

Ealing Abbey Parish Magazine



Summer 2009

FROM THE EDITOR

I am pleased to introduce the latest issue of the Parish Magazine. This time I need to start with an apology for the long gap since the last issue.

As always, all contributions to the Parish Magazine are welcome. Articles, reviews, prayers, poems, reflections, drawings could all find a space here – although some may need to be lightly edited for brevity.

Please send material, preferably by email, to 'The Editor – Parish Magazine' at the Parish Office: parishoffice@ealingabbey.org.uk. Please include your full name so that your item can be properly credited and also contact details in case of queries.

Elizabeth Howard

AQUINAS CELEBRATIONS

The Feast of St Thomas Aquinas, on Wednesday 28th January, was celebrated with great enthusiasm by the staff and students of St Benedict's School. All pupils had the chance to complete a quiz on St Thomas and to win a prize of £25, whilst those lucky enough to have Religious Education classes on the feast of the patron saint of theologians were given small treats.

However, the highlight of the day was reserved for the evening. Thirty five students studying Religious Studies for A Level joined the Ealing Abbey congregation for the 6.00pm Mass. Afterwards, together with the Monastic Community and parishioners, they enjoyed a celebratory dinner in the Parish Hall with Fr Gerald O'Collins, SJ, who gave a fine after-dinner speech 'In Praise of St Thomas'. It was a wonderful evening which brought the whole community together.

Mr Allott, Head of Theology and Religious Studies said, "The sight of a Jesuit priest speaking to a Benedictine community in praise of a Dominican friar would surely have pleased St Thomas Aquinas and marked a fitting end to a day of celebrations."

Jessica Taylor, an Upper Sixth student who hopes to study Theology at university commented that, "The day's celebrations were really wonderful and it made me glad to be studying RS for A Level! Prof O'Collins made a real effort to speak to every student individually and, although he is one of the world's finest theologians, he managed to speak about St

Thomas in a way that made sense to a group of 17-18 year olds."

Marek Nalewajko



Fr O'Collins with Mr Joe Foley, Head of Sixth Form (left) and Tom Jewers, Year 13 (Upper Sixth) RS student and captain of our 1st XV rugby.

"ROOM FOR ANOTHER ONE"

Everyone knows the saying "There's room for another one" and we probably think of it as squashing up on a bench or a

sofa, so that another guest can have a place. As I write that I am also reminded of the famous "Tea-Party" scene in Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland". When Alice arrived the Mad Hatter, the Dormouse, and the March Hare were already having tea, and although the table was large and all three were crowded together in one corner of it, they rudely cried out "No room! No room!"

Mrs Malone, an elderly lady (Irish, perhaps) lived all alone in a little cottage near a wood, and despite being very poor and not having enough for her own needs, never ever cried out "No room!" She became famous for always inviting the poor and needy to share her humble home, with whatever food and comfort she could manage, and her welcoming greeting was always :

There's room for another

In Bible readings, appeals, sermons and talks, that is a message we often hear, and to which we sometimes respond.

"Mrs Malone" was the subject of a poem by the well-known writer, Eleanor Farjeon, who wrote over eighty books for children and adults , some still in print, and who is often remembered as the author of the popular hymn "Morning Has Broken".

The poem is set in a winter like the one we experienced this year, and it is on

*One Monday in winter
With snow on the ground
So thick that a footstep
Fell without sound,
She heard a faint frostbitten*

Peck on the pane.....

and there, outside, is a frozen sparrow. On Tuesday a hungry cat arrives, on Wednesday a vixen with her cubs, on Thursday a donkey, and on Friday a bear. All are welcomed.

*" What with one thing and t'other
Me fambily's grown ,
And there's room fer another"
Said Mrs Malone.*

But come Saturday Mrs Malone needs their help. At first they think that she's only sleeping that she *had forgot to sit up*, but when they realise what has happened they place her on the back of the donkey and take her on a journey.

By Sunday morning they arrive at the Gate and are welcomed by St Peter.

The animals tell him of her kindness and care and how

*Her heart was so big
It had room for us all.....*

and the poem ends with Peter 's words to Mrs Malone, who has now awakened, anxious and overawed

*" Go into the Throne.
There's room for another
One, Mrs Malone".*

On August 22nd 1951 Eleanor Farjeon was baptised and received into the Catholic Church at St James ,Spanish Place. She described herself as "a very old baby of 70". The

congregation was surprised, at the end of the ceremony, to hear Father Richard Mangan recite the words:

" *There's room for another
One, Mrs Malone.*"

Not long after her baptism the much-loved illustrator, Edward Ardizzone, illustrated the poem and it was published in a small edition, out of print now, and much sought after by collectors of poet and artist. It has now been republished, by a new, innovative venture, CANDLESTICK PRESS.

This press has already been much praised for its charming and original poetry pamphlets, beautifully printed and packaged and selling at £4.95....

.....ideal as a small gift, or as Jenny Swann, the publisher (who once lived in Ealing) says: "Instead of a Card".

Alongside pamphlets on Walter de la Mare, Christina Rossetti, Poems on Love, Poems on Bicycles and Poems about Puddings, is the very delightful long poem by Martin Armstrong *Miss Thompson Goes Shopping* (I learnt it, by heart, at school) and the elderly lady in that poem is now joined by the equally charming *Mrs Malone*.

Anne Harvey

The Candlestick pamphlet *MRS MALONE*
is on sale in the Abbey Bookshop

EALING ABBEY LABYRINTH

Background

In 2005 a full scale replica of the labyrinth in Chartres Cathedral was built at Ealing Abbey, following interest emerging from a combination of parishioners and the Parish Priest. This is located outdoors, in the grounds of the Benedictine Study and Arts Centre (BSAC) on Castlebar Road, in a beautiful monastic garden and informal wildlife sanctuary, with fruit trees, a vegetable garden and ponds.

For those not familiar with labyrinths, the basic idea is of a single pathway leading through various convolutions to reach an inevitable centre. This differs fundamentally from a maze, which is a place of entertainment in the process of getting lost and finding a way out again. The labyrinth, on the other hand, is the place of a meditational walk, and once entered there are no choices to be made, only the choice to continue, in which case the centre will inevitably be reached. In a way this embodies the journey of faith.

In the Middle Ages, a number of great cathedrals incorporated a labyrinth in their structure, for instance laid out in stone in the floor. Their use was sometimes seen as a substitute for an obligation to pilgrimage. Some have in subsequent years been removed, but the one at Chartres Cathedral in France, a Catholic Cathedral dating from the twelfth century, has remained. It is a particularly beautiful, harmonious and complex labyrinth design which incorporates an image of the cross, and has a symbolic rose, sometimes associated with the

Virgin Mary, at its centre.

Process of Building

After a fairly prolonged initial planning stage, spanning a number of meetings of interested people within the parish, it was decided to hold an exhibition and sale of labyrinth related art works, donated by local artists, in order to raise the modest funds required for the project. The initial construction used natural stone cobbles laid into a large circular lawn to delineate the paths, and the work was undertaken by a group of five to ten parishioners, over a period of about three months, working in small periods on a regular basis. Each working session was preceded by a gathering in a corner of the garden for a period of silence and the sharing of Gospel readings and other spiritual texts. This became an important part of the ethos of the construction for those taking part.

Although the basic structure of the labyrinth is of course fixed, as a faithful copy of the one in Chartres, nevertheless there were significant choices to be made during the process of construction, for instance in relation to size, choice of material, situation in the "landscape" and orientation to the compass. As far as possible these were considered as we went along, and resolved by what seemed to emerge naturally from our surroundings, and the process of communal working.

Walking the Labyrinth

Once the construction of the labyrinth was completed in Autumn 2005, the project was opened with a celebratory

open air Mass, and social gathering in the adjacent BSAC.

Since that time, a handful of parishioners have formed themselves into the Labyrinth Prayer Group, and walked the labyrinth on a monthly basis, come rain, sun or snow, as well as on a number of special occasions. To be able to take part in a process of worship in a beautiful open air environment, and in the awareness of the seasonal changes of creation, has been one of the great gifts of being involved in the labyrinth group over these past three years, perhaps particularly for those who are city dwellers, and used to all church related activities being indoors.

At each of our walks, we first gather in a corner of the garden near a small pond to share the Gospel for the day, then undertake a walk at whatever speed seems appropriate for each individual taking part. Often this might mean spending half an hour over something that could be covered in five minutes at normal walking speed, although there is no expectation on any person to walk at a pace that seems either too slow or too rapid for them. I always find it impressive how entering the winding stone pathway has the powerful effect of slowing down the footsteps, as well as making sometimes anxious and racing thoughts more peaceful and "God centred". The presence of a nearby busy road seems to be quickly forgotten, and different aspects of the labyrinth walk can emerge, sometimes touching deep elements of our inner lives, as well as our current concerns. Some people who have walked the labyrinth have described it as an experience of healing in the broadest sense of the word, and the centre has been seen as

an image of balance, completion, and realisation.

The Future

These days there is a resurgent interest in labyrinths, and many profound things have been written on the experience of the walk. On one level, perhaps it can be seen as a prayer in physical form, rather than in words, and in this way to involve silence in the sense of a stilling of conceptual thought. In this sense the labyrinth can be seen to be part of our contemplative Christian tradition.

At Ealing Abbey we are able to undertake such a meditational walk in a specifically Christian context, and to reconnect to something which has for many centuries been a part of our Christian heritage.

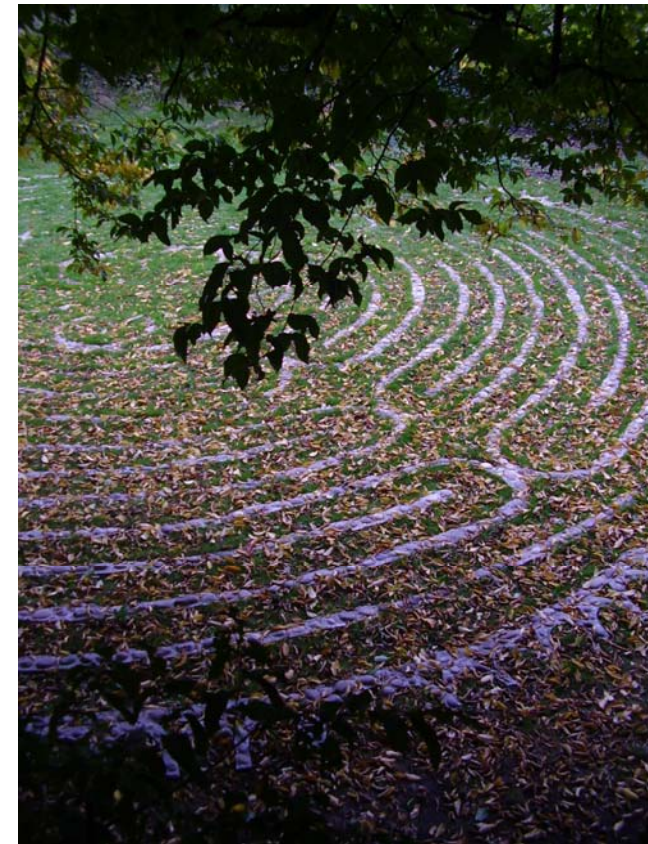
The Labyrinth Prayer Group meets on the first Saturday of each month, at eleven am, in the grounds of the Benedictine Study and Arts Centre on Castlebar Road, which is a short walk or bus ride from Ealing Broadway station. We have just hosted a well attended labyrinth afternoon, led by one of the priests from the parish, including a presentation on labyrinth related spirituality, a communal labyrinth walk, and a closing session to share how we had found the experience. Hopefully it will be possible to hold another similar event in the not too distant future.

Solitary walking, which has its own special qualities, is also a possibility, by arrangement with the parish.

Anyone who is interested in these activities would be very

welcome to contact the Labyrinth Prayer Group, and to leave contact details for future events, at the Parish Office on 020 8862 2160, or simply to come along and join us on the first Saturday of each month at 11 am when we gather in the grounds of BSAC for our regular monthly walk.

Chris Makin



THE DIGNITY

Chorus

Have you seen the Dignity, have you seen her lads
She's out from the Laide jetty, bobbing there with pride
Have you seen the Dignity, have you seen her lads
She's moored from the jetty, riding from the tide.

She originated in 1946

She was then a lifeboat, for one of those big ships
When she came to Gairloch, she had had her day
Bashed, bruised and battered, broken and decayed.

When our Stuart saw her, she fairly caught his eye
And the more he spied her, his eyes began to shine
He would sure restore her, but then that is his trade
She was in a sorry state, the night she came to Laide.

Six years in the workshop, it is a long long time
He has now restored her, with love and care and pride
She's fitted with a wheelhouse, and much much more besides
She is completely ready, just waiting for a tide.

He appreciated the help he got, so great
His mates would always rally, for jobs that he did hate
He spent so many hours there, for patience it did take
And Calum, Isle of Raasay, the nameplates he did make.

Early Saturday morning, before the hour of five
I am at the window, the launching for to spy
When there came a phonecall, it will be second tide
For out of that old engine, no spark of any kind.

Johnny from the bedroom, he came with big long strides
Get her in the water boy, get her there as planned
I will fix your engine, just leave all that to me
And it does not matter, although she is on the sea.

With tractor and with trailer, she's taken to the pier
And soon the tide has lifted her, I see it all from here
The morning it is gorgeous, with not a drop of rain
She is duly christened with a bottle of champagne.

I'm tired now of waiting, she's not heading for the deep
What is Johnny doing, has he gone to sleep
But two hours after midday, as I head out the door
From that famous engine, there came a mighty roar.

At last now she is moving, they're heading out with glee
I wonder where he's going, it could be to Portree
But what on earth is happening, the engine has cut out
And Iain with his dinghy, is turning her about.

Now where is that engineer, is he still around
Has he gone in hiding, has he gone to ground
I'm told with slight adjustments, that we will shortly see
The sound victorious Dignity, heading for the seas.

Ann Gunn

LIVING THEOLOGY

"Living Theology" or Catholic Dogma as it was called when it first started in the sixties is a five day course in Ushaw

College, Durham. Jim Murphy, Norman Walton and I took the train to Durham from King's Cross. It was a pleasant enough journey despite being turfed off the train at Darlington because overhead cables were no longer overhead.

By the time we arrived in Durham we had been joined by another "pilgrim" and so the four of us took a taxi to Ushaw. For me it was a very personal journey because my Uncle Martin had trained there to become a priest. He had left St Cuthbert's School at the age of 17 and gone to Ushaw to join the 250 other seminarians. At 25 in 1934 he had been ordained; then curate in a local parish; then army chaplain to the Eighth Army in north Africa. In Italy he had heard Mass said by Padre Pio and seen his stigmata at the consecration.

I had gone to Ushaw with a mission, to return my uncle's Mass Book to the library. Peter Seed, the Estates Manager, was pleased to welcome it home, together with the memorabilia of his parish work in Walkergate. Mission accomplished I sat back and enjoyed the lectures by the Jesuits and the beautiful services they shared with us.

Norman, my husband, chose a series of lectures on St Luke's gospel. This series was given by a quietly spoken, gentle priest called Father Peter Edmonds SJ. We enjoyed his illuminating talks enormously as we did the very different style of Father John Moffatt SJ, Chaplain at Oxford University. He didn't just talk about the catechism and its roots, he acted it. There were scenes of a metal blob being transformed into a living form with a spirit. Father duly rolled around the floor in an undignified pose but he got his message across.

The theme of this year's "Living Theology" was dialogue: dialogue with other faiths; dialogue with scientists such as Richard Dawkin who have no faith. For us visitors there was dialogue between ourselves. We were like-minded people with similar and dissimilar views. The conversations in the classes and at meal times were lively and good-natured. Talking of meal times the food was excellent as was the accommodation. Sadly Ushaw only has 20 seminarians now and many of the buildings stand empty. It is like a town and in order to survive, buildings will be sold for redevelopment.

We took advantage of the lovely Durham countryside and had some very pleasant walks. We weren't deprived of entertainment either. On our last night several visitors took part in a concert party which was of a very high standard. Norman wanted to do a tap dance but I was worried he would fall off the stage. He is blind and we'd drunk several wines with our evening meal. Norman found a great deal of kindness. Apparently, we needn't have chosen the same lectures so I could help Norman; others would have guided him. We were told this by Mary who deals with special needs visitors and who is herself blind.

My talk on my experience of the stem cell graft I have had to my left eye was well received with us all conceding that mature stem cells are condoned by the Catholic Church but not embryonic stem cells. Actually that was one Catholic dogma we lay people knew about but we were all agreed that the laity doesn't know all Catholic dogma as we don't study it.

Patricia Campbell

MOTHER TERESA

I would like to share with you some of my experiences while working for Mother Teresa in Calcutta.

The main building where the Sisters of Charity live is called 'Sishu Bhavan' (Children's Home). It faces a large front courtyard, surrounded by a high brick wall. The entrance to the premises is through a small green door which leads to the front office. The nuns frequently find an abandoned infant left outside this door overnight. They take the child in to be cared for.

The area is rather rundown with poor people in slums living cheek by jowl. Their shacks are constructed with bits of wood, old doors, gunny sacks, corrugated sheets, any material which can be pilfered or found in the city. The babies conceived, in or out of wedlock, are often unwanted. These infants are disposed of, sometimes just wrapped in newspaper and dumped in garbage heaps. Mother Teresa said, "Bring all these children to me before the cats and dogs get them." There are women in the Community who do just that. They in turn are given for their families supplies of rice, wheat, milk powder, medicines, whatever is donated to Mother Teresa.

The upper floor of the main building is a large room housing the nursery. Here there are four rows of small metal cradles running down the length of the room, each occupied by an infant. At one end of the room are feeding bottles, at the other end is a bank of swaddled premature babies. These are cared for by sisters with medical training.

We workers looked after feeding the other babies. Each cradle had a name label, which matched a name on one of the feeding bottles. Names were selected according to the area in which the baby was found, Muslim or Hindu. The milk formulas were prepared by the nuns, according to the age and health of the child. Unfortunately there were very few voluntary workers, and many babies had to be propped on their sides with a bottle. One or two hours of feverish activity followed, with changing, soothing, burping, and adjusting positions. Mother Teresa appealed for just an hour of time that we could spare for the care of these little ones. She wanted each child to have known the warmth of a mother's arms, at least while feeding.

Some of these children grow up disabled or impaired. They continue to be cared for in the home. They in turn help with the babies' needs all day. Some are taught how to use machines, and sew little vests and clothes for the babies. Other girls are trained in housework, laundry and cooking. They can be employed in reliable homes as domestics, and meet at least once a week in Sishu Bhavan.

The room adjoining the nursery was occupied by toddlers. It was amazing to see all these tiny children sitting cross-legged in front of long low tables along each side of the room. Each child was served a metal plate with rice, lentils, vegetables, sometimes an egg. They fed themselves, were cleaned up, and played happily.

Nirmal Hirdai

Nirmal Hirdai is a home for the terminally ill, abandoned and destitute, run by Mother Teresa and her nuns. It is situated in a very poor area of Calcutta, near the Burning Ghats. This is where the Hindus build funeral pyres for the cremation of their dead.

The building is actually a huge old warehouse. The only light filters through windows situated high up on the walls. Along the length of the floor are low camp cots lined up in rows. These are occupied by men in one area, women in another. When people are found in the streets sick, starving and dying, they are brought to Nirmal Hirdai. There are Brothers and Sisters who bathe and clean them up. The ill are assessed and given whatever help possible. A few survive, many die.

Mother Teresa and her nuns also go out at night in a van scouring the streets for the homeless poor. She told us a moving story. One night she and her sisters found five or six people desperately ill. They took them all to the home. Mother concentrated on one very old, frail woman and asked the sisters to look after the others. She was about to put the woman in to a bed, when the old lady took Mother's hand, gave her a beautiful smile, said 'Thank you,' and died.

Mother Teresa continually encouraged people to treat the poor with dignity, for they too are human beings, with a need to be treated humanely, and with tenderness.

Sheila Mathias

The bluebells are blue...

When in pain, never complain.
Think of that plane or listen to the rain.
Think of that fame; that fight to remain sane - the acclaim!
It is in the name; it is all a game; it is all the same, so never complain.
Stop this rhyme now,
Wait for a sign now from the divine now; don't turn to crime now;
close to the sublime now!
Nothing else matters.
The whispering trees; the birds and the bees.
Nothing else matters.
Just listen to the words; the birds.
That is all that matters.
The bluebells are blue
That is all.
True colours.
True blue
Peace.

Julie Agati

A Poem to Ponder

I was shocked, confused, bewildered
As I entered Heaven's door,
Not by the beauty of it all,
Nor the lights or its decor.
But it was the folks in Heaven

Who made me sputter and gasp--
The thieves, the liars, the sinners,
The alcoholics and the trash.
There stood the kid from seventh grade
Who swiped my lunch money twice.
Next to him was my old neighbor
Who never said anything nice.
Herb, who I always thought
Was rotting away in hell,
Was sitting pretty on cloud nine,
Looking incredibly well.
I nudged Jesus , 'What's the deal?
I would love to hear Your take.
How'd all these sinners get up here?
God must've made a mistake.
'And why's everyone so quiet,
So somber - give me a clue.'
'Hush, child,' He said, 'they're all in shock.
No one thought they'd be seeing you.'

Anonymous; contributed by Sheila Mathias

Prayer of St John Vianney

I love You, O my God, and my only desire is to love You until
the last breath of my life.

I love You, O my infinitely lovable God, and I would rather die
loving You, than live without loving You.

I love You, Lord and the only grace I ask is to love You
eternally...

My God, if my tongue cannot say in every moment that I love
You, I want my heart to repeat it to You as often as I draw
breath.