

window

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This issue of "WINDOW" will be published on the parish website and in paper copies for those who do not have access to the internet. We are grateful to all those who have given accounts of their experiences of isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic, and especially to the young people for their perspective on home learning and other features of the lockdown. A series of photographs provide a record of the online services that kept us in touch with Mass in St Dunstan's when we could not attend in person. Many thanks to Fr Philip and Fr Simon for keeping the worshipping life of the parish alive in this way – and for their singing! We are all grateful that the church is now open for private prayer and to that it is once more possible to come together as a community – even if only at a distance – to celebrate Mass. On a sadder note, we were sorry to hear of the passing of Pat Fitzpatrick, one of the stalwarts of the parish for as long as we can remember. He will be greatly missed. R.I.P. _____ **Editors**

THE NEW SANCTUARY FURNITURE

The photos show the work that has been going on in recent weeks in St Dunstan's. The work on the altar, the tabernacle plinth and the ambo was done by Wrights Stonemasons from Barton-under-Needwood in Staffordshire, to a design by Fr Philip and Fr Simon, and the standard of their workmanship is truly excellent. The concept of the design was that the curve motif that comes from the outer wall of the church, and is continued in the design of pews and the sanctuary, be echoed in the new sanctuary furniture. You will notice that the altar, tabernacle plinth and ambo are of a similar design but on different scales – a carved base with supporting columns – for each of these items are related to each other in the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries.

The stone used is Portland Stone from the Jurassic coast of Dorset, and as such you can see the traces of fossils within the stone. The stone was worked on and cut at Knights workshop before being transported to St Dunstan's. There is a photo of the mensa of the altar (the table top) being wheeled in to church – and lifting it up into position wasn't a job for the fainthearted! As is customary, the mensa has five crosses carved into it, one at each corner and one in the centre – each cross representing one of the Lord's five wounds in his hands, feet and side. This is a poignant reminder that the altar is a place of sacrifice. In the Mass, the sacrifice of Calvary is made truly present, and Christ the Passover Lamb is offered to the Father. At Mass we are caught up in Christ's offering of himself to the Father, and as Jesus becomes truly present in those sacred moments, heaven and earth are knitted together – the altar is holy ground!

As the Roman Canon prays: '*. . . we, your servants and your holy people, offer to your glorious majesty from the gifts that you have given us, this pure victim, this holy victim, this spotless victim, the holy Bread of eternal life and the Chalice of everlasting salvation*'; and as the Third Eucharistic Prayer says: '*Look, we pray, on the oblation of your Church and, recognising the sacrificial Victim by whose death you willed to reconcile us to yourself . . .*'

In the altar mensa, a cavity has been carved to await the placing of the relic when the Archbishop consecrates the altar. We are grateful to the Fathers of the Birmingham Oratory who have donated a relic of Birmingham's saint – St John Henry Newman – to be sealed into the altar. The Archbishop was due to come this month to consecrate the altar. Sadly this has had to be postponed until such a time as it is safer to gather in numbers.

Providentially, when the church reopens for private prayer, the moving of the Blessed Sacrament back into the main body of the church will mean it will be easier to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament during these times of social distancing – for the Blessed Sacrament chapel would have made its use quite challenging in such times!

We all look forward to the day when the church reopens its doors, and we can gather again to pray and offer Holy Mass. _____

Fr Philip



REFLECTION DURING THE PANDEMIC

When the lockdown began I, like so many people, sat down and simply crossed things out of my diary. In my case these included Lenten preaching, a retreat, a pilgrimage, a Day of Recollection as well as meetings and concerts. In one of my emails I said, “man proposes, God disposes”, and that, in fact, is something I have been thinking about for a long time and since long before I heard of the Corona virus.

What I think has been made clear to us is that we all need to sit very loosely with our own plans and projects. God often upends them anyway. In particular we need to sit loosely with the ideas and convictions we develop about how God is using us and about our own particular role or profile within the Church. Of course we all do have a unique calling within the Body of Christ. St John Henry Newman said that each of us is a link in a chain. The problem is that our sense of calling can begin to feed our ego and this can happen imperceptibly – without our noticing it. We invest heavily and personally in our plans and projects and we can get hurt and upset when they don't work out or are not well received.

When we react in that way it is time to ask ourselves whether we have been looking in the wrong direction. We may have been looking to our own fulfilment and not to what the Lord is doing here and now. God's actions are always new. “Behold I do a new thing” ... “I will give you a new heart. A new spirit I will put within you.” We must always be on the lookout for what the Lord is doing in us and with us and in our world. It is always

new and often it will make our current vision and our current plans look tired and improbable. We need to develop a continuing openness to what God is doing in us and our world – a taste for the Spirit of God! Being open to the new will require courage and humility whatever our current views, convictions, ideals and so on may be.

In particular, at this moment, we need to be careful about looking forward to “getting back to normal”. The pandemic will change things in many ways, some of which are already clear but most of which will only become clear as time goes on. That is a sobering thought. What will be normal in the future is not something we can be very clear about now.

It is significant that Holy Week and Easter are taking place during the pandemic lockdown. In Holy Week, we remember the Passion of the Lord. Jesus had to suffer and lose everything before he would rise in glory and before we could be given the hope of resurrection. The Passion was the route to Resurrection. There was no other way. There is no other way. So we all need to embrace this time and to nurture a confident, open and receptive spirit. Resurrection is beyond the compass of human imagination but not beyond the compass of human hope. Let us be very open to the new things that the Lord will do and will ask of us. _____ *Archbishop Kevin McDonald*
_____ *Maundy Thursday 2020*
[We are grateful to Nuala Bielby for passing this on and to the former Archbishop of Southwark for permission to print it _____ *Editors*]

The Triduum during Lockdown

Since we joined the Parish Choir in the 1970s, we have missed singing the wonderful music of the Triduum in St Dunstan's Church only twice: once when the Easter highlight of a tour of New England was the candlelit opening of the Vigil Mass in an Italian church in Beverley; and once when we attended an Easter Sunday mass in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris on our 40th wedding anniversary. Not to sing the lovely settings of the Mandatum on Maundy Thursday and the Reproaches on Good Friday, and the joyful motets and hymns of the Vigil and Morning masses

on Saturday and Sunday was one of the deprivations of the current lockdown. We were very grateful, therefore, to Fr Philip and Fr Simon for the gift of at least experiencing the Triduum online from our own parish church during the extraordinary Holy Week of 2020. On the left is Maundy Thursday, on the right is Good Friday and on the front cover is Easter Sunday as we saw them on our screen. _____ *Editors*



LIVING UNDER LOCKDOWN

Reflections on a Song

A couple of weeks ago, I was reflecting on the tremendous challenges with which we are all being presented by the global Covid-19 outbreak, when lines from the Leonard Cohen song 'Anthem' came into my mind: 'There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in'. This prompted me to listen to this track again and I was moved by the beauty of it, amazed at how pertinent it seems to the current situation.

The birds they sang
At the break of day
Start again
I heard them say
Don't dwell on what
Has passed away
Or what is yet to be

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in.

My understanding of the meaning of this song is that he is talking about how nothing human is ever perfect. There are constant threats and challenges in our lives, to our faith in the goodness of others and our faith in God. But in the face of adversity, we need to try not only to accept but even to honour these imperfections and the opportunities they provide for growth.

We are all currently carrying enormous fear for the safety of ourselves, our families, our friends and neighbours, our communities, and people throughout the world. This is a dark time, and we are having to contend with isolation, loneliness, sadness, financial insecurity, physical or mental illness, and, for some of us, the loss of our loved ones. We are not built to live remotely, so being isolated may leave us feeling deprived of human warmth and connection. We may be angry with the Government for what we see as their shortcomings in protecting us. We may even be angry with God for not preventing this crisis.

In this darkness, however, and this enormous 'crack in everything' we hold dear, I think there is a radiant beam of light 'getting in', and this light is helping us to see who and what is truly most vital, valuable, and important to us as human beings. Our enforced isolation gives us the opportunity to slow down and recognize the huge sacrifices that people are making by staying at home in order to protect themselves and others; and we can 'see', perhaps for the first time, the everyday acts of heroism by health and social care workers, bus drivers, delivery people, and supermarket staff. I think that the 'crack' which can open up in us, when

we are more aware of our own frailty and mortality, gives us the chance to feel and show our love for each other, and to share our vulnerabilities. We can also see more clearly the value of our older citizens and learn to take better care of those who need our care at different times in their lives, through illness or homelessness. We have become aware that we have so much to be thankful for, and so much to make up for.

So, all in all, I think that Leonard was right! And I hope that when this is over, we will remember what we have witnessed, and continue to appreciate the things we have perhaps taken for granted. I hope that we will have changed and grown as people and that we can continue to honour and begin to appropriately reward and care for the people we have always relied on for our wisdom, health, wealth and general well-being; and to thank God for all these blessings.

Lynn Abbott

Change in Our World

Like everyone else in this altered world, I have found plenty of time to consider the many challenges Covid-19 has placed before us. The sphere of modern technology seems to have gone mad, yet it allows us to maintain vital social contact with families, friends and colleagues. It sometimes feels as though we are doing more of this than we would usually do in our crammed, busy lives. Is that such a bad thing?

Of course, the dangers and health challenges presented by this disease are many and varied. We have all had to "step up to the mark" whether we are self-isolating, isolating because we have been told to do so, maintaining visits to the workplace where necessary or following another pathway which is equally relevant. A great sadness is the inability to gather together to celebrate the lives of close family members and friends who have died. The negatives of this situation are many but let's pause for a moment and consider the positives which could well benefit our future:

- ◆ increased contact with others, whether by text, telephone or zoom
- ◆ a quiet time for prayer and reflection
- ◆ the chance to 'attend mass' online
- ◆ more time to interact within the home
- ◆ a reduction in traffic-induced pollution

In years to come, our generation will reflect on this time with mixed emotions, but prayer is a great healer and we can be confident in the knowledge that God is always with us, helping us face the challenges of our lives and leading us towards greater understanding of his plan. _____
Annette McGrath

Teaching Children's Liturgy at Home

As parents we make a baptismal promise that we will help our children grow in faith. Before lockdown, this was easy, as they went to Catholic School, we went to charismatic conferences, Mass every Sunday and we said our prayers every night. I saw it as my job to teach practical things, like how to make the sign of cross, the Our Father and Hail Mary, teach empathy / charity; and the other bits I believed they would get from Mass, school and charismatic conferences.

When the pandemic broke and the news came that they wouldn't be at school or even be able to go to church, I became very aware that this promise was not going to be fulfilled, unless I took much more of an active role. I also felt that we needed something to make Sunday still holy for the children, so they knew it was an important day, even if we weren't leaving the house, or going to church.

In my day job, I run a youth engagement organisation so I am used to creating workshops and I also help with children's liturgy in the parish, so I made the decision to do Children's Liturgy at home. On top of this, I thought I would film it. Originally, I wasn't really sure why, nor could my husband understand why on earth I would film it! I just felt it might encourage and inspire other people to try it too. Mostly because my family are *not* perfect: the children don't always concentrate, they won't sit still and I sometimes miss things out or have to make the "mum face" to get them to be quiet. I hoped, in people seeing my very far from perfect household doing it, then they could either think they could do it or even better know they could do better!

We have created 9 videos, one for each week we have been in lockdown, and it has now become something the children look forward to doing. In the more recent videos, it has been lovely to see that they are truly growing in their faith and now know the format, so are much better behaved. I try to think of activities people can duplicate and use resources from Celebrate@home, Cafod and Catholicism.com. We have on average about 40-50 views each week and I have been asked to share it on Celebrate (Catholic Charismatic Renewal) Facebook Page to help families on there. I share it with the family on my social media platforms, so please feel free to check it out and even subscribe to the channel if this is something you want to keep up to date with.

These are hard times. We all need to do what works for us. I do this, not to shame any families that are not, nor to get recognition that I am doing it, but because I love Jesus. I miss going to church. I want my children to have the love and desire for our Lord too and for me this works. _____ *Charlotte Slater*

Videos can be seen on: <https://youtu.be/EEQw6lq9gJE>

CAFOD LITURGY ONLINE

Anyone with small children will know how gratifying it feels to turn up to church on time. And if you've arrived with everyone's teeth cleaned, hair brushed and shoes on the right feet, it's a Sunday miracle.

At the beginning of lockdown, my family started tuning in to CAFOD's online children's liturgy. This meant we simply had to get from the breakfast table to the sofa on a Sunday morning, and if one of the children had a crust hanging from their hair or were still wearing their pyjama trousers, that was fine.

One of the things that we appreciate from this liturgy is the structure it gives to the children on a Sunday, which could very easily feel like any other day right now. It carves out time to stop and hear the word of God, sing hymns amongst friends, pray for people and reflect on what Jesus is saying to us. It 'gives families an opportunity to celebrate their faith in a way that is familiar at a time when we are being asked to do things so differently'.

We begin by lighting a candle like the other hundreds of families tuning in at the same time and it feels

like a small reminder of how church used to feel. Somewhere where we belong, somewhere where we come together as one family. We are certainly looking forward to getting back to church and seeing people face to face, but for now, we are treasuring the intimate encounter with God and other families in the comfort of our own home.

You can register for the virtual children's liturgy on the CAFOD website.

_____ *Kyra Trewby*

Did you know?

Fr Tony Nye SJ, of the Jesuit order at Manresa House in Harborne, and a member of our Birmingham South Deanery, was the Priest Advisor, for six years, to the BBC production team of *Father Brown*. Fr Tony, who recently celebrated his 88th birthday, told me he gave up advising on *Father Brown*, partly because some of the new stories, set in the 1950's, were 'getting too sexy!' I will be extremely disappointed if, following this article, there is a spike in downloads of *Father Brown* boxsets in the Birmingham area. *Deacon David*

Last Flight Home

My first (and now very likely my only!) travel adventure of 2020 was a 23-day tour of Vietnam and Cambodia. In Hanoi, Vietnam's capital, everyone appears to be busy at some kind of work; and, as across Vietnam, there is a real sense of family support and solidarity within communities. The country has only opened up to the outside world since 1995. Hanoi provided many opportunities to sample local culture, with calligraphy and a cookery lesson before visiting a lacquer factory which made the most exquisite products.

A 100-mile drive from Hanoi through rice paddy fields and banana, lychee, mango and pineapple plantations took us to the coast and the iconic Halong Bay. A first indication that the situation was changing was the temperature testing and hand sanitizer that now appeared at every location. Villagers treated us to a traditional water puppet show before we flew to Da Nong in order to visit Hoi An, where there remains a fusion of Chinese, Japanese and French influences. A visit to an Eco Village provided the most incredible lunch sourced from their own vegetables, herbs and fish. By night Hoi An is lit up by lanterns and is a quite magical place. However by now we had become aware that we were among only a handful of tourists.

I could never have imagined on that Sunday, when I attended Mass and prayed in English at the Catholic Church of Hoi An, that it would be the last time that I



would be able to attend Mass and receive the blessing of the sacrament of Holy Eucharist for the foreseeable future. It is a beautiful, welcoming Church with a large congregation and amazing singing. The parish has a long history and is called the cradle of the Vietnamese Church. By the next Sunday, the churches were shut to foreigners. Then to Hue with its huge Dong Ba market, where an eclectic mix of goods were piled ceiling high

and we noticed that as a group of unmasked Europeans we were attracting attention. A trishaw ride took us to the Imperial Citadel of the Nguyen Dynasty. The next stop was to the DMZ and the Hien Luong bridge that used to separate North and South Vietnam and I stood with one foot in what used to be each of these. We then visited the Vinh Moc tunnels, where the Vietnamese army and their families lived during the years of conflict with only 2m by 2m as the living space for a family.

We flew on to Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon, a city of 15 million people and over 8 million scooters. It was a huge contemporary city but strangely quiet. The situation was now clearly changing and we heard reports that Halong Bay and Hoi An were closed down. We visited the Independence Palace, Post Office and War Remnants Museum. We then heard that the borders were closing, so we decided to leave very early the next day to cross by foot into Cambodia the day before the borders were shut to all Europeans.

Cambodia is the Kingdom of Wonder, but is tarnished by the brutal history of Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge and the Killing Fields. We were in Phnom Penh, Asia's fastest growing city, but again the streets and sights were largely deserted. The Royal Palace was still open and was amazing, with its classic Khmer roofs and gleaming silver pagoda, all pointing upwards to Heaven and still a residence of the Khmer royal family. In stark contrast, the S21 Tuoi Sleng Genocide Museum, with its piles of skulls and barbed wire, was a chilling reminder of the terrible recent history.

After a stay in the fishing area of Kep Bay, our final stop was in Siem Reap. Here we were somewhat surprised that sites were still open and we were constantly checking the flight situation back to the UK. We went to see the ancient temples and sculptures of Angkor Wat, which is considered the most beautiful place in Cambodia, which is why it is included on the national flag. After Angkor Thom and Banteay Srei, two more wonderful examples of Anghorian art, our last visit was to the hugely atmospheric Indiana Jones fantasy location of Ta Prohm.

Our planned route back via Bangkok was now unavailable and we were blessed that our operator had sourced a flight via Qatar, which proved to be possibly the very last flights out of SE Asia back to the UK. We arrived on the first day of lockdown! Memories will remain forever of Vietnam and Cambodia, so beautiful and yet so quiet – as they must have been before mass tourism. _____*Sue Allen*

SVP UPDATE

As ever, I have to start with thanks to our priests, Deacon David and to you, the people of our parish, for the support we in the SVP unfailingly enjoy.

The virus and the restrictions which go with it hit us just after we had put in an application for funding from a large legacy – administered by SVP National Office – which would have enabled us to continue “Funday and Lunches” at Manningford Hall in Druids Heath up to and including the school summer holidays in 2021. This is obviously now on hold and who knows whether it will be possible to run these events in the foreseeable future.

Also, before lockdown, we were carrying on our usual work, responding to the various needs that came to our attention and helping people with bags of groceries, furniture and white goods and, possibly most valuable, company and a listening ear. With lockdown things became more difficult. Not only are several of the members of the SVP Conference having to stay isolated themselves but our friends in the care homes, for example, can no longer receive visits. We’re still ‘open for business’, though, and try as hard as we can to work around the restrictions. We recently applied for funding – via the Archdiocese – to the Gubay Foundation, specifically to help us provide food and furniture to families in need.

What might be useful – if you encounter people in need – is an update on the situation with local food banks. The Active Wellbeing Society are running a foodbank at Manningford Hall. Their number is 0121 728 7030 Monday to Saturday, 8.00am-6.00pm and Sunday 9.00am-4.00pm; and their Website is <https://theaws.co.uk/food/>. If people are not self-isolating, food bags are available for collection from Manningford Hall every day between 10.30am and 12 noon.

B30 Foodbank has been operating a delivery service from its warehouse since 29th March. (It’s obviously not possible for people to safely attend a crowded foodbank at Cotteridge Church Centre at present.) Clients are now referred to them by e-voucher. Only those who do not have money to buy the next three days food should be referred to B30 Food bank. The number for inquiries is 07582 143972. I have access to the e-voucher system. If you encounter someone who is in urgent need of food please contact me (Andygudge@blueyonder.co.uk) or 07855 824434.

And by the same token, if you want to contact the SVP for whatever reason please feel free to do so, either by contacting me directly or by going through the priests or Deacon David.

Andy Gudge

President, St Dunstan’s & St Jude’s

Local Food Deliveries

It’s heartening to discover all the wonderful food deliveries that are taking place across Birmingham to vulnerable people and families who need this extra support during this time.

The Station Pub in Kings Heath has turned its premises into a food bank, delivering around forty parcels a day across the whole of Birmingham. It coordinates a team of volunteers who help to receive donations, pack up food parcels and do doorstep drop-offs. One of the volunteers, who is also a St Dunstan’s parishioner, says, ‘It’s a humbling and eye-opening experience to do the doorstep drop-offs. Families greet you at the door with such gratitude and relief. It really is a lifeline for many.’

If you would like to support the Station Pub food bank, you can get in touch with them on Facebook__*James Trewby*

Social Committee News

The planned film night and quiz went ahead very successfully in January and February, and were enjoyed by all who attended.

Other planned activities are on hold, but we hope to run them when we have the all clear that it is safe to do so, though this may be quite some time in the future. These include a day trip to Holywell and Llandudno, and to Oscott, and the parish Christmas celebrations, as well as further film nights and a barn dance. The social centre has a new glass-washer and fridge, so will be able to provide an even better customer experience when normal service is resumed. The annual pilgrimage to Walsingham has been rebooked for next year. There will be more information later about deposits already paid. Celebrations for the refurbishment and reopening of St Dunstan’s are also dependent on the easing of lockdown and on social distancing.

There will be great rejoicing when it is safe to move freely and mix socially without restrictions, perhaps with a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by our parish clergy? _____*Mary Browning*

Volunteering for Care4Calais

During a very stormy week in February, Brian and I set sail for a 4-day session with Care4Calais, which is an English charity run by volunteers. It delivers essential aid and support to refugees in Northern France and Belgium. It is based in a warehouse three miles to the West of Calais, where donated goods and food are sorted and delivered daily to refugees. Since the destruction of the Jungle, refugees are living in tents, deserted barns, in forests and along the roadside. Their aim is to get to England by whatever means possible. Part of our reason for going was to try and find out why they wish to make the journey, and what they hope to find if they manage to arrive here safely.

Each morning, we arrived at the warehouse in time for a briefing at 9.30 that updated us on any changes or tensions that were likely to be affecting the refugee community, and morning jobs were allocated to the team of volunteers. This was also the time when our leader discovered just how many volunteers had managed to arrive: owing to the inclement weather, ferries had been cancelled so numbers were lower than expected. Their age range was from 18 to 83, mostly early 20s. All were deeply committed to the cause, and it was a pleasure working with them.

Mornings were spent sorting donations and preparing for the afternoon distribution session.



After lunch, we were allocated transport, given our afternoon jobs, and told where the distribution point was to be. Over our four days we went to Calais and Dunkirk. Care4Calais also distributes in Paris and Brussels. At that time there were about 500 refugees in Calais and 200 in Dunkirk.

As soon as we arrived at the distribution point, refugees started to arrive. They knew the drill well, so would start forming a queue for whatever

was to be given out each day. On the first day, it was warm jumpers, next day blankets and on the third day waterproof jackets. It seemed hard to appear to be inflexible when some may have preferred other items, but with such large numbers needing help it would have been impossible to cater for everyone's individual needs. Each distribution point was visited by other charities working along similar lines, which helped to achieve a co-ordinated approach.

Having got their jumpers, the next stop for the refugees was the phone-charging point. This was a large MFI board with about 80 electrical sockets powered by a petrol generator and manned by volunteers. The generator also powered the tea and coffee urns and the shaving and haircutting equipment, also manned by volunteers.

When all the jobs were completed, we were able to talk to the refugees and find out a little about them. They were mostly young men under 40 and they had travelled from Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Morocco and India and Pakistan. Many were Kurds. They nearly all spoke English and expressed gratitude for the small service we were offering. They were constantly wary of the CRS (Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité), best known for crowd and riot control.

They told us of some of the reasons why they would like to apply for asylum in the UK. The first and most important was that they needed to flee from their own countries because of the threat of persecution. Many had family members already living the UK, and as they had been taught English at school and had some awareness of English culture, it seemed a good choice. They also felt that they would be welcomed in England and that the UK was a tolerant country.

At the end of our last shift, we had a debriefing session. The main goal the team leader set for our return was to try and dispel some of the negative feelings we as a country can tend to harbour towards refugees. She also asked us to highlight the fact that there is no safe way for would-be asylum seekers to reach our shores, and to spread the word about the work that English charities are undertaking with the refugees in Northern France.

Jackie Trewby

Care4Calais during COVID – postscript

After Jackie Trewby's article about volunteering in Calais, here are a few quick snippets from Care4Calais during COVID:

At the beginning of April, Care4Calais surveyed 150 refugees across Calais and Dunkirk to gather data on the impacts of Covid-19. 'We want to assess both our own response and most needed actions. The results are interesting. 48% of those we talked to have only been in Calais for three months or less. This is a reminder of how transitory the population is – particularly given that for the last month there have been rigid travel restrictions in France and the rate of new arrivals has dropped.

'Only fourteen people told us that Coronavirus was a primary concern for them. Why should it be? Nearly three times as many said they were fearful for their most basic needs: food, sanitation, shelter or clothing. When you don't know where your next meal is coming from, a virus seems like a problem for another day.

'As the two weeks of the survey progressed, concerns around clothes and shoes rose to 46% and 41% respectively. For the last month, we've had to focus entirely on food provision as other NGOs have pulled out and the French state has cut back. The knock-on effect is people wearing the same dirty clothes for weeks and telling us they are itchy and sore. We are low on volunteers and struggling to get donations across but must respond to this need – it's the worst it's ever been.'

On 16 May, the French lockdown was relaxed and Care-4Calais reintroduced some of their services in Calais. They distributed food and clothes packs as usual, followed by hair cuts, hot tea, music, clothes repairs, cycle repairs and phone charging.

'It was so nice to see the more relaxed atmosphere that we used to have before Covid . . . the volunteers could do things to help counteract the harsh and unwelcoming environment that is created by the French authorities.'

Generous donations from various people and organisations meant that Care4Calais were able to put together family foodpacks for the entire May bank holiday weekend. 'Four hundred men, women and children had fresh food including halal chicken, vegetables, dates, juice and other goodies while they celebrated the end of Ramadan.

James Trewby

ELIZABETH CREASY

7 November 1928 – 9 April 2020

R.I.P

There are some people in life whose paths you are very glad to have crossed. Elizabeth Creasy was one of these people for me. She came into the church about twenty years ago through RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults), having met parishioners who were knocking on doors, inviting people. She was delighted to be received into the church and became a staunch member of our parish and joined the committee for RCIA, helping other people to make their own journey of Faith.

My husband, Ray, and I became great friends with Elizabeth and her husband, Anthony, who were both historians, very clever and well-read but wearing their learning lightly. They had well-informed opinions on all current events and always knew the back stories to everything. I never left them without feeling I had learnt something. Elizabeth was very fond of reading. She loved the social satires of Jane Austen and her gentler twentieth century equivalent, Barbara Pym. Elizabeth and I often laughed together about the earnest ladies in Pym's novels who enjoyed knitting socks for the parish curate. Watch out, Father Simon!

Elizabeth was a wealth of knowledge about Moseley and surrounding areas, having lived here all her life. She remembered Coventry before the bombing and spoke fondly of the medieval streets. She was brought up in Prospect Road by her mother and aunts, who ran a small school in one of the large houses. Her job during the war was to check the attics for incendiary bombs! She went to King Edward's Grammar School when it was situated at Camp Hill, and then to King Edward's Girls' School and St Hilda's College, Oxford, where she read History. After graduation she taught at some of her old schools as well as bringing up a family of four boys.

Sadly, Elizabeth and Anthony suffered ill health in the last two years of their lives. Anthony died in hospital in February while Elizabeth was in St Mary's Hospice. Deacon David was able to conduct a memorial service for Anthony at Elizabeth's bedside, which relatives and a few parishioners were able to attend. Elizabeth, herself, died six weeks later. Elizabeth and Anthony were bright, lovely, welcoming people. They will be sadly missed by all those of us who enjoyed their company and hospitality. We are confident they are now safe in the Lord's keeping until we can all meet again.

Nuala Bielby

'Virtual' Life at Bishop Challoner College'

"We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love"

It has been an immensely challenging few months for us all. Words like "social distancing" and "self-isolation" have become part of our daily language. We are engaging in a variety of ways of communicating, invariably using technology to reach out to loved ones and keep in touch. All of this is perhaps "new" to us but maybe the real joy resides in re-discovering some of the things we have forgotten without the many distractions of modern living to contend with: communities coming together to support each other; hundreds of thousands of people volunteering to support the NHS; rainbows in windows to spread joy; the whole country uniting to applaud our frontline workers; schools, including our own, sharing vital PPE with care homes and hospitals; shops expanding home delivery to support the most vulnerable in society; families enjoying true quality time together. In all this we see the very best of society, which resonates strongly at Bishop Challoner in our own Year of Community.

Throughout the lockdown, our school has remained open every day (including holidays) to families of key workers; our heartfelt thanks go out to all within our community who are working on the frontline to support people across Birmingham and beyond. Our school website (<https://www.bishopchalloner.org.uk>) now hosts our online curriculum for the many students who are working at home. Each day students follow an adapted timetable of lessons and return completed work to their teachers. For those without access to technology, work is posted out each day. The website contains a mixture of academic work, daily prayers and reflections, safeguarding and well-being support, and guidance and ideas for fun activities to encourage students to try something new.

My sincere thanks go to our brilliant teaching staff who have worked around the clock to provide a wealth of digital resources for students to access and collated a range of other freely available resources to support students. Also to our support staff, many of

whom are now working remotely to ensure that our school can still operate in these challenging times.

The absence of public examinations this summer allows us a chance to re-evaluate the broader importance of education: the acquisition of new knowledge; the enjoyment and challenge of learning something new; preparedness for the next stage. What we perhaps recognise most is the role of education in ensuring all our students leave our care equipped to be strong and active members of society with a deep sense of moral purpose. If the past few months have taught us nothing else, it is what tremendous good people can do in times of need.

Our own school continues to make PPE contributions to local hospitals, hospices and care homes. Mr Crawford and Mr Pegg have now produced over 1,000 visors using our lazer cutter; Mrs Dane has been producing sets of scrubs; Mrs Ashton has been making scrub hats; Mrs McGowan and Ms Saddler have been sewing wash bags for NHS staff; our brilliant catering team have provided gloves and our science department have donated gloves, goggles and masks.



Donations have been received by:

- St Mary's Hospice
- Heartlands Hospital
- University Hospital
- St Michaels Care Home - Solihull
- St Joseph's - Coleshill
- Diamond Carers - Black Heath
- Crossfield House - Wales
- Broadgreen Hospital – Liverpool

We remain deeply humbled by the work of our NHS and all those working on the frontline in hospices and care homes.

For those within our community experiencing any illness in their families, you remain in our thoughts and prayers. _____
James Coughlan

Head Teacher



THE WRITINGS OF ST JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

VIII: *THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY*

John Henry Newman was involved in education all his life. He completed a BA degree at Trinity College, Oxford, in 1820 and was elected a Fellow of Oriel College in 1822. Having been ordained a priest in the Church of England, he was appointed as a college tutor in 1826 and was instrumental in establishing a system of individual tutorials for serious students that is still the hallmark of undergraduate education at Oxford and Cambridge. Worried about alienating the wealthy parents of dissolute sons who were in a majority in the college, the Provost of Oriel stopped assigning students to Newman's reform group of young tutors in the summer of 1830. The future saint's educational influence in Oxford continued until 1843, however, in the famous sermons that he gave as Vicar of the University Church of St Mary the Virgin. One of his former Oriel colleagues (by then Bishop Wilberforce) recalled that 'he reached the heart of young Oxford' from St Mary's pulpit.

Given Newman's long association with Oxford and his high-profile conversion to Catholicism in 1845, it was natural enough for Archbishop Cullen of Armagh to consult him about the proposal to set up a Catholic University in Dublin. The city's Trinity College admitted Catholic students, but their religious education was not catered for, and scholarships and fellowships were reserved for members of the Protestant Church of Ireland. The idea of founding a Catholic University was a response to a government scheme to establish three secular colleges in Belfast, Cork and Galway, to be known collectively as Queen's University, which would be open to students of all denominations but exclude religion from the syllabus. Backed by the Vatican, the majority of Irish bishops decided to create an alternative institution, along the lines of the new Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium, where Theology would be given a prominent place. So Archbishop Cullen invited Newman to Ireland in 1851, ostensibly to seek his advice, but with the ulterior purpose of eventually making him Rector. As a preliminary, he asked him to deliver 'a few lectures on education'. It soon became apparent that Newman's idea of a university was rather

different from the kind of lay seminary that the Irish hierarchy had in mind.

The first of his 'discourses' was given on 10 May 1852 to an audience of ecclesiastical and lay dignitaries. This was followed by four more weekly lectures, and a further four that were never delivered. They were published all together as *The Idea of a University*. In a preface dated 21 November 1852, Newman set out the parameters of his ideal conception of a university: it was a place for 'teaching universal knowledge', which meant that its object was 'intellectual, not moral'; and it was concerned with 'the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than the advancement'. From these fundamental principles, it followed that it had no business with either 'scientific and philosophical discovery' – what we call 'research' – or 'religious training'. A university's essential 'office of intellectual education', therefore, is independent of the Church; but in order to 'fulfil its object duly', it needs the Church's assistance. In Newman's own words, 'the Church is necessary for its integrity'. In reading the Nine Discourses in which he expands upon these preparatory ideas, the modern reader needs to place his arguments in the context of the educational disadvantages of Catholics in Ireland in the middle of the nineteenth century. Other institutions (like St Patrick's College in Maynooth) existed for the training of priests, but Newman insisted that when the Church founds a university, it is with a view to the 'spiritual welfare' of her children and 'with the object of training them to fill their respective posts in life better, and of making them more intelligent, capable, active members of society'. In other words, the purpose was to produce an educated Catholic laity that could compete on equal terms with Protestant graduates.

In the introductory discourse, Newman makes it clear that the 'philosophy of Education' he is proposing is based upon 'truths in the natural order' and the conviction that we please our Maker best 'when we use what we have by nature to the utmost'. Therefore he will ground his argument on 'human reason and human wisdom', while always looking out for 'what is beyond nature in the confi-

dence of faith and hope'. The second discourse tackles the exclusion of religion as a subject for study at Queen's College. Newman maintains that 'religious doctrine' is a branch of knowledge and therefore Theology has as good a claim to a place on a university curriculum as Astronomy. This idea is developed in the next two discourses, which deal with the relation of Theology to other branches of knowledge. His basic points are that individual 'sciences' or intellectual disciplines – each of which offers only a partial view of the world – all together form 'one large system' and that a university which omits Theology (defined as 'the Science of God') will 'put our whole encyclopædia of knowledge out of joint'.

In the fifth discourse, Newman argues that knowledge is 'not only an instrument, but an end' that satisfies 'a direct need of our nature in its very acquisition'; and that the purpose of a 'liberal education' is not to instruct in 'useful or mechanical arts' but to foster a life-long 'habit of mind', which reasons well in all matters and reaches out towards truth. The next three discourses explore the relation of 'intellectual culture' to 'mere knowledge', 'professional knowledge' and 'religious knowledge'. Among the many insights that are still relevant to the debate about education today is his belief that a university should be an 'Alma Mater, knowing her children one by one, not a foundry, or a mint, or a treadmill'.

So far, Newman had been deliberately conducting his argument on the basis of human reason and common sense – including the need for a department of Theology. In the ninth discourse, he examines the necessity in a specifically Catholic university for the 'direct and active jurisdiction of the Church over it and in it'. This is because the Church, as the guardian of Revealed Truth, has a duty to counteract the tendency of Physical Science to exclude it and of the Arts to corrupt it. In short, her role in a university is 'not to prohibit truth of any kind, but to see that no doctrines pass under the name of Truth but those which claim it rightfully'.

Although Newman concluded his final discourse by insisting that he was not 'fitted for the task of authority, or of rule', Pope Pius IX appointed him Rector of the Catholic University of Ireland, which opened on 3 November 1854. He had spent seven years of his life on this project, but the hostility of some of the Irish bishops, a dearth of local students, and the failure to attract students from overseas led him to resign in 1858. In 1879, the name of the institution was changed to University College; and in 1882, the teaching faculty was taken over by the Jesuits. Nevertheless, *The Idea of a University* is an important part of his legacy that has inspired generations of educators.

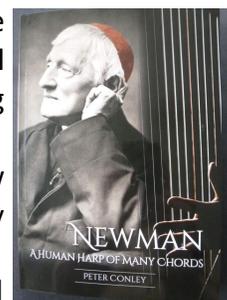
Editor

A New Book on a New Saint

The title of this book is from a letter that John Henry Newman sent to his mother in 1827, which begins, 'I am a harp of many chords' (some are identified as 'wisdom, fancy, graceful gaiety, / Or ready wit, or happy sentiment'), and ends with the hope that the woman who 'made me what I am' will add her string 'to my assortment of sounds'. Drawing particularly upon Newman's many letters, Fr Peter Conley shows how the holiness of a saint, who liked 'a good gossip', enjoyed country walks and contemporary novels, and played at cards and billiards, encompassed a humanity that brings him 'close to the everyday experience of people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures'. Each chapter is a meditation based on some aspect of Newman's ordinary life (his delight in the gift of a violin, his use of curry powder to spice his food) or some phrase or image that opens a window onto his religious teaching (lines from the hymn 'Lead kindly light', 'tuning a piano', 'God's kaleidoscope'). Newman's words will strike a chord with anyone seeking the way forward in the journey of faith, embracing change, unsure of their vocation, or struggling with bereavement.

Fr Peter confesses that Newman's letters are, for him, 'the best way of getting to know and love him today'. In his book, with its many quotations and its own wise and witty commentary, he has found a way of sharing that knowledge and love with his readers.

[*Newman: A Human Harp of Many Chords* can be ordered from www.alivepublishing.co.uk _____ *Editor*]



Youth Pages

Holy Week

When Holy Week came around, the Parish couldn't come together and celebrate the most important week in the Church's calendar. Therefore, many families had to improvise with wonderfully creative artworks and displays to represent each significant day in Holy Week. Here are some examples...



Life in Quarantine

Unfortunately with the lockdown put in place recently, Church has closed, meaning the congregation cannot come together to worship God.

However, the Kenelm Youth Trust (KYT) have started weekly livestreamed masses and activities aimed at young people to help them keep a connection with Jesus in these unprecedented times.

In my personal experience, these livestreams have become part of my weekly routine and have turned out to be vital in maintaining that connection with God.

By Alice Stewart

KENELM youth trust		food for the soul
TUES	HOW TO PRAY: THE ROSARY	Youtube: Kenelm Youth Trust
WED 11:00	WEDNESDAY WORSHIP	Facebook: Alton Castle, Instagram: Soli_kyt
THUR 20:15	PRAISE AND WORSHIP	Facebook: Alton Castle, Instagram: Soli_kyt
FRI 20:00	BCYS LIVESTREAM	Instagram: BirminghamCYS
SUN 18:00	MASS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE	Facebook: Alton Castle, Instagram: Soli_kyt

CAFOD reflection for Laudato Si week

Lockdown has brought both good and bad impact on the world. Nature has started to retake control of our major cities and pollution is less than it has been in many months. Post lockdown, I would like to see nature continue to thrive in these unusual places and more and more endangered species bounce back from the brink of extinction. Humans can help increase biodiversity by allowing animals access to our gardens and creating more green spaces for plants and animals to flourish in. By doing this we are fulfilling our stewardship promise to God: to protect the Earth and all that lives on it.

By Alice Stewart



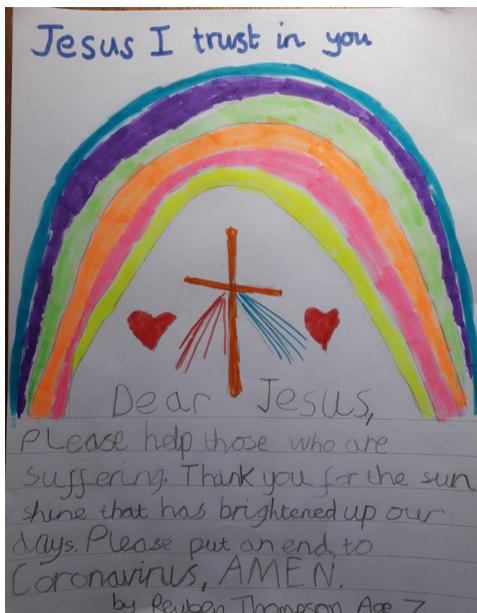
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC391qXQqW3X06ucJ4eNuzlQ>

Quarantine and Religion

Coronavirus may have closed our Churches but...

We can still pray at home. We can spend some time quietly at home or in the garden and learn to slow down, breathe gently and ask God to listen to our prayers. We've made our own little shrine in the garden where we light our candles, sit and pray and listen to all of God's creatures and their wonderful birdsong joining us in prayer. This is an easy idea that people could try. We listen to Hymns from choirs on YouTube in the garden as well. My favourite is 'make me a channel of your peace'. We also watch the Masses from St Dunstan's in the garden as well. I really miss not being able to go to St Dunstan's or St Jude's Churches but the garden has also become like a Church for me. I hope all the children from St Dunstan's, St Alban's, St Jude's and Bishop Challoner will be able to have their leavers' Masses this year.

By Harry W, Year 6, St Dunstan's



Little Lambs

Even though the children cannot meet up and play together, the helpers at Little Lambs have suggested these crafts for them to do at home. The crafts are exciting and fun for the kids and I'm sure they will enjoy them. There is a link at the bottom of the page.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9HZgeUdHs6s&feature=youtu.be>

Lockdown from a young person's point of view

The Coronavirus is a deadly disease which has claimed thousands of lives – young and old. However, it rarely does affect children; most of the time children have mild symptoms or none at all (unless they have underlying health conditions). This brutal virus started in China; the animal source of the Coronavirus hasn't been identified yet, but scientists think that it was bats. They think the bats gave it to live chickens or other animals sold at the Wuhan Market which were later consumed by humans.

Due to Coronavirus, the UK has been in lockdown. You aren't supposed to go out unless absolutely necessary and schools are closed. Furthermore, all exams are cancelled until further notice, this means that there's a chance that Y6's won't do the SATS, Y11 won't do their GCSEs and Y13 won't do A-Levels! Also, it means that every child in the country will be home-schooled: many children will fall behind, but they'll learn other qualities that I think are equally as important.

Covid-19 has killed many people, but I try to look for the Brightside of the situation. While I've been in lockdown, I've learnt how to grow a bigger and better relationship with my family, I've learnt things about them that I never knew before. During these hardships, I'm spending more quality time with my family, because life is short and we should make the most out of it. I'm missing my family and friends, but we can still stay in touch over the phone. During this time I've become closer to my family and that's special. So for me, this lockdown is a blessing in disguise. We've just got to remember that we will get through this.

By Esther Thompson

Stay Home, Stay Safe

It is very hard to see past the difficulties people are facing at this time. A time that will go down in history. Just a few months ago life just went along as normal, then along came a microscopic virus that quickly spread around the world bringing death, economic crisis, and change to life as we know it.

Locked down in our homes can be very difficult for many people: the elderly, the lonely, single parents, those who have lost their jobs. People worried they might be the next victim to succumb to the virus. However, through all this worry and uncertainty we have to look for the positives.

Personally we have really enjoyed being at home with our daughter. Home schooling can be a struggle at times but we have had great fun learning together. Although life has been hectic for us at this time and full of worry, stress and sadness, there have been moments of joy when we share and do enjoyable activities together. We have witnessed new life in our garden. Watching



the Great Tits flying to and fro from their bird box with food for their young. Playing games together and creating works of art out of old milk bottles and egg cartons. I have even picked up my paint brush after many years. Art can be very relaxing and pleasurable.

All in all, we have enjoyed being together again and spending quality time with each other and doing things we wouldn't normally have time for. So although we are in difficult times, always look to the blessings God gives us.

Stay home stay safe. _____ *Mary Di Maria*

On-line Vespers

On Easter Saturday, in place of the Easter Vigil, Fr Simon enabled us to enjoy the beautiful service of Vespers in the quiet of our own home. _____ *Editors*



Thoughts from a 7-year-old

It's very hard at the moment with everyone in lockdown. Lots have changed around, like no one has been out of their houses, but you need to be safe. It's very important. Even though we are stuck in the house we can still enjoy stuff like games and activities. A really fun thing to do is bird watching or finding shapes in the clouds. Stay home stay safe.

_____ *Jennifer Di Maria*



[Some of Jennifer's 'lockdown' artwork]

A student view from Year 8 at Bishop Challoner Catholic College

Rushing to school in the morning in heavy traffic is something we used to do every day. Getting to form, seeing friends and going to clubs after school is something we took for granted. We spent weekends at clubs, going out to eat and having fun with other people visiting our houses. But now all we can do is be at home all the time, and miss the people we usually see every day.

Schoolwork has now become one of the only constants in our lives. Online work is being set and although it's sometimes hard to motivate myself to get it done, the structure of my timetable and online school gives the week a sense of time. I still get the Friday feeling and can relax over the weekend and by Monday, I'm grateful for my schoolwork so that I feel that I'm doing something worthwhile and productive.

We're all adjusting to this as our new normal, with online lessons, feedback from teachers via e-mail and a new way of going to school for now. I think I can probably speak for everyone when I say we're all missing our friends. We can't wait until it's safe to go back to normal, and when we do, we will all have a new sense of respect for school. _____ *Oscar Barrett*

Some lighter notes in Lockdown

Me: Can you spray my roots for me. I can't get to the hairdresser.
Husband: Oh, should your hair have gone bright orange?
Me: (grabbing can) No it should not! You have used fake tan.
* * * * *
Daughter: Mom, I think you won't cope in Lockdown so I am going to lend you my cat, my best one.
Me: Thank you but I do have your father here with me.
Daughter: Mom, do you really think Dad could measure up to a fluffy white cat?
* * * * *
Me: (over Skype) What is that wooden thing you are creating in the garden? Is it a skeleton or a scarecrow?
Grandson: It is an opponent for me to play basketball against. I can dodge round him.
Me: Well, this does put a new twist on making friends.
_____ *Nuala Bielby*

Pentecost under Lockdown

Like everyone else, we had to spend Whitsunday at home, but were able to celebrate the birthday of the Church by tuning in to the Mass that Fr Simon celebrated for the parish on-line. _____ *Editors*



Terrible Dustbowl – Or Something Better?

In his review of a book *Serengeti Shall Not Die*, the zoologist Gerald Durrell referred to 'the terrible dustbowl that we are rapidly making out of an incredibly beautiful world'.

That was in 1960 – sixty years ago. Sadly – tragically – we've not learned or grown wiser in that time. On the contrary, we seem to have redoubled our efforts to turn this incredibly beautiful world into a terrible dustbowl.

We have cut the rainforests down with thousands of chainsaws; we have slaughtered elephants and rhinos in their hundreds; we have built housing estates and motorways on meadows and ancient woodlands. We have poisoned the oceans and fed sea life with our plastic refuse. We have warmed the atmosphere with our emissions, so that the ice caps melt, the climate changes, deserts grow and huge areas of the planet become uninhabitable.

We, human beings, behave like spoilt children in a well-equipped nursery; we do not welcome and respect the many good things we have been given. Instead we vandalise them, spoil and destroy them, for no reason but that we can do so.

But, there is hope. Hope that has become so much more vivid in recent days. Have you noticed, because of the lockdown, that so many things have become much better?

- More birds and insects in our gardens and open spaces
- Empty skies
- Clean air
- People walking or cycling
- Clear canals in Venice
- Communities getting closer
- People caring more

So, as we come out of the current emergency can we decide **not** to go back to the old ways? Can we try instead to make a better world?

We, as a parish, started on this before Corona-virus. We signed up to CAFOD's "Live Simply" campaign.

And, once the emergency is over, can we perhaps supercharge this? Things we can do:

- Recycle, don't waste, drive less;
- Save energy, use renewable;
- Boycott polluting countries & companies and encourage friends & family to do so;
- Tell politicians and would-be politicians that we will vote for those who stand with the planet and campaign against those who don't;
- Pray that Almighty God sends us signs that enable us to help preserve His creation.

This world is so beautiful. We must not let it become a terrible dustbowl. _____ *Andy Gudge*

Haircut and Sin

I always thought that when, in God's good time, I pass away, unconfessed sins would be dealt with in the next life. That was until my last haircut from my good lady wife, Catherine. I wasn't aware I had offended her, not recently anyway, but that is the only explanation I have of the events I am about to relate.

During lockdown, I have been lucky enough to have a couple of trims from Catherine. She was always a dab hand at cutting my late mother's hair, so I had no qualms about asking her for a more extensive cut. I had even contemplated ditching my barber, Alfredo (name changed to protect the innocent), when normality returns. Alfredo is cheap, a friendly chap and not a bad stylist. However, if you visit him after he's had a night's partying, you soon notice a slight tremble in his hand; not good for close scissor work. But perhaps I have misjudged my socialising barber, as a few weeks ago disaster befell me. 'Could you give my hair a quick trim dear?' I said. 'Yes, of course sweetheart,' said Catherine. All seemed well. Snip, snip with the scissors and then she used my electric razor, with the beard attachment, to trim the back of my neck. The sound I heard was similar to a Flymo lawn-edger hitting a piece of sodden turf. 'What was that?' I said. 'Oh nothing,' said Catherine, and she carried on to the end. I looked in the mirror and was very pleased with the result.

For the rest of the morning, I had a nagging feeling about the Flymo incident, and as I caressed the back of my head it did feel a little bare in one part. 'Catherine, are you sure it was all right when you shaved my neck?' 'Yes, of course dear, it's fine...if you don't believe me get the hand mirror and look for yourself. I'll even hold it for you.' I hesitated, thinking I was paranoid. Little did I know that Catherine was playing a knife-edge game of bluff (she should play professional Poker). But curiosity, and a slight dread, got the better of me and upstairs to the bedroom mirror I went to see for myself. Catherine, still confidently fronting it out, followed me to get the hand mirror. Suddenly, she disappeared, and I heard her footsteps hastily descending the stairs, as if fleeing the scene of a crime. 'Funny,' I thought, but sat on the bed anyway in front of the big mirror and awkwardly manipulated the hand mirror so I could see the back of my neck. 'AAAAAAGGG!!!' I cried. Even if the neighbours heard me, I doubt Catherine did as she was downstairs laughing loudly. You may know that Birmingham Council has cut tram lines in parkland grass, to create social distancing lawn pathways. Well, the back of my head looked like that.

All I can say is that I am thankful Zoom meetings show front face only. On that very evening, SVP members, joining our first on-line meeting, were blissfully unaware of my embarrassment. The moral of this tale is, always be loving to your wife, and go to Confession more often. _____
Deacon David

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A Half Hour Adoration In Lockdown

Daily permitted exercise,
a walk to the side of the church,
to the outer wall of the sanctuary.

I intend to rest longer than I should.
I sit on a wooden slat bench
ten metres from the tabernacle.

Jesus' presence needs
no halo of a monstrance
to saint the ground.

He walks through the wall
to announce his resurrection.
He streams like morning sun
through an east window
in every colour known
to heaven and earth.

His presence an incense
of April pollen, his choir
of birds chirruping matins.

I stand, prepare to return home,
blossom beneath my feet
confetti around a bride,
the bridegroom returning
with me. The tabernacle
his gate, not his prison.

_____ *Bernard Davis*



The back entrance to the church before and after the renovations.





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