was. He worked, however, in the Chapel Royal and St George's, Windsor, from 1550 until his death, from natural causes, in November 1580. His tenure, which began under the arch-Protestant Edward VI, nevertheless coincided with "huge developments" in Latin church music. You may have heard St Pancras' choir performing his "*O Sacrum Convivium*" from time to time. He was a very busy man; he wrote plays, trained the Chapel Royal "children", entertained three wildly differing monarchs, married and fathered ten children. As well as his large brood, he is the Father of the verse anthem, a particular product of the English Reformation. Always sung in English, the form alternates solo or duet verses with a choral refrain. Henry Purcell's "Rejoice in the Lord Alway" is a late, splendid example. Have a look for it. My two Farrant pieces can both be found on YouTube, and they are both short.

Their texts are taken from the penitential psalms and are in English. My favourite version of "Call to Remembrance" does not come from an English cathedral, but from St Michael and All Angels, Portland, Oregon. Brian Fairbanks, who conducts, also sings. This American church choir performs with grace and sensitivity to the words and the sentiment. And their diction is crystal clear. The two sopranos give a high, clear call which is then underlined by the other voices. The bass part is particularly thrilling. To hear it rendered exquisitely, so far from its home, is rather disconcerting, but none the worse for that. By contrast, my YouTube choice for "Hide not Thou Thy Face" is right in the thick of the English choral tradition. You don't get more Anglican than this – King's College Choir conducted by the late Sir David Willcocks, in a recording for Ash Wednesday 1964. From singing it myself, I can tell you that the alto part is special, sad and austere. It may help that the language, Early Modern English, is the beautiful English of Shakespeare and the King James Bible. My third choice is both nearer and further away from our own time than the first two. It is an early 20th century setting of 15th century words. Two more Richards feature: Richard Runciman Terry, a Catholic convert from Anglicanism, and "Richard de Castre" – Richard Caister, parish priest of St Stephen's, Norwich, a hundred years before the Reformation. Some of my readers will recognise his name; he was the confessor of the redoubtable Margery Kempe, whose "Book" the Book Club has been reading. He defended her successfully against the charge of being a Lollard (sort of Protestants before Protestantism.)

His lovely text, "Prayer to Jesus," is written in Middle English, the English of Chaucer, but is not too difficult. Julian of Norwich, another famous name, was his neighbour. I love his prayer – it feels like the prayer of a kindly person. In it, he prays for himself – and for everyone else; for wrongdoers to be "amended," not punished; and expresses his absolute, humble faith in "Jhesu, in whom is all my trust, that died uppon the roodé tree." "Rood" is an archaic English word for "cross." Richard Terry, to whom we owe the Westminster Hymnal, was born in 1865 and died in 1938. He had been a music master at Kempston, Bedfordshire, and organist for the Anglican cathedral in Antigua by the time he became a Catholic in 1896. Working then at Downside, he conceived a passion for the music of the 16th century composers Thomas Tallis and William Byrd (both Catholic, both working for Queen Elizabeth I, who liked their music and turned a blind eye.)

He was also involved in the revival of Gregorian chant. He was director of music at Westminster Cathedral for twenty years. To hear his simply beautiful choral setting of Richard Caister's poem, go to YouTube and find the rendition made by Thomas Dawkins. The text of the poem is featured as the video element. The use of alternate lines of unison and harmony in the voices is quietly inspired. You feel both the pious simplicity of Richard Caister himself and the profound richness of the Catholic faith which was his whole life. And Terry's. And ours. I've saved the grandest until last. The grandest is the great Franz Liszt. Born in Hungary in 1811, he was closer to a modern-day rock star than anything else: a virtuoso pianist, composer and conductor, with a mane of long hair and a personal life to compare with that of, say, Mick Jagger. In his later life he became both devoutly religious and Richard Wagner's father-in-law.

His "*Via Crucis*" dates from the latter part of his life and consists of fifteen dramatic pieces for voices and organ, intended to accompany the Stations of the Cross. Later, he made piano transcriptions of the same work. What speaks to my heart is the introductory movement, a metrical arrangement of the chant "Vexilla regis prodeunt", which irons out the original chant to make a sombre marching tune – the King's banners, so to speak, being carried forth in procession by the King's soldiers. The original chant is a thing of absolute loveliness, and should be performed far more often than it is, during Holy Week. A lovely, simple recording by Dominic Bevan, under the auspices of the Latin Mass Society, is available on YouTube. But to get back to Liszt: the Netherlands Chamber Choir, directed by Reinbert de Leeuw and recorded on Deutsche Grammophon, have a good, small-scale performance, using piano rather than organ. The keyboard is rather the hero of this piece, it has to be said. The chords, which are splendid, trudge, rather in the manner of slow marching feet and heavy hearts. After "Amen", the chords walk slowly, sadly, into the distance and a cappella singers take up "*O crux, ave, spes unica*" in sonorous harmonies: O cross, hail, our only hope. The a cappella "Amen" is somehow questioning: "sad and wondering," perhaps. And so, in my head, my musical journey through Lent arrives at the threshold of Passiontide. The banners of the King go forth, inevitably, to Calvary, and to deeper, greater mysteries beyond.

YouTube links:

Richard Farrant – Call to Remembrance

https://youtu.be/2v7cpGU1UdM?si=l972OLQ2lySuD5cV

Richard Farrant – Hide Not Thou Thy Face

https://youtu.be/Ez1YM6UuCdw?si=64pFHFEx7M_V1_Ua

Richard Terry – Richard de Castre's Prayer to Jesus

https://youtu.be/-c2yi40h0JU?si=gDIXqzfAB-KUPJoD

Franz Liszt – Via Crucis introduction "Vexilla regis prodeunt"

https://youtu.be/VozLYcyzBiQ?si=c-5JPE-yJ6x22eqr

A Madrigal History Tour

A brief survey of madrigals from the 16th to 21st centuries



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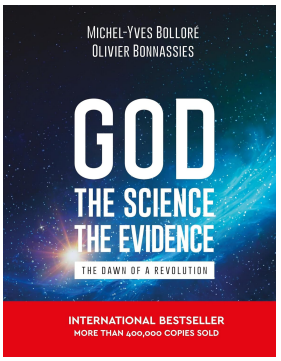
Recommended Reading

By William Newman - Sanders

If you are interested in understanding your faith or explaining it to others, this is probably the most useful book after the Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Price, about £15. It is written by two Frenchmen and has just been translated into English. One is a computer engineer with degrees in science and business administration and is head of a mechanical engineering group; the other is an entrepreneur with a degree in theology. It is a book to be dipped into (not necessarily read from cover to cover) depending on your interests and scientific ability. For instance, the second law of thermodynamics and entropy would be difficult for most non physicists.

However the book is full of fascinating information that can be understood by anybody: for instance page 259 gives the probability that a living cell would have arrived by chance in the 13 billion years the universe has existed is 1/10340 (that is 10 with 340 zeros after it). To any rational thinker that is zero. Page 347 shows that at the time that Genesis was written Jews were the only people who did not believe the sun and moon were gods but were just luminous objects in the sky. Page 416 explains that the Jews are likely the only people from antiquity who have preserved their original country language and religion. There is a whole chapter with photographs explaining that Our Lady's appearance at Fatima really happened and was a miracle. Chapter 19 Jesus: who could he be? No one has the right to dismiss this question: who could Jesus be ? For astonishing or inexplicable facts demand our attention Fact one: The entire population of the Earth – over 8 billion people – uses the year of his birth as year one of their calendar, even those who are not Christian and have never heard his name. Fact 2: He is a unique phenomenon: more than 20,000 books have been written about him in the last century alone Fact 3:

By all accounts Jesus ought to have remained and in glorious nobody. Fact 4: Jesus asked his followers, and through them, indirectly ask us, an unsettling question: "But you, who do you say that I am? Here are the seven answers that have been given historically and which are the only logical answers to the question "Who could Jesus be?" (They've tried it all!). He didn't exist; he is a myth created later on Beginning in the 18th century this thesis was supported by some atheists and authors like Bauer, Couchoud and Onfray. He was a great sage.



First published October 2021

This thesis is the thesis of Renan and Jefferson, and it is currently held by many Freemasons and a segment of the general public He was a mad man. This theory has been held by a number of philosophers since the 19th century: first by David Strauss and Nietzsche, and later by physicians and psychiatrists such as Binet-Sangle and William Hirsch. He was a failed opportunist. This is the thesis of the Talmud and it can also be found in mainstream Judaism. He was a prophet This is the thesis of the Muslims and it was also held by some of Jesus's contemporaries. He was the Messiah and an extraordinary man, but only a man. Thesis of the Arians and Cathars. He was the Messiah and God made man This is the thesis of Christians and of some messianic Jews. The chapter goes on to explain in great detail that No. 7 is the only logical answer.

A Bible Passage,

Chosen by Lisa de Pasquale

11. And he said to him: Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord: and behold the Lord passeth, and a great and strong wind before the Lord, overthrowing the mountains, and breaking the rocks in pieces: but the Lord is not in the wind. And after the wind, an earthquake: but the Lord is not in the earthquake.
12. And after the earthquake, a fire: but the Lord is not in the fire. And after the fire, a whistling of gentle air.

From 3 Kings 19:11-12 Douay-Rheims (1 Kings 19:11-12 NRSV)

Eucharistic Congress

By Father Joseph

This year sees the golden jubilee of the founding of the diocese of East Anglia, 1976 – 2026. Before that, the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire, and the unitary authority of Peterborough, had all been part of the much larger diocese of Northampton, with the bishop living far away but with an auxiliary bishop living in Poringland. Once East Anglia became its own diocese, the church of St John the Baptist in Norwich became our cathedral.

Part of the celebrations of this jubilee include the week-long, deanery-wide Eucharistic Congress from 6th to 13th September 2026. With events and speakers spread across the deanery, from Aldeburgh in the north (where Fr David Bagstaff is now parish priest and who was the first priest to be ordained for the new diocese following its canonical establishment in 1976) to Felixstowe in the south, the several parishes that make up the Ipswich deanery will join together to worship the living God, truly present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Already there are plans for times of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, for a Eucharistic procession through the streets of Ipswich, for keynote speakers to present thoughts and meditations on related topics, and for a culminating Mass in the Corn Exchange on Sunday, 13th September at 11 o'clock with our Bishop, + Peter Collins, as the principal celebrant. It is planned as a tremendous profession of Catholic faith and life in our small part of the world, and we are thrilled, here at St Pancras, to be included in those plans and eagerly look forward to being part of those celebrations.

The motto on the diocesan coat of arms reads, Ministerio Christi Addictus, which translates as 'Dedicated to the Service of Christ,' a worthy motto for us all as we grow in ever greater conformity to Our Lord in a world that needs His presence, and the truths of the Catholic Faith, more than ever.

The Heraldry of the Diocese of East Anglia

Editor's note

Within the shield appear three golden crowns on a blue field, an ancient emblem of East Anglia long associated with the Anglo-Saxon kingdom and with St Edmund the Martyr, the region's patron saint.

Above the shield appears the traditional ecclesiastical hat with its tassels, a customary heraldic device used to denote a Catholic bishop and, by extension, the diocese itself.

Taken together, the arms symbolically reflect the diocese's pastoral care of the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, uniting the Church's present mission with the rich historical and spiritual heritage of East Anglia.



A Humorous Find

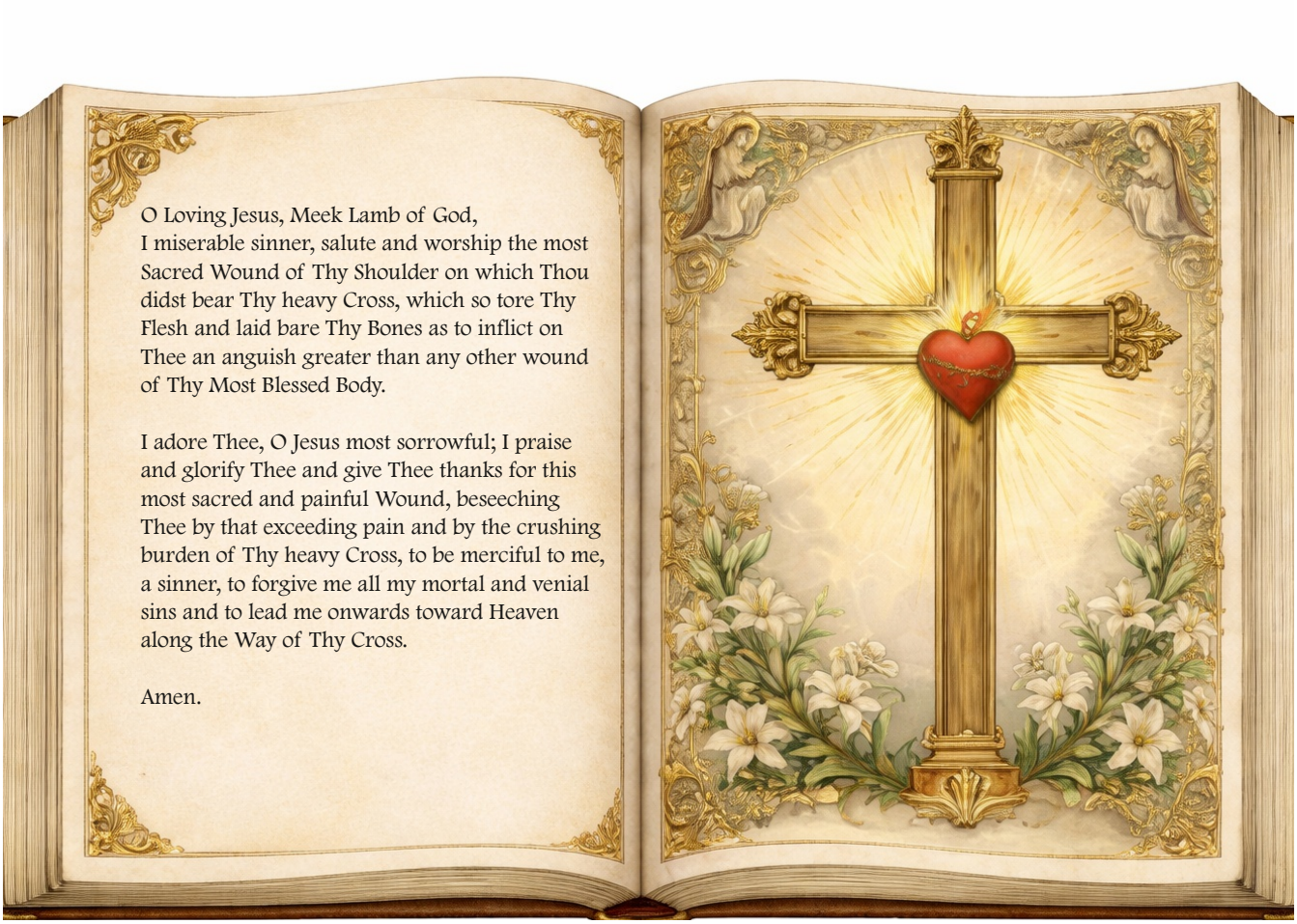
Dr Pamela Barcella, one of our parishioners, recently shared this humorous notice, which she spotted in the reception area of a previous workplace and which never failed to raise a smile.

A Doctor's Prayer ....

Dear God,
Grant me the serenity to accept the things i cannot change .
The courage to change the things i cannot accept.
The wisdom to hide the bodies of those i had to kill today because they got on my nerves .
Also help me to be careful of the toes i step on today, as they may be connected to the feet i may have to kiss tomorrow..
Help me always to give 100% at work:
12% on Mondays
23% on Tuesdays
40% on Wednesdays
20% on Thursdays
and 5% on Fridays .
Please help me to remember.... When i am having a bad day and it seems that people are trying to wind me up , it takes 42 muscles to frown , 28 to smile and only 4 to extend my arm and smack someone in the mouth!

Prayer to the Shoulder Wound of Jesus

Selected by Lisa de Pasquale



December book club

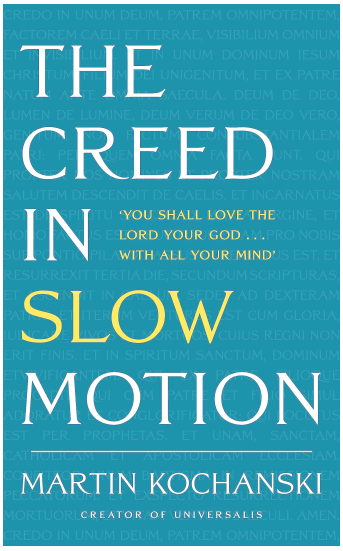
By Brian Price



It is fair to say that this was a lively but extremely good natured affair. We started at our usual time of 7pm but did not finish until 9pm, which suggests that we were all enjoying the discussion. It seems to me appropriate that we got a lot of things to discuss from a book that is dedicated to "Dom Mark Pontifex, monk of Downside, who delighted in rational argument". It was said by one person, not a member of the Book Club, that reading this book did cause him to have doubts about his agnosticism. The book in question was "The Creed In Slow Motion" by Martin Kochanski. This must not be confused with "The Creed In Slow Motion" by Ronald Knox, though I am sure that book would have been a worthwhile read; confessing here that Ronald Knox is a great favourite of mine. Martin Kochanski holds an MA in Mathematics and Philosophy (an odd mix of subjects to some of us), living proof of his own dictum that one can be a scientific rationalist and believe in God. One of the delights of this book was that it made us think; luckily we were all sitting down while attempting this. Two quotes directly from the book are relevant here.

"If God hadn't wanted us to think, he wouldn't have given us minds." "It doesn't matter if you disagree with every bishop you've ever heard from or think that every priest you have ever met is an idiot (not you, Fr. Joseph, this isn't personal): if you believe what is in the Creed, you are a Christian (a turbulent Christian perhaps: but then so were half the saints)." Interestingly, the New Testament quotation "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind" (Luke 10:27) is not simply repeating one of the Ten Commandments. The phrase "and with all your mind" was added. A word of caution here. It has been said that "the human mind is a machine for making every mistake that could be made." The book is 287 pages long and is broken down into 40 chapters and so I shall be taking only snippets from it. Some of our discussion implied that there were lots of things missing from this book but it was generally agreed that 2,000 pages might still not be enough to cover everything and that reading such a long book would curb the enthusiasm of even the most loyal Book Club attendee. Some of the book focuses on the enduring science -v- religion debate, mainly to show that there is actually no conflict. The book tells us that the three great sciences are Mathematics, Physics and Theology (hands up all those who loved Maths and Physics at school, thought not). Mathematics is the science of truth, Physics is the science of facts and Theology is the science of being. The mathematician in Martin Kochanski gives a clever idea. It is physically impossible to see the whole of a cube but we take it on trust, as with all 3D objects, that the rest of it is there. My quirky sense of humour suggests we do the same when viewing a horse from the side; the horse has not fallen over, which implies there is something on the side that we cannot see. Our minds are capable of accepting the existence of something we cannot see, based on something that we can see. Sadly, someone by the name of John asked what would happen with a transparent cube; no wonder we were nattering for two hours.

However, none of these three sciences has all the answers and if you have problems with some religious idea and think that the physical sciences have the answer, rest assured that the other two have their own problems. Following one of Kochanski's points, I asked Google if everything falls at 32 feet per second per second and the answer is "Yes". OK, why is that ? Gravity. OK, but why does gravity make it 32 feet per second per second and not some other number ? It turns out that Google does not have the answer to everything. All we can say is "that's the way it is"; we know the fact but we do not know the reason behind the fact. The sad truth , however, is that when it comes to religion "that's the way it is", is considered to be an inadequate response. According to Kochanski, the Book of Genesis starts with a myth. Some readers may dispute that, of course, but there is still an interesting argument here, especially if you choose to discuss religion with someone who argues that the Genesis story cannot be true and that therefore religion is nonsense. The point that Kochanski wants to make is that a myth is not a lie, it is simply a way of telling us something by way of a story. Interestingly, the physical sciences make use of myths as well. One book about evolution states that caterpillars have learned that eating the leaves of a certain plant makes them poisonous to predators. In one way, this is nonsense. Caterpillars do not talk or read or write and I suspect that kindly butterflies do not flutter back and give lessons on survival to the latest batch of caterpillars. In another way, however, it is true, because caterpillars do eat leaves which make them poisonous; that's the way it is. A flavour of Martin Kochanski, no more than that, but if you choose to read the whole book you will be entertained as well as informed. Next up, "The Book Of Margery Kempe". Although she was born in Kings Lynn, we shall see that as her own misfortune and treat her kindl



First published 2022

Full speed ahead for 2026

By Peggy Ayers



In the autumn I bought some Charlotte seed potatoes in the hope that I would have a crop for Christmas. Very pleased to say that yes I did – even if it was quite small; the potatoes were delicious and I think I will do the same again this year. I ordered my seed potatoes for 2026 from the seed catalogue which arrived at the end of September last year;t hey duly arrived early January and are now chitting (sprouting) very nicely in cardboard trays under a sofa. The Anya variety have got ahead of themselves and the sprouts were about 3 inches long so I have cut them back to 1 inch. I am going to try the following with regard to planting this year:

1st Earlies - Mid March to Early April.

2nd Earlies - Early to Mid April.

Maincrop: Mid April to Early May.

I thought Anya was a salad potato like Pink Fir Apple but now see that it is a second early so they will be planted in April. I keep a garden diary and try to record each year when I have planted things. Sometimes they are done at roughly the same time but sometimes miles apart. Most things still seem to come up though. Not however the peas; nothing came up before Christmas so I bought some new seed and planted quite a few but there are only 10 plants which means I will have to plant some more. The sweet peas on the other hand are doing really well both in the greenhouse and on the allotment. I really look forward to having some to pick as they smell so divine. The window sill in my front bedroom is perfect for starting seeds in containers. I like to use supermarket mushroom containers and then when the plants are a decent size I prick them out and put them into individual cells. At the moment tomatoes, beetroot, and leeks are doing well there. I did grow some lettuce like that in the mushroom containers and did successional sowing which saw me through winter. One lot of lettuce however grew as 4 runner beans which confused me until I remembered that I had upset my container of beans for planting when I was in the garage, and some must have fallen into the seed and cutting compost bag which I had there. The plants are looking quite strong and as soon as I can I will plant them in my raised bed at home. The Broad Beans are looking promising both at the allotment and at home.

Sadly my purple sprouting broccoli is rather pathetic at the moment – hopefully with a bit of luck it might improve. Usually I have so much I don't know what to do with it all so give a lot away; this year it looks as though there might be just enough for me. I mentioned leeks – last year I grew Bulgarian leeks which were really tall but rather spindly so this year I have gone back to Musselburgh which are nice and sturdy.

Looking through my Gardening Diary I found the following:

If Candlemas be fair and bright winter will have another flight.

If Candlemas be shower or rain Winter is gone and won't show again.

As far as I remember it rained on Candlemas so I checked that on Google who agreed. So much for that rhyme! The snowdrops in the garden have looked lovely this year – they always bring a smile to my face. I remember going to see them in The Winter Walk at Anglesey Abbey on numerous occasions and also at Beth Chatto's Garden. Mine have formed nice clumps so I will dig some up, thin them out, and replant where there are none. So many lovely flowers on the move now. I planted extra Irises on the allotment which are growing and looking very untidy. Still to be planted are quite a lot of gladioli which I hope will do well. I am undecided about Dahlias. A neighbour on the allotments is allowing my grandchildren to plant pumpkins on his plot this year so hopefully they will do better than the water melon of last year. Someone from Latvia has given me seeds from her country to try out as she was really successful with her water melons. Fingers crossed. So much for all of us to look forward to I hope.

Around The Diocese

By Theresa Cleary

My brother Fr Pat Cleary retired from his parish in Thetford in early September 2025 having served one year beyond the accepted retirement age for bishops and priests. He had a wonderful send-off from his parishioners as some of you will have read from the front page of the November issue of Catholic East Anglia. In his farewell speech he said that retiring priests always have a special love for the first and last parishes in which they have served as parish priests. In Fr Pat's case that was one and the same parish because he was first appointed to St Mary's Thetford in 1985 as parish priest and again in 2022. On returning to the parish for the second time he encountered a man whom he had baptised as a baby during his earlier spell there. I am writing this because I want to thank my brother for his kindness in always inviting me to stay with him for a little holiday in whatever parish he has served. It has been an interesting experience for me as I got to know people in different parishes around the diocese, some of whom I have kept in touch with over the years, such as one lady from Thetford parish who with her (now late) husband took instructions from Fr Pat's in his first years there and was received into the Church. It is lovely for us to visit her home in the country to see her and her antiques, especially dolls' houses.

After his ordination by Bishop Alan Clark in Norwich cathedral on 16.12.1978 and his first Mass at St Mary Magdalen's Ipswich on 17.12.1978 he was appointed as curate to Our Lady and the English Martyrs Cambridge (OLEM) where he joined fellow curate Fr John McNally under the watchful eye of parish priest Canon Paul Taylor. I visited him there once and encountered the big rectory where his room was but I did not stay there. His next move was to St Mary's Ipswich when Fr Bernard Nesden was parish priest. When Fr Nesden was moved to Hunstanton Fr Pat became priest in charge at St Mary's, then in 1985 after nine months at the cathedral in Norwich he was appointed parish priest of St Mary's Thetford. Both our parents were still alive then and they and I stayed with him in that fascinating presbytery which was actually two houses knocked into one and joined to the church. There were two staircases pointing in different directions and I never could work out which way to turn for the kitchen on descending the stairs nearest to it. In those days only the ground floor was opened up between the two houses. If you were upstairs and wanted to go through to the other house you had to come down one staircase and up the other to get there. We have several photos of inside and out of this building -and of Fr Pat's cat Patchwork, a dark tabby which knew its own mind. If she was due to go to the vet a good parishioner would take her but on such mornings she was nowhere to be found. A search of her usual favourite haunts would draw blank and the appointment at the vet's would be missed after which, when it was too late, she would reappear! She had a habit of curling up for a nap halfway up one of the staircases and one day Fr Pat came down carrying a load of things and stepped on her. A loud howl of anguish followed but no harm done. There was a convent of three Sisters, Daughters of Jesus, and we made friends with them. Fr Pat left Thetford in 1991 to give himself to the St James Society which sends priests to South America for five or more years after which they return to their home dioceses.

Fr Pat learned Spanish enough that he could preach a sermon in it and he was assigned to Cochabamba Bolivia. After about two and a half years he was called to serve at the HQ of the St James Society in Boston Massachusetts USA where he organised the fund raising and visited parishes in the USA and Toronto Canada to make the appeals. When Fr Leeder heard that one of the parishes Pat was to visit was Salt Lake City Utah, a Mormon stronghold, his comment was that he hoped Pat would not come home with six wives! Pat adds that the deacon in that parish was a former Mormon. Some of our family members visited him in Bolivia and Boston but not I.



Fr Pat was in Boston when Mrs Rose Kennedy, mother of President J F Kennedy, died aged 104. Her funeral was held at St Stephen's, the church where Pat was, and there is a picture of him and other priests round Rose's coffin which was published in a popular magazine. I waited until he returned to East Anglia in 1999 and became parish priest of Our Lady Star of the Sea Lowestoft. I was very happy to spend time there where our family had had a very happy holiday in 1948 before Fr Pat was born and I was only too happy to revisit this well-loved town and its beautiful Catholic church. Lowestoft is the most easterly town in the country and we have photos of him and a group of people up early to see the sun come up on the first day of 2000. In 2002 Fr Pat was moved to St Joseph's St Neots, the most westerly parish in the diocese where he was for eight plus years, the longest he was in a parish. I stayed there nine times and really loved the place and its people.

Right next door to the church was a lady who loved the Traditional Latin Mass (TLM) and we became firm friends. Another lady with an amazing garden would invite Fr Pat and me and three or four others over for a meal at her and her husband's home which would include a tour round her prize-winning garden. Another couple invited me over for a meal, the husband being not only expert at decorating and suchlike in and outside the presbytery but also at portrait painting. He had painted a picture of Fr Pat with a broad smile on his face which Pat had hanging on the landing.



When one of our great nieces saw it she burst out laughing! I was so sorry when Fr Pat was moved elsewhere in 2010. However, his destination was St Laurence's Cambridge, and each year I stayed there I would take the coach to St Neots one day and attend Mass, meet all my friends there for coffee in the presbytery afterwards, then spend the rest of the day with my TLM friend next door to the church. The first weekend Fr Pat was at St Laurence's Cambridge, our nephew Graham was celebrating his thirtieth birthday in North Hertfordshire and the only way I could attend was with Fr Pat and then to spend the night at St Laurence's. So when people saw me at Mass the next morning one or two of them thought I had moved in with Fr Pat! St Laurence's too had some very kind parishioners and it was remarkable to meet the permanent deacon there. Fr Pat had told me he had Ipswich connections so when I got talking to him I asked him what road he had lived in and he said "St Aubyn's Road". Well, how amazing! St Aubyn's Road is a little cul de sac off Cauldwell Hall Road and it is where our sister's husband grew up and where his mother was still living. So I asked the deacon if he knew them and not only did he know them but during the War he used to play with our brother in law's older brother as they were about the same age. In 2018 Fr Pat moved to Wymondham Norfolk and his induction there co-incided with his Ruby Jubilee of priesthood. Again I encountered dear people one of whom still sends me a Christmas present each year via Fr Pat who has kept in touch with Wymondham after he moved after four years back to Thetford. While still at Wymondham Fr Denis Gallagher joined him and they acquired a cat which they called Etheldreda, Ethel for short. When Pat moved back to Thetford they decided that Fr Denis had custody of the cat and Fr Pat had visiting rights! So when Pat visits Wymondham he sits in his armchair and Ethel jumps up on his lap as if he still lives there - but after giving him a cautious sniff just to make sure! So-a big thank you to my generous brother and the good people he has served who have shown me such kindness and friendship. God bless you all.

A Short Update on 'A Cautionary Tale' which I wrote for the Christmas edition of the magazine following my accident:

I improved to the extent of being able to walk outside with my three wheeler walker and, joy of joys, I came back to St Pancras on Christmas Day for the first time since the accident, travelling in Fr Pat's car as he was staying here for three days at Christmas and was saying the 9.30 Mass to help Fr Joseph. Since then David Sparrow has kindly brought me to every Sunday 9.30 Mass and I am also getting to some weekday Masses too.



● Celebrating with a pint on the new roof of St. Pancras Parish Church in Tacket St., Ipswich, are Steeplejacks David Offord and Dave Segger with parish priest Father Berrell.

On top of world over roof repairs

PEOPLE paused in Tacket Street, Ipswich, today to raise an eyebrow at the unusual sight of a priest laden with bottles of beer climbing laddrs to the roof of St.

By MONK MATTHEW

Pancras Roman Catholic church.

But Father Augustine Berrell, the parish priest, is not a secret drinker with lofty hide-outs!

He was having a simply topping time providing workmen who have spent six months up there with a "topping out ceremony".

Work on re-roofing St. Pancras' the largest of the five Roman Catholic churches in Ipswich, has been continuing since last November.

Inspection, following leaks, revealed that the 20-year-old roof had rotted throughout.

The cost is about £10,000 and parishioners have given money and run coffee mornings, fetes and jumble sales to raise it.

To further help payment, a fete is to be held at St. Joseph's, Birkfield, on May 29.

Industrial relations between the Church and the workmen has included a laying-down of tools and a "half-hour silence" during morning Mass every weekday.

In addition to the re-roofing, a project adjacent to the church, involves the building of a Catholic hall, s expected to be completed in the autumn.



From East Anglian Daily Times, 10th May 1976

Lili's Story – Told by Alex Smith





Woof,woof and waggy greetings to you all. I am the apprentice and my name is Lili. Mum says I'm goofy with my long gangly legs that won't quite fold up when I sit down. But then I am a greyhound afterall.You might also like to know that I have rather fetching black and white markings and am quite petite for my breed. Yesterday dad took me to a building he calls a church." Now don't mess around Lili, you have to be very still and quiet." Well of course, I was on my best behaviour. Afterwards we went into a big room where some kind friends gave me treats – delicious! I hope we can go there again. Back at the flat I surface cruise sniffing out tasty nibbles. My long legs help a lot, I'm expert at grabbing rolls and loaves of bread, nothing is safe. Otherwise my fav. thing is stretching out and snoozing on the sofa. Let me tell you, it wasn't always like this.Finding dad has been the best. You see, I didn't want to race – too much stress for a laid back girl like me. Dad was looking for a K9 friend and here I am. Now my life is perfectly pawsome ,yummy food, treats, walks and zoomies in the park. Dad even took me on holiday at Christmas. We went by train and car.It was a long way and I was very tired. As soon as we got to mum's I looked for a comfy place to sit - just the thing,a small fluffy rug in the hall.I got ready to fold up my weary legs when the rug jumped up and barked at me.What a fright! The rug was Loulou, Mum's curly white bichon frise.She is very bossy and steals my treats but she is also very smart and we are now friends. I feel much better with her leading the way Now we are back in Ipswich dad takes me to visit interesting places.Soooo much better than straining my legs. Well then, what about a quiz on motion and running? I hope you can race through it!

Notes from a Lenten Sermon: The Confused Camel



By Serena Guo , aged 12

The confused camel

There were once a mother camel and a baby camel.

One day, as he was looking at the ground, the baby camel asked the mother camel, "I don't get it. Why do we these three toed feet?"

And the mother camel reply, "To help stop our feet from sinking into the sand of the desert."

"Then, why, mother, do we have such long eyelashes?"

"To keep the sand from getting into our eyes."

"Mother, why do we have these huge humps on our backs?"

By this time, the mother camel was getting quite impatient, but with a sigh, answered, "To keep the sand from getting into our eyes."

The baby camel paused. Then, he said, "Now, I understand we have three toed feet to help stop our feet from sinking into the sand of the desert, long eyelashes to keep the sand from getting into our eyes and huge humps on our backs to keep the sand from getting into our eyes. But why in a zoo?"

Your questions of the Catholic Faith answered by Father Joseph Part one



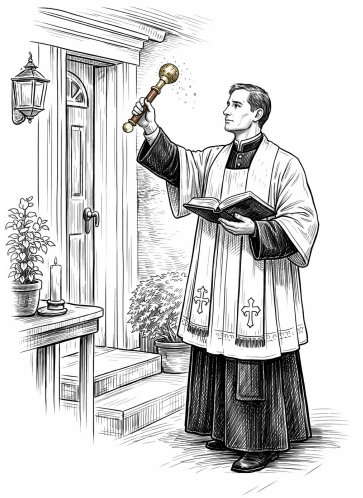
Why do Catholics make the Sign of the Cross with Holy Water as they enter and leave church?

Perhaps most Catholics dip their fingers into the Holy Water in the stoop by the door of the church, and make the Sign of the Cross as they enter and leave, automatically. Yet it is both a prayer in its own right and a profound act of reverence, and we do well to pause and think on what we do, and ponder on its beautiful mystery.

First, the Sign of the Cross puts us in mind of the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and is, in itself, an act of worship of the living and Triune God. Each time we make the Sign of the Cross we are singing the praises of God the Father who created us, God the Son who redeemed us, and God the Holy Ghost who sanctifies us. It is for this reason that whenever we make the Sign of the Cross it should be done with reverence and not hurriedly. By making the Sign of the Cross as we enter a church we are also acknowledging that we are entering into God's house and, for a few moments at least, leaving the world behind. As we mark ourselves with the sign of our redemption we are placing ourselves under the shadow of the Cross much as we might sit in the cooling shade of a tree on a hot day. We take shelter under the arms of the Cross and seek the protection of our Redeemer against the assaults of the noon day devil (Ps 90:6). In this sense we should always live beneath the Cross so that each moment of our lives – everything that we think, and say, and do – is shaped by Christ's sacrificial death on Calvary. St Paul exhorts us to do exactly this when he says, 'Be not conformed to this world, but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God' (Rom 12:2).

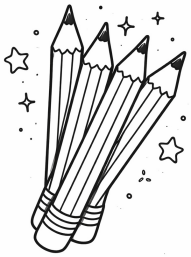
Second, the Holy Water reminds us of our Baptism when our souls were cleansed of the stain of original sin, but it does more than just remind us, it also renews the purifying effects of our Baptism, helping to cleanse our soiled souls from sin so that we might be whiter than snow once again (Ps 50:9). This simple and routine act helps to create a clean heart, and renew a right spirit, within us (Ps 50:12). In this cleansing action our hearts are being prepared so that once we get inside the church we may offer up to God a worthy and fitting sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving whilst reminding us of our need of a continual conversion of heart.

As we leave the church, we repeat the action, entrusting ourselves to the protection of Almighty God, and asking for His blessing, as we re-enter the fray of everyday life once more, taking with us, and out into the world, the graces He has poured into our hearts whilst we were in His house of prayer.



Children's Corner

Colour in St Clare's picture





St Clare of Assisi was a holy woman who lived in Italy about eight hundred years ago. As a young girl she heard St Francis of Assisi preaching and felt called to give her life completely to God. She left her family home and founded a community of nuns who became known as the Poor Clares. They lived very simply, praying, serving others, and trusting in God's care. St Clare had a deep love for the Blessed Sacrament and is remembered for her courage and faith. Catholics celebrate her feast day on 11 August, and she remains an example of prayer, humility, and trust in God.

Make & Decorate Your Easter Chalice

Carefully cut out each piece along the dotted lines. Take your time and ask for help if needed.

Once all the pieces are ready, gently glue them together to form your chalice, placing the cup on top, followed by the stem and then the base.

You may then colour and decorate your chalice as you wish —for a more decorative finish, you might add sequins, beads, or a touch of glitter.

Allow the glue to dry, and your chalice will be ready to display.



German Easter bread (Osterzopf)

Selected by Tilly Rampley



Ingredients:

- 500 g all purpose flour
- 50 g sugar or up to 100 g
- 250 ml cream (or mix 150 ml heavy whipping cream with 100 ml milk)
- 2 eggs
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 egg white
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 envelope rapid yeast
- 1 Tbsp milk

Instructions:

Instead of using cling film, I prefer to cover my yeast dough with a beeswax wrap. It is delightfully reusable, conforms effortlessly to the shape of the bowl with the warmth of one's hands, and proves remarkably effective.

- In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour and sugar.
- Warm 100 ml of cream very gently until just lukewarm — it must not be allowed to become too hot, lest it spoil the yeast. Sprinkle the yeast over the cream and leave it to rest for five minutes.
- Meanwhile, add two whole eggs and one egg white to the flour mixture, reserving the remaining yolk for later.
- Pour in the yeast mixture, followed by a further 150 ml of lukewarm cream, and bring everything together into a soft, slightly sticky dough.
- Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface, knead briefly until smooth, and shape into a neat ball.
- Return the dough to the bowl, cover with a clean tea towel, and leave it in a warm place to rise for approximately 45 minutes, or until it has increased considerably in size.
-Once risen, transfer the dough back onto a floured surface and give it a gentle knead.
- Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F).
- Divide the dough into three equal portions and roll each into a strand.
- Begin plaiting from the centre outwards towards one end, then return to the centre and repeat in the opposite direction. Shape the plait into a circle, tucking one end neatly beneath the other to secure.
-Cover and allow it to rise once more for 15–20 minutes.
- Lightly beat the reserved egg yolk with a tablespoon of milk and brush this glaze over the braid.
- Bake for 20–30 minutes, or until the surface is a pleasing, lightly golden brown — do keep an eye on it after the 20-minute mark.
- Allow it to cool slightly before serving, though it is at its most delightful when still just warm.

A Little Note:

The Osterzopf, or Hefezopf, is a traditional braided yeast bread enjoyed across Germany, Austria and Switzerland, particularly during the Easter season. Its plaited shape is said to symbolise unity and togetherness — a rather fitting centrepiece for a table meant to be shared.

Historically, such breads date back several centuries, when enriched doughs like this were reserved for special occasions. Even today, it retains that quiet sense of celebration — something just a little more thoughtful than an everyday loaf.

Maybe He's Not Such A Bad Chap

By Brian Price

I was recently watching an old episode of the programme "McDonald and Dodds." This was a traditional crime drama with two seemingly mismatched characters, DCI Lauren McDonald, a streetwise London detective who has transferred to Bath, and Detective Sergeant Dodds (played by the sublime Jason Watkins) who is generally regarded as a bit of an old fool. Needless to say, Dodds is no fool, as McDonald quickly realises. Dodds has the endearing Columbo trick of saying, "just one more thing, sir," to the guilty party. Now to the interesting part. The episode started with the tale of Robert Johnson, a blues musician who allegedly sold his soul to the devil at a Mississippi crossroads in return for success as a musician. A neat bit of fiction to set up the main plot about an old map that supposedly showed the famous cross-roads, or so I thought. A few days later, a friend of mine shared a rap song she had written about Robert Johnson. It was not fiction for a TV show, he did really exist! The actual selling of his soul may not be true, though that was the story that Robert Johnson told; he died at the age of 27 and so either way he did not get a great bargain.

My friend, who not only composes songs but writes novels as well (her book "Hexed" is available from all good booksellers and a few dodgy ones as well), is currently writing a book about Mordred, who sells his soul to the devil for…success as a musician. This got me thinking about how Satan does figure quite heavily in literature, music and drama and that perhaps we need to show the old chap a little appreciation. I once saw an entertaining musical called "Hot Stuff" about a musician…oh you get the idea. Actually, the soul selling was conducted not by Satan himself but by his assistant Lucy Ferr (a man in drag, obviously), and as with all such Faustian contracts, things did not go too well. Our hero eventually regrets his actions because he is not happy. Lucy Ferr reads the contract and makes the valid point that it promises success and wealth, which our hero now has, but makes no mention of happiness. The devil is indeed in the details. Our hero is so upset that he decides to take up punk music and gives us the punk version of "God Save The Queen". This song was banned by the BBC and so I had never heard it before; I quite enjoyed it. Other examples of Faustian-style pacts that went wrong were the Monkey's Paw and the Greek goddess Eos. Whoever possesses the Monkey's Paw is granted three wishes, but it is dangerous to interfere with fate and unless the wishes are carefully thought out, disaster may well follow. In the original short story, the couple who own the paw wish for great wealth; this comes in the form of compensation for the death and disfigurement of their only son in an accident. The mother now makes a wish that the son be returned to life. Her husband, terrified that their disfigured son will appear and suffer eternally, uses the third wish to cancel the other 2. Eos, goddess of the dawn, had a taste for mortal lovers and decided to give one of them, Tithonus, eternal life.

Unfortunately, she did not specify eternal youth. I leave you to fill in the details "Why should the devil have all the good tunes?" Not Martin Luther, apparently, though it is sometimes attributed to him, but I want to thank Satan for a couple of songs that were inspired by him and which give me pleasure. "Ghost Riders In the Sky" is a Country and Western song, which has been recorded by so many people that it might be quicker to list those male artists who have not sung it. Basically cowboys who have sinned are, as their punishment, forever "trying to catch the devil's herd across these endless skies". Charlie Daniels recorded "The Devil Went Down To Georgia" in 1979 and this is a rare example of a Faustian pact where Satan was the loser. This time it was a bet as to whether Satan or a Georgia country boy were the better fiddle player; no contest really. A real treat if you like fiddle music. Finally, I need to talk about why I suspect Satan has perhaps had an unfair press or, since we are trying to see his good points, I should like to call him Old Harry. There is a delightful Radio 4 comedy called "Old Harry's Game", which was written by and stars Andy Hamilton; come on, is it really possible to hate Andy Hamilton even if he is playing the part of Satan? It is a comedy that could work only on radio; sound effects of cloven hooves are so much more effective than any attempt to show them on a screen would be. The show ran for seven series, which means that it must have been pretty good. The only way to appreciate this show is to find it on Youtube and grit your teeth with frustration when an advert pops up just before the punch line. A favourite episode of mine deals with the time when a health and safety officer ended up in Hell and immediately started making changes that would minimise the risks to the demons.

Satan was not happy but I think it is fair to say that he had met his match. Equally entertaining and perhaps quite poignant was the episode where Satan kept trying to find new ideas to make life on earth, err hellish, only to discover that mankind could come up with ways of doing this that even Satan had not thought of. Probably Satan is not such a good egg but he has given us wonderful horror stories, memorable songs and great comedy.

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Great Catholic minds

by Tilly Rampley



Sr. Miriam Michael Stimson (1913–1975) was an American Roman Catholic chemist, noted for her work in spectroscopy. She was the second woman to lecture at the Sorbonne, a distinction of some significance at the time. Although she did not publish books for a wider audience, her work appeared in scientific journals, as was customary in her field. In particular, her use of ultraviolet spectroscopy in the study of nucleic acids contributed to the early investigation of DNA, at a time when its structure was not yet fully understood. Her work has also been the subject of later reflection. In The Soul of DNA by Dr Jun Tsuji, Sister Miriam Stimson's contribution to the understanding of DNA.

Quiz answers

1- July 1926, at Belle vue Stadium in Manchester

2- USA, 20th July 1969

3- The Soviet Union's Luna 2 was the first man-made object to impact the moon

4- 31st May,1868 at the Parc de Saint-Cloud in Paris

5- I200metres won by James Moore who rode a wooden bicycle with solid rubber tiles

6- Tourist Trophy

7- Athens, 6-15 April of 1896

8- Summer of 776 in Olympia

9- All wars had to stop while the games took place

10- Silverstone, hosts the Formula British Grand Prix and MotoGP

11- *Ben Hur*, 1959

12- The Hellespont Swim, this crosses the Dardanelles Strait, connecting Europe and Asia

13- George Harbo and Frank Samuelsen in 1896

14- A victory on 27th August 1798, during the Irish Rebellion, where a combined force of 2000 French soldiers and Irish rebels routed a much larger British force of 3000 – 6000 men

15- Pheidippides

16- Pheidippides ran from Marathon to Athens to report news of a Greek victory.The distance covered was about 25 miles

17- Hermes

18- Atlanta

19- Annually in Congham, Norfolk, July

20- "Ready, Steady, SLOW"

21- Attributed to Aesop 620 – 560 BC

22- The ships were the Cutty Sark and the winner, the Thermopylae

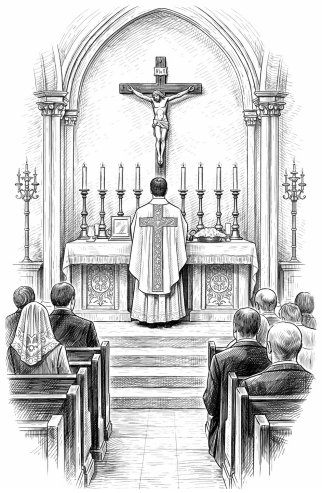
23- The Boat Race, an annual competition between the universities of Oxford and Cambridge

24- The London Marathon

25- Campbell, both father Sir Malcolm and son Donald set world speed records.



Part two



Why do Catholics have to go to Mass every Sunday?

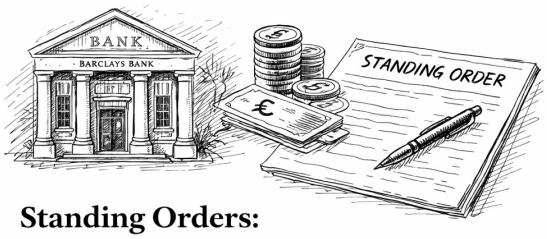
How many times have you had to heave yourself out of bed on a Sunday morning to get to Mass, asking yourself, 'Why?' In its most simple form the answer is, 'Because God commanded us to do so in the third of the Ten Commandments: Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day.' (Ex 20:8).

God's work of creation was accomplished in six days and on the seventh He rested. So, to grow in the likeness of God (in whose image we were made) we should do as He does and rest on the sabbath day. Once Christ had risen from the dead, Christians moved the day of rest to Sunday, the first day of the week, in celebration of the Resurrection (Acts 20:7). Since the early days of the Church, then, all Catholics have been obliged to attend Mass every Sunday, and indeed on certain other days of the year which we call Holy Days of Obligation. Not to do so through choice (or through laziness, or because we have arranged to do something else instead, like a sporting fixture, or a holiday, or a family gathering, and so on) would be to commit a mortal sin which we must mention in Confession before we can next receive Holy Communion.

To most people's surprise, this Commandment, which comes in at number three, ranks more highly than, 'Thou shalt not kill' which comes in at number five. But why? The answer is, because God has commanded it, and because we need to get our relationship with God right first if there is any chance of getting our relationship with other people right. It's a little bit like the instruction on an aeroplane for parents to put on their own oxygen masks first before they attend to the masks of their children.

More importantly, our first duty as creatures is to worship our Creator, and going to Mass is the chief form of worship. The third Commandment also forbids 'servile work' which means abstaining from the sort of work by which we earn our living (although this is, admittedly, difficult for some people in today's society) and from any menial or manual labours. Works of the mind, such as writing, playing music, and so forth, are permitted, as are necessary tasks like cooking (but not the week's grocery shopping if it can be done at some other time).

Whilst no one wants a return to the stifling inactivity of Victorian Sundays, nonetheless each Sunday is God's time not family time, and we are commanded to abstain from servile works in order to be free to dedicate the day to God by sanctifying it (making it holy) in prayer, by receiving the Sacraments, and by attending such services, perhaps, as Stations of the Cross in Lent or October Devotions, or May or Corpus Christi processions, and so on. If we read books and watch films on other days of the week, we might do our spiritual reading or watch uplifting films on Sundays.



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The Road to Fátima: A Pilgrimage Made Simple

By Eduardo Nogueira

For many of us in the parish, a pilgrimage to Fátima is a lifelong dream. While international travel can sometimes feel daunting, we are incredibly fortunate in Ipswich to have a very straightforward "gateway" to Portugal right on our doorstep. If you have been considering a visit to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Fátima, you might be surprised at just how easy and affordable the journey can be. The journey begins at London Stansted, our most convenient local airport. It is easily accessible from Ipswich via a short drive down the A12 or a direct coach service. From Stansted, there are regular, affordable flights to Porto (Francisco Sá Carneiro Airport). The flight takes roughly two and a half hours—just enough time for a quiet prayer or to read a chapter of a good book. Upon landing in Porto, the transition is simple. You do not even need to leave the airport building to find the tube. Take Line E (the Violet Line) toward Campanhã. The trains are modern and run every 20 to 30 minutes. The ride to Campanhã station takes approximately 30 minutes, offering a lovely first glimpse of the Portuguese landscape.

And the Final Stretch to the Sanctuary, is Campanhã is Porto's main transport hub. The beauty of this route is that the bus station is located within the very same compound as the train station. There is no need for taxis or long walks with luggage; simply follow the signs within the terminal to board an express bus. The scenic drive to Fátima takes just over 2 hours, delivering you to the local bus station. One of the best things about arriving in Fátima is that the bus station is just a short, flat walk from the Sanctuary. There is no need for further transport; you can easily walk from the terminal straight to the heart of the shrine and your accommodation. And here is a taste of Portugal, and pilgrim Recommendations: Whether you are stopping for a few hours in Porto or settling into Fátima, dining like a local is part of the experience, for example, in Porto:

· O Astro: Located directly in front of Campanhã station. You must try their speciality: the Bifana. It is a traditional sandwich of thinly sliced, seasoned pork in a soft roll.

· Mercado do Bolhão & Bom Sucesso: Visit Bolhão for a vast selection of tapas, or Bom Sucesso for Sandes de Leitão (succulent suckling pig).

· Capa Negra II: Famous for the Francesinha, a hearty sandwich layered with meats and melted cheese in a savoury sauce.

Some local favourites in Fátima:

· Casa Pena: While there are many tourist cafes, Casa Pena is a true standout. It is an excellent, family-run restaurant where the locals go for traditional Portuguese home cooking and a warm welcome.

· Pingo Doce Supermarket: Conveniently located not far from the Fátima bus station, this supermarket is a fantastic resource. It has a large ready-to-eat section with plenty of hot and cold takeaway food, ideal for a quick picnic or a quiet meal back at your hotel.

Where to Stay: Comfort at a good price:

You will find that Fátima is very well-equipped for pilgrims, with a wide range of hotels at very good prices. Many high-quality 3 and 4-star hotels are located within a few minutes' walk of the Basilica, offering comfortable rooms and peace of mind without a high price tag. Because everything is so central, you can easily walk between your hotel, the local restaurants, and the Sanctuary throughout your stay.

How long is the ideal trip?

From my experience, the "perfect" length for a trip to Fatima depends on what you are looking for. I have visited for everything from a single day to nearly a full week, and each experience had its own unique charms.



· The Day Trip: If you only have a day, it is a wonderful way to visit briefly, offer up a few prayers, and soak in the atmosphere before heading home. It is a beautiful, concentrated experience of faith.

· The Longer Stay: However, if you have the opportunity to stay for a few days or even a week, the experience deepens. You gain the chance to visit the shrine at night or in the very early hours of the morning. During these times, the crowds have vanished, and you can enjoy the profound silence and peace of the Sanctuary in a way that isn't possible during the busy afternoon hours.



Why Choose This Route?

Travelling via Porto is often more relaxed and cost-effective than flying into Lisbon. It allows you to see the beautiful North before arriving at the Sanctuary, refreshed and ready for your pilgrimage. Whether you are travelling alone or with friends from the parish, this path is well-trodden and welcoming. Perhaps this is the year you finally answer the call to Fátima?



Photographs: The author



Artwork by Sara Horby