

Ealing Abbey Parish Magazine



Christmas 2006

FROM THE EDITOR

Yet again, I wish to thank all the contributors, regular and new, who found the time to write articles and poems for this edition of the Magazine. The run-up to Christmas can be very busy, and I am especially grateful to those who produced some wonderful copy at very short notice.

I wish you all a very enjoyable and peaceful Christmas.

All contributions to the Parish Magazine are welcome. Please send them to "The Editor – Parish Magazine" c/o the Parish Office or by e-mail: parishoffice@ealingabbey.org.uk.

THE FAMILY MASS ADVENT JOURNEY

Dear Parishioner

Each year we celebrate the central mysteries of our faith in the two great feasts of Christmas and Easter. You could say that it is the one saving event that we celebrate in each feast - The Incarnation of the Son of God. By this, we mean an extraordinary truth revealed by God about an event that has no true parallel in the insight offered by any other religion. This is such a wonderful mystery. It brings meaning and offers hope to the existence of every woman, man and child no matter what their circumstances may be.

The mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God began with his conception in the womb of the Blessed Virgin in Nazareth and his birth in Bethlehem and came to completion in his passion, death and resurrection in Jerusalem.

In St Paul's letter to the Philippians he seems to quote what many think is a very early Christian hymn which must date from before the year 50:

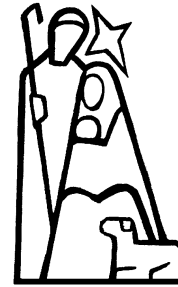
*His state was divine yet he did not cling to his equality with God
but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave,
And became as men are; and being as all men are, he was humbler yet,
even to accepting death, death on a cross.
But God raised him high
and gave him a name which is above all other names
so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld,
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus
and that every tongue should acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.*

(Phil 2:6-11)

In their kindness we are so often blithely wished a happy Christmas by people who may have little grasp of the reason to be so joyful. In his letter to the Galatians, St Paul expresses it thus: "When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Gal 4:4)

When you look into the manger, see the Word of God made flesh and see your fragile, transitory, mortal flesh made worthy of eternity.

A very happy Christmas to you.
From Fr Peter



For the past five years, parishioners of the Family Mass have taken part in a long-standing tradition of being host to an "Advent Journey". In this symbolic pilgrimage, a group of wooden figures with embroidered faces and hand-crafted clothes, representing characters from the Christmas story, is carried from house to house, spending one night in the home of each participating family.

Two journeys are enacted by the Family Mass community each year – that of the Holy Family on their way to Bethlehem and that of the Three Wise Men led by a star.

After hosting the figures for a night, each participating family will travel to the home of the next to effect the handover and the two families will act out a brief drama, based on the events of the Biblical narrative and its spiritual significance, and share in some prayer time together. No doubt there is time also for mince pies and mulled wine, and often neighbours, relatives and other friends are invited to make a substantial occasion of it. The journeys begin on the first Sunday of Advent, and return to the Abbey on Christmas Eve when the figures are used in the liturgy of the Blessing of the Crib.

When the idea was first taken up by the Family Mass community, all the clothing, figures and embroidered faces were carefully prepared over a period of time by members of the congregation and Father Peter. Although, in this sense, the whole enterprise is felt to be quite special to this mass, there is nevertheless an awareness that the idea is part of a tradition that we share with other Christians around the world.

Not only is it a chance to meet members of the Mass who have previously been more or less strangers, but it is also a way of

becoming more aware of the sense in which Advent, and indeed spirituality in general, can be seen as a journey, and furthermore a journey that, as a Church and a community, we all undertake to some extent together.

In the context of the Family Mass, the whole idea of the Advent Journey, and the meetings for the handover of figures that it encompasses, is something that quickly becomes blessed by that particular magic that childhood brings to Christmas. This is not to say, however, that the value of the tradition is confined to families with young children and, in at least one local church, a similar project is undertaken by the congregation as a whole.

From my own experience, I would have little hesitation in suggesting that if any other Mass at the Abbey wished to start their own version they would find it valuable and enriching.

In a sense, it is similar to the small Faith-Sharing Groups, with which many people at the Abbey will be familiar, in providing a wonderful opportunity for the sharing of prayer and the symbolic welcoming of spiritual light, in the intimacy of our own homes. In the lead-up to Christmas it might have the additional advantage of being a million miles away from the commercialisation of the season. ■

Bookworm



SUMMER GIFTS WITH BONUSES

by Jennifer Smith

This summer, I went to sing in Daroca, near Zaragoza in Spain. My colleagues picked me up at the airport, and we went to lunch somewhere in the old town of Zaragoza, passing the huge basilica on the way. I managed to get all those unbelieving, non-practising or lapsed Catholic colleagues of mine to go into the basilica, after lunch and before our trip to Daroca, as I really wanted to pay a visit to Nuestra Señora del Pilar. We crossed the vast piazza, in the blazing afternoon sun, and were soon enfolded into the dark cool interior. When our eyes were adjusted, there was the shrine, magnificent, silver, gold and jewels all over, and the tiny statue itself. If you didn't know what you were looking for, you'd miss it. The director of the group - an avowed atheist - and I lit enormous candles, which wouldn't stand up. He said he always lit candles at shrines, "because you never know..."

Then on to Daroca, a small town with many churches, the principal of which is the Iglesia Colegial de Santa Maria de los Corporales, in which we were to perform Responsories by the Portuguese 17th -century composer, Carlos Seixas. This church is a kind of reliquary for a miraculous corporal, which bears the bloodstains of six hosts. In the year 1239, during a battle with the Moors, the Chaplain of Daroca was celebrating Mass, when a surprise attack from the Moorish army forced him to quickly wrap the six consecrated hosts remaining in a corporal; making his escape, he hid the little parcel under a rock. As soon as he could, he returned, to find the hosts, stuck with blood to the piece of cloth, which to this day is kept above the altar of a little side chapel, in a swivelling frame, the stains being visible on the reverse side, through glass, and only on very special occasions. During our "dress" rehearsal, late morning of the day of the concert, I had been internally complaining about the lack of reverence of my colleagues for the place, and for the words we were singing, feeling very negative about my job as a singer, having to put up with travel, lack of punctuality and organisation of conductor, then realising that this is probably my cross, having to put up with all these difficulties, (like being on a different planet, wanting to scream sometimes!) At this moment, several things happened at once: the conductor called for a break, and just as we began to disband, out of the sacristy and right past my line of vision, came a priest, robed, with acolyte carrying the bread and wine, obviously making for the Chapel of the

Relics to say Mass! Now one of the “crosses” of my job is not always being able to get to Mass, either because it is too early, or because we are rehearsing, or performing. And here was a Mass about to be celebrated, in my break! Of course I was there almost before the priest was. What I found so moving was God’s answering of my deepest need, with **bonuses**: not only the timing (in my break), but the deep devotion of this priest (and although this made me a little nervous, as I knew that I began the first piece after the twenty-minute break and therefore didn’t wish to be late!); he could have been rushing through his Mass! He was a visitor, hence the **exceptional time** of the Mass. But also and especially, the Sister in charge asked me if I would like to **view the Relic**, as she was going to show it exceptionally to this priest! I couldn’t help smiling at the infinite generosity of our God - showing me that He is always there, ready to **shower** us with gifts, even when we feel alone, and away from the comfort of our “religious families” and practices.

Another gift with bonus I received was at Heathrow airport, on another trip out of London. At check-in, I was told my flight was delayed an hour and a half; so off I went to St. George’s Chapel. Gift no.1: if the delay had occurred when I had already gone through security, I would not have been able to come out to the Chapel, which is outside the terminals (if you don’t know it, I highly recommend it, a very quiet and prayerful place). As I was praying the Office by the Blessed Sacrament (in the company of a deeply sighing homeless man), in came an elderly gentleman who asked me if I was in charge!! Gift no.2: he was a priest whose flight had been delayed, and who wanted to celebrate Mass. He duly found whoever was in charge, and so we had Mass, just the two of us (the homeless person went into the entrance hall for that, and someone who was there from the beginning had to leave after a phone call...); I read the reading and the psalm, sang the Alleluia, and Gift no.3: his Mass was one of the most prayerful I have ever experienced. After the Mass, I went into the sacristy, and asked him to bless me, which he did, hands on my head, praying for all travellers. I felt this included the homeless person who had by then disappeared.

Our Lady of Fátima has given me little signs all through my life. On this particular occasion, another singing trip, this time to Portugal, she again made her presence felt to me. My dear (Lutheran) friend with whom I was staying, in the country northwest of Lisbon, near Torres Vedras, where Wellington fought such a great and victorious battle against Napoleon,

drove me from the airport as usual, saying there was a surprise for me. When we were driving through all the villages, I noticed, to her great glee, that they were all festooned and garlanded with what looked like paper flowers, blue and white (they turned out to be plastic). Of course, I remarked that blue and white are Our Lady’s colours, which she didn’t know, being a Lutheran, but which made her even more gleeful. It turned out that the Travelling Image of Our Lady of Fátima was making its 10-yearly tour of the region, with a whole week’s programme of processions, always at night, and Mass at the Church of arrival. There are two main statues of Our Lady of Fátima: the one at the Sanctuary itself, and this travelling one. My Lutheran friend ended up going to Mass nearly every day, first with me, then with her cleaning-lady! The processions were lovely, all the local authorities being involved, fire brigade (voluntary in Portugal), *Guarda Nacional Republicana*, Mayors, and anyone else with badges or in uniform. The parish priest, only one for all the villages, followed the “andor” in his mini, with all his paraphernalia for the next Mass! The “andor”, roughly translated as *walker*, is the contraption which carries the statue, can be a platform carried by humans; in this case a purpose-built “acquarium” shaped like a sort of cone, lit on the inside, and carried by a tiny fire engine from the 1940s or 50s, polished to within a centimetre of its bright red and chrome life. We happened to witness the placing of the statue in this thing, after Mass at one of the churches, with much discussing in low voices, and much wobbling. All the walls round the church and on the procession’s way were lit with plastic bottles of varying sizes, from the 5 litre to the 2 litre, cut in half, weighted with sand, and candles stuck in the sand. Very clever, practical and safe, as it gets very windy in that region, especially in the evening, with strong winds coming in off the Atlantic. People had been collecting plastic bottles for months, apparently, couldn’t get their cars into their garages any longer. Then the procession took off, all the way to the next Church, where it would be placed for the next 24 hours. Here again, a gift with bonuses! 10-yearly happening?? Lutheran friend supporting it all ?? Oh the abundant goodness of God! ■



Living together

We think our loved ones will live for ever.

*Sometimes we get irritated by them,
annoyed,
we say we hate them.
Deep down, we know we don't
but that's how we feel at the time.*

*When that happens, we could stop...
and reflect for a moment...*

*One day that person (sister or brother, husband or wife,
child or parent) will be gone...*

*Yes, gone for ever
and then,
we'll wish we hadn't wasted our time not trying
to love them more when life was tough.
("practical love" as my mother-in-law says)*

*We're only on this earth for a limited time,
so let's make the most of it,
let's make our homes joyful and peaceful.*

*And when our time has come to meet our maker,
hopefully, we won't have any regrets.
If we do, it'll be too late.
We don't live for ever!*

B.C. - 01 November 2006

THE RISING: FAITH AND MORN!

*The Crow, brazenly wanders the Common,
Pecking for scraps:
The yellow empty carton of foam, discarded;
Once housing greasy chips –
Now becoming – The Scavengers Treat!*

*The Sun's in rise, majestic and magical,
Warming and visible;
Over and across the way,
Betwixt the leaf of tree –
Yet to reach the height of day!*

*The smell of Earthly scents, fill my nasal;
The soil below; musky,
The trees about, breathing – close to dry;
Or are they, gasping – close to die?
The air is slightly spoiled; polluted
By the streets and ways of man;
Like all in life itself!*

*I now feel stronger in my faith –
A Lost Sould No-More!
I look the Devil in the eye;
I stare him down face to face...*

*... too many years,
His scheming and deception, have fed
From the fountain of my soul;
Stealing of my purities,
Dwelling in my weakness,
Trespassing my pain
And lack of conscious understanding!
"No-More", I say... I pray... "No-more!"*

*The Cross of Christ is Clear –
CROWNING
THE HEAD OF THE CHRISTIAN HOUSE!*

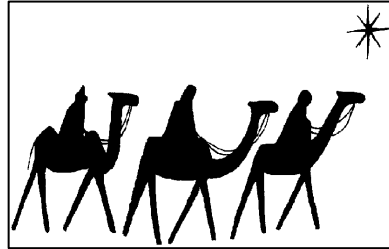
*I have my faith, The Faith: Jesus Christ!
I feel and understand God's Love for Me, Today!*

'Tis a Perfect Day for Latin Prayer!!!

Laurie Keegan Culley, Pocket Poet (The Prodigal Son Returns!) 6am 21/07/06

FRENCH EPIPHANY CAKE

Every year on 6th January, families and friends all over France gather yet again around the table – on this occasion, to share a “Galette des Rois”, literally the Kings’ cake. This lovely tradition celebrates the arrival of the Wise Men in Bethlehem. A figurine (or a blanched almond) is hidden inside the cake. When you cut the cake, you can ask the youngest child to sit under the table and call out each guest’s name in turn as you place the slices on the plates. This always generates a lot of excitement and has the advantage of making the process impartial. Whoever finds the figurine is crowned King or Queen and is then allowed to choose his Queen or her King.



In addition to the ingredients below you will need 2 decorated paper crowns.

500g ready rolled puff pastry

1 large egg yolk beaten with a teaspoon of water for the glaze.

1 blanched almond

75 g (3 oz) unsalted butter, softened

75 g (3 oz) icing sugar, sifted

75 g (3 oz) ground almonds

1 large egg

1 large egg yolk

1 tablespoon dark rum (optional, but recommended)

On a lightly floured surface, roll out the puff pastry until it is about 2 mm thick. Cut out two 20 cm circles using a plate as a template. Refrigerate for 30 minutes. This prevents shrinkage during cooking.

To make the almond cream: in a large bowl, cream the softened butter with the icing sugar using a whisk. Gradually mix in the ground almonds, then the egg, egg yolk and rum. When the mixture looks smooth, refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Place one disc of pastry on a dampened baking sheet. Spoon the almond cream into the centre and spread it leaving a 4 cm border all around. Place the blanched almond in the cream, not too near the centre. Brush a little of the beaten glaze over the border and carefully place the other disc of pastry on top, pressing firmly on the edge to seal it. Score the edge with a knife.

Brush the top of the galette with the glaze and refrigerate for 10 minutes to dry. After that, you can use a knife to score the top of the galette in a criss-cross pattern..

Bake in a pre-heated oven (180°C) for 30-45 minutes until well risen and golden.

Bon appetit!



QUESTIONS YOU MAY NEED TO ASK HEALTH-CARE STAFF

by Teresa Lynch

Teresa Lynch is a nurse specialising in palliative care and founder of “Nurses opposed to Euthanasia”. This article addresses some of the issues arising from the Mental Capacity Act which covers the care of patients.

When elderly or disabled people enter hospital as patients, they may be in a very vulnerable state. Friends and relatives may be needed to act as their advocates, in an official or unofficial capacity. The healthcare staff, nurses, doctors and paramedical staff have different roles and responsibilities, but together they should ensure that the patient’s needs are met. The patient’s next of kin and close friends also have an important part to play. They should be consulted, when the healthcare team are formulating a care plan for the patient at the time of admission and in relation to discharge planning.

- The care plan requires your contribution so that the patient’s needs may be met.
- Never be hesitant to ask questions or make suggestions on behalf of your relative or friend.
- You should feel free to ask questions of any team member as you see fit – but the nurse in charge should be the most appropriate.
- It will help the team to know that someone is there to keep an eye on the situation.
- Tell the team that you want to be kept informed about any changes in the care plan, from admission to discharge. (It is important, when possible, to first get the patient’s consent for this and then confirm a clear agreement with family/friends as to who is the trusted person/next of kin).
- The staff will then identify your role and responsibility as friend or next of kin.

Some situations that may arise and questions that may be useful:

A. HYDRATION AND FEEDING

1. Is the patient able to take anything by mouth?
2. Is it safe for the patient to eat? If so could I help with feeding?
3. Is there a “Nil by mouth” notice by the bed? If so ask:
4. How long has the notice been there and why is it there?
5. How long will the order notice last?
6. May I see the fluid intake chart? If there is no chart, you should raise the question of hydration by a drip into a vein or under the skin.

What are you doing about hydration? If the answer is nothing, there is cause for concern, for no one can survive more than about a week without fluids of any sort. Dehydration can add to the patient’s discomfort, cause thirst, confusion, severe agitation, kidney failure and ultimately death.

- You may be told that the patient will not suffer from thirst, but this opinion is not universally accepted. It depends on the clinical situation.
- If a person is not dehydrated, there may be reasons not to hydrate the patient if he or she is only likely to survive one or two days. Hydration by means of a drip under the skin is simple to insert in hospital or at home, as a prevention of thirst and delirium due to dehydration.

What are you doing about feeding? It is not unusual to wait a while to see if a person regains the ability to swallow, if that is the problem, but while waiting, hydration should be provided. Most doctors advise that decisions about feeding should be taken sooner rather than later as malnourishment adds to the patient’s problems.

1. If swallowing is a problem, the patient should be expertly assessed and re-assessed at least weekly.
2. Sometimes oral feeding can be maintained using specially thickened feeds. The advice of a dietician is helpful.
3. If no food can safely be given orally, feeding can be achieved via a tube, passed into the stomach either via the nose and throat, or directly into the stomach. The latter, called a PEG for short, requires a small procedure under local anaesthetic and sedation. The advantages and disadvantages of this procedure should be discussed with all concerned. It carries a small risk.

B. UNDUE DROWSINESS

This can be due to a number of factors, but the first thing to check is whether the patient has been given a sedative, or medication such as morphine for any reason.

You are entitled to make enquiries about these matters. If sedation or other medication has been given, ask “Why?”. Keep on asking until you get an answer.

You may need to speak to one of the doctors and, if need be, speak to the Consultant. If you are still not happy about the situation, ask for a second medical opinion.

C. PAIN CONTROL

If the patient seems to be in discomfort or pain, report this to the nurses and ask them to assess the situation. There may be a simple explanation, such as a need for the toilet, or the need to be turned in the bed, or the need for a drink or some food. Abdominal pain is sometimes due to severe constipation, which can be overlooked and can make the elderly unwell and confused. A urinary infection can also cause discomfort and is a risk for those with catheters.

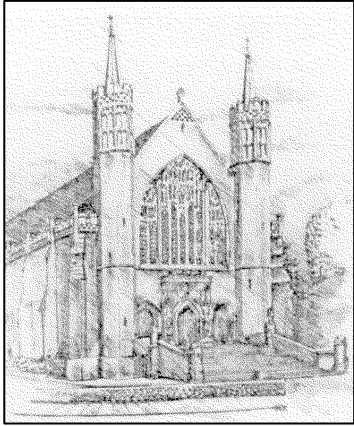
Sometimes patients are given morphine for reasons other than pain. It is also an effective medication to relieve coughing and shortness of breath.

If the patient has been prescribed pain medication, check the drugs listed and find out why they have been used. Some hospitals have been criticised for over-using strong pain-killers, given via a syringe driver. This can be dangerous, but is valuable for patients who are terminally ill whose pain cannot be controlled with simpler medication.

D. FURTHER QUESTIONS THAT MAY ARISE ON CARE AND SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT

1. How could the patient be made more comfortable?
2. What can be done about?
3. Would it be a good idea to try, eg. pressure-relieving mattress, mouthcare?
4. Would it be a good idea to contact a Speech Therapist (in the event of swallowing/speech problems), Dietician, Consultant for Elderly Care, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Minister of Religion, Discharge Planner?
5. In the event of a negative response, ask: “What grounds do you have for not contacting these people?”
6. How do you know that the patient is not experiencing hunger and thirst?

The ideal situation is that, from the outset, there is good communication between the staff and the patient’s relatives and friends. ■



Report from Fr Peter on the Parish at the Autumn 'Parish in Council' Meeting

The parish priest usually gives a report on the year at the Autumn Parish in Council Meeting. I thought that it might be worth including my report in the Parish Magazine. I have added at the beginning some suggestions as to how we can look at who we are as a parish. I have also added a few things which were missed in the original report.

How should we try to describe the complex life of a parish?

How to describe the life of a Catholic faith community like this parish? At the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles there is a description of the life of the early Church which may help us. It begins 'These remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to prayers.' (Acts chapter 2 verse 42). Can we describe ourselves like that? In spite of the many differences in the circumstances in which the Catholic Church is to be found in our culture today, can we recognise ourselves in that description? The phrase does at least give us some reference points.

Reflecting on this, it seems to me that, in the terms of the phrase from the Acts of the Apostles quoted above, we can well see ourselves as a community of Christ's disciples, called together in the Church to hear the Word of God and proclaim it to others; to celebrate the Eucharist and through it grow in the life of grace, fellowship and charity and learn to pass on faithfully the Church's teaching passed down to us from the apostles.

The difference that our Benedictine identity makes

Some years ago, a Parish in Council Meeting was set the task of coming up with a 'mission statement' for the parish. I remember that, in the discussion, there was widespread agreement that our Benedictine identity was important to the way in which we describe ourselves.

This might be expected to bring a special emphasis in some areas to the way that we try to live as members of the Body of Christ. For example:

- A special desire to celebrate the Holy Eucharist and all liturgy well.
- A high value set on reading and listening to God's word to us in Sacred Scripture whether in groups or alone.
- Time and attention given to prayer.
- The desire for a strong tradition of study and growth in understanding of our faith.
- A strong emphasis given to hospitality and the desire for a strong community life where every person feels welcome, valued and appreciated.
- Special care given to the sick and respect to the elderly.
- Firm commitment to listening to the voice of the young and learning from them.
- A strong sense of Church tradition.
- A strong sense of the unity of the Church and of the mission to work for it.

I believe that we can see all these emphases in our life as a parish and that our Benedictine heritage helps us in these ways in our lives as Christ's disciples.

The Diocesan Document 'Communion and Mission'

In the parish bulletins prior to the Autumn Pastoral Council meeting I drew attention to a document issued at the end of the Millennium celebrations by Pope John Paul II. This document was also drawn on by the recent planning White Paper 'Communion and Mission' issued by our bishops on the future of our diocese. These have given another 'lens', as it were, through which to examine and understand our life as a parish. In those documents great emphasis was given to the parish as a community of prayer and communion charged with the task of spreading the Good News.

There is a need for a parish three year plan

In the end we need to be guided at all times by the Holy Spirit and be open to the guidance and requests that we receive from our bishops. It seems sensible to try to have some kind of on-going parish plan to help us be more organised and effective. It is in the nature of such a plan that it will change and develop continually as new needs and circumstances arise. It is hoped that following on from the Autumn

Parish in Council meeting we can use the wisdom pooled at that meeting to set up various working groups to get a plan properly started.

REPORT ON THE PAST YEAR

Liturgy

We don't have a liturgy committee. Something that in the past I have acknowledged would be a good idea. Most of the Sunday Masses have organising groups of one kind or another and this seems to be working quite well. We held two retreats for Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Eucharist last year and one retreat for readers. The latter had to be cancelled because of poor publicity and consequent low take up. Readers at Mass and Extraordinary Ministers are being asked to make a retreat each year and we need to make provision for this as well as ongoing training sessions. We are very grateful to Gordon Nunn who keeps the records of all our extraordinary ministers. Gordon is currently following the training for ordination to the Permanent Diaconate. We are also very grateful to Sister Mary Pauline who undertakes the training of altar servers in the parish. We are very fortunate that so many young people are willing to serve. I do wonder if there is a need for training for more adult servers as well. It might be quite nice sometimes to see whole families serving Mass.

The Blessed Sacrament Procession took place again this year. At our last meeting, various comments were made about how it might be improved and we must try to take account of these. For next year, Bishop Alan Hopes has agreed to be the principle celebrant. We are very grateful to Brother Alexander who works very hard on these masses. It was wonderful to see him ordained a deacon this year and we look forward to his ordination to the Priesthood next year.

The Abbey hosted a diocesan Ordination this year to which many parishioners came. The celebration of Marriages, Baptisms Confirmations, First Holy Communion Masses, Funerals, all require a tremendous amount of preparation and organisation. In each of these categories there are celebrations for around a hundred individuals or more each year. A very special word of thanks should be made here to our organist Cherry-Willow Pauls who, as well as being an exceptional musician, contributes enormously from her liturgical knowledge and experience. She gives very generously in time, hard work and enthusiasm. We can easily take for granted just how well music is organised at these liturgies. Recently, Catherine

Nicholls has brought together a parish children's choir mainly for primary school age pupils. They have given an Advent service and contributed to the music at First Communion celebrations and the parish open day. The Confirmation Candidates this year will, it is hoped put together a Gregorian chant choir and I know that Cherry-Willow Pauls would dearly like to do more in the way of adult choirs and music training days. A new initiative in our liturgy this coming year will be a special mass for married couples on 11th February. At his visitation, Bishop Alan suggested that we try to build up collaboration with the Polish Parish and we will be making this a joint celebration for the two parishes.

Other special celebrations this year have been the Blessing of Animals and a Mass for teachers, Governors and others who work in the field of education, which marked the start of the Academic year. This, we hope, will be repeated annually.

Prayer

We continue to have a wonderful variety in people, groups, organisations and initiatives in our parish. At Bishop Alan's visitation of our parish last Autumn he warned us against getting lost in too much activity without the balance of prayer. He didn't think that we were falling into that trap but it is something to guard against. We have all kinds of prayer groups from Morning Rosary, to lectio groups, to exposition, the Blessed Sacrament Guild, scripture sharing groups, Padre Pio group, Meditation groups, the Neo Catechumenate and even a Labyrinth prayer group who meet in the grounds of the Study Centre.

Education and preparation for the Sacraments

As I'm sure you are already aware we have a wonderful catechetical co-ordinator in Marianne Cuthbertson. Despite being part-time she is now piloting both the First Communion Programmes and the Confirmation Programmes. A very special word of thanks must be made here to Jo Buckley who has been leading our First Communion Programme for many years. She is greatly loved and respected by so many children and their families for her hard work. I would like to thank Mrs Christine Nevard who has agreed to take on the huge task of running this programme. Thank you, too, to over 50 catechists who will be helping with these programmes this year. The basic catechist's training course 'Echoes' will be offered again this year and Marianne is also arranging for a Catechist's Certificate training course from Maryvale college to be offered in the parish. This will offer further training to catechists and also be very helpful to parents and to anyone else who wishes to deepen their understanding of the faith. After Easter, it is hoped that we can offer a course on prayer. Fr George Smith, a very highly regarded and

experienced Missionary Father of Africa who lives in community here in our parish, will be offering regular meetings to discuss aspects of the faith that are often questioned or found challenging. The series 'Café' (Catholic Adult Faith Education), which uses videos as a basis for discussion, will also be continuing in seasons each term through next year.

We are very fortunate to have the Benedictine Study Centre here at Ealing Abbey. This centre, run mainly by volunteers, is ecumenical, and offers lectures to a very high standard in a welcoming atmosphere with very small classes. These lectures are very suitable for those wishing to look in an explorative and critical way at aspects of theology. They are especially tailored to suit those just returning to serious study. A complaint is sometimes made about the costs. Professional lecturers are employed for these validated courses and the rates are in fact very competitive when compared to similar courses. They are very good value for money and some bursaries are available.

Welcome and community

In the Spring, the Diocese invited all parishes to 'open their doors' to the local community and beyond in an event of their choosing. We did just that. We opened our doors. We put quite a lot of resources into advertising. The pastoral council arranged a wonderful day of music, refreshments, international food. There was a very relaxed atmosphere. The exhibition of the illustrated St Mark's Gospel and the drama throughout the afternoon on the topic of marriage, staged by some members Sunday night youth group, seemed to be appreciated. I think that many enjoyed the opportunity to wander around the monastery garden and study centre. Many non-Catholics came and I think enjoyed a really wonderful English Summer afternoon. It was particularly wonderful to have displays of flowers from various groups in the parish, from other churches and from at least one secular flower arranging group. They seemed to appreciate the invitation to share in our life. It should be acknowledged that many who attend Ealing Abbey week by week are not Catholics and come for various reasons, usually because a spouse is a Catholic. These friends to the Church often make a very significant contribution.

Community Life

One of the most important areas of our involvement with the wider community is through the SVP. This relatively small band of parishioners do an amount of work out of all proportion to their size on behalf of the Abbey in our community. They coordinate our involvement in the soup kitchen at St John's Church as well as supporting our neighbours in need here in Ealing, as well as fellow parishioners, in

all kinds of practical ways. There is now a junior SVP conference starting in the parish under the guidance of Ursula Kopp our youth co-ordinator. We also have the Legion of Mary and the Catholic Women League. The latter have decided, because of the difficulty of finding proper leadership and because of so many other commitments, that it is time for them to disband this year. Thankfully, it is hoped that Monica Yates and others will be able to take over the running of the Tuesday Club for senior citizens. They will need lots of support. We have a justice and peace group which helps to bring to the attention of the parish important issues and dispenses the money collected through the World in Need envelopes. A new initiative starting as an offshoot from this is a parish ecology group. Two members of our parish serve on the local ecumenical committee. Susanna Nunn is secretary and Elizabeth Daly Jones is the lay chairperson. Last year, the week of Christian Unity ended with a very beautiful celebration in the Abbey. That will be repeated this year. Christians Together have also asked that the other Churches may join us for the celebration of Compline - evening prayer - with the monks on the Monday of Christian Unity week this January. Do mark those dates in your diaries.

A very special word of thanks must be made here to Phelim and Geraldine Martin who have been running our parish club, the Benet Club for over 13 years. When they took this task on they were charged with making it a truly parish club where, after meetings or evening masses or just for a quiet evening or a special party, parishioners can come with their friends and relax. This is just what they have done and in a very caring and professional way. They will be retiring this Christmas and Kim Dixon has been appointed to take over running the club. Do make her welcome. Thinking about the future of the club, I think that the time has come, in anticipation of the change in the law to make it a no smoking club, except in the garden. This will begin in January. It would also be nice to make every member of the parish a member. We also need to reinstate a parish social and club committee.

New Catholics

A very important part of our Parish life is the group who meet on Saturday mornings in order to prepare to become Catholics or just find out more about the faith. Mrs Sheila Rees cares for this group with Fr Francis as Chaplain and Marianne Cuthbertson with oversight of the catechesis. This is also a way for older children to prepare for the sacraments and for adults who have missed out on sacraments to receive preparation.

Youth

Ursula Kopp continues in her ministry with young people. She has an excellent and very impressive core of young people who have achieved a great amount over the past year. In parallel to the pastoral council there is a youth pastoral council, who reported at the Spring meeting and who are represented here today. Their views need to be made more widely heard. We are very fortunate to have a youth group for a younger age group. This meets on Friday evening. Many thanks to those dedicated volunteers who, on our behalf, ensure the safe running of these groups. There should be no higher priority in the parish than the safety and well being of our children.

St Gregory's School, St Augustine's Priory School and St Benedict's Schools all play a vital part in the life of the parish and we pray that the three way relationship of support for our children between home, school and parish continues to develop. I hope that this is also true for children at secondary schools beyond our parish boundaries.

The Parish Team

Geraldine Larkin has recently been appointed as a pastoral coordinator. She is helping the parish priest in organisational tasks. One immediate effect of her presence is that the boundaries of the parish priests' areas have been redrawn to give a more even distribution of the work load. Gordon Nunn, as part of his training for the permanent diaconate, also attends the team meetings. The whole parish is, I am sure, very grateful to Fr Francis for all his work, among other things caring for the dozen or so homes for the elderly in the parish and to Fr Timothy who somehow manages to be chaplain to both the Confirmation and First Holy Communion programmes, the Tuesday School for children in Non-Catholic Schools, the two Youth Groups as well as the Padre Pio Group not to mention his involvement with the Neo Catechumenate and the Council of Christians and Jews.

Starting to plan for the future

The Spirit seems to have led us to focus especially on marriage in the coming months. I hope that as many married couples as possible benefit from the new initiatives. These are not particularly for couples whose relationships are in trouble but to enhance married life for any couple and to deepen their understanding of this vital vocation in the life of the Church. I have already mentioned the special Mass for all married couples at 2.30 pm on the 11th February. Quite a number of parishioners have attended the course for married couples at Holy Trinity Church in

Brompton. They have found it very enriching to their marriages – husbands in particular, I am told. Some of them will now be running this course here in the parish from the end of January. You are invited to sign up for it now. At the Spring Meeting of the Pastoral Council Edmund Adamus from the Pastoral Affairs Office of the Diocese spoke of his desire to run the course on marriage called 'Celebrate Love' here in the parish. This is planned to take place in April.

The seasons for faith sharing groups continue. The next one will be in Lent. The 'Core Community', as it is called, who keep all this happening has now had a big influx of new members and it seems that, far from fizzling out as was predicted, this initiative will be stimulated to grow and continue.

There are many challenges facing us in the immediate future.

In our discussions over the coming months I'd be grateful if you would reflect on two in particular. Firstly, the huge increase in Catholic immigrants locally and the bishop's request that we try and help them and secondly, how we go about being more effective in making Christ known beyond the Catholic community. After all, this is what we are for.

Please also keep in mind the needs in all area of parish life of different age groups and people in different states of life; married, single, widowed, Ethnic groups and also class groups.

Conclusion

We are, I believe, continuing along the 'Way' of those early Christians 'trying to remain faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to prayers.' With the prayers and guidance of St Benedict to help us and in co-operation with our bishops may we continue to seek the face of Christ. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who knows where that quest will take us next. ■



**DOM BERNARD ORCHARD AND DOM KEVIN HORSEY,
R.I.P.**

Dom Kevin Horsey and Dom Bernard Orchard died on the same day within an hour of each other. Both were the only surviving, founding monks of St Benedict's School.

Father Bernard Orchard, who died on Tuesday 28th November aged 96, was one of the foremost Headmasters of the school, as well as a holy and conscientious monk. At the age of ten, he joined Ealing Priory School and distinguished himself in many ways, especially in his athletic gifts, holding a record long-jump that was only surpassed twenty years later by Anthony Rossiter. He was the first Old Priorian to ever go to university, taking a place in Cambridge.

He entered monastic life in 1932 at Downside Abbey and was sent to be headmaster of his old school in 1945, a task he amply fulfilled, being dedicated, with strong opinions and not believing in half measures. He was highly regarded by the staff and a report in 1960, when he stepped down, recorded that he was an outstanding headmaster whose loss would be keenly felt.

In 1965, after Dom George Brown gave up, he returned to the school, overseeing an expansion in the music and language departments, refusing to give way over compulsory attendance at school mass, feeling that: "I'm here as Head to be kicked but not to budge". It was this, which was the end of his second headship in 1969. He did not stop there, however. He was a great ecumenical scholar, and often wrote articles. As a founding member of the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate, he played a large role in ensuring that Catholics were fully involved in working with other Christians. He could often be seen around the school and the abbey.

Father Kevin Horsey, who died on 28th November aged 92, was well known around the Parish both as a member of the parish team and as a Scoutmaster for the 20th Ealing Scouts. Born in 1914 in America, Fr. Kevin was sent to school in England. He entered the novitiate at Downside, and in 1942 was sent to Ealing Priory. Between 1942 and 1958, he taught Geography and Religious Instruction (now Religious Studies) in the upper school, was housemaster of Powell and the U5th division master, as well as commanding the school Combined Cadet Forces. He founded the 20th Ealing Scouts, serving as Group Scoutmaster for nearly thirty years. He was awarded the Silver Acorn and the Silver Wolf.

Even as his physique began to take its toll, he still maintained a well-informed interest in the monastic communities' life and stands as an example of patience and stoicism in the face of old age and incapacity.

On 5th December, a funeral service was held in Ealing Abbey for both monks to a packed church. Both will be missed.

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace.

James Meade (L6)

Reprinted with the kind permission of the headmaster of St Benedict's School from the "St. Benedict's Chronicle".

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS:

Baptism

October

Elizabeth Cheasty
Millie Donnelly
Sol Margarita Marray
Constance Ahluwalia
Emerald Amath
Heberniese Pollard
Sophie-Ann O'Sullivan
Mia Davies

Emma Cullen
Hamet Hogan
Callum Hunter

Francesca Ng

November

Michael Freely
Patricia Burga-Urdaniga
Issey Rodriguez
Ruby Whish
Sofia Bartels
Samuel Starkey
Thomas Barry
Ines and Oscar Wheeler
Gabriela Taborelli
Luca Savarino
Josephine and Miles Heffernan
Romy and Ines Huegle

Marriage

October

Geraldine McAleese and Jerome
O'Donohoe
Natalie Arabian and Carlos Magloire
Alexandra Brian and Richard Grady
Francesca McMahon and Syed Haq

November

Patricia Burga-Urdaniga and John
Marray

Death

October

Zbigniew Wilimowski
Paul Manduke-Curtis

November

Anna Hearn
Kathleen Murphy
Snehaprabha Santhirasenan
Anthony Fenelon

