



The Pylon



THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ST JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC CHURCH NORTH HARROW



WINTER 2016 - ISSUE NO. 10 - PRICE: £1



Welcome to the tenth edition of The Pylon. We do hope that you enjoyed our Summer edition and that this issue has articles of interest to you.

Thank you once again, John Towell, for the wonderful front cover.

This issue would be very empty without the contributions from you all and we hope that more people will be inspired to contribute articles, recipes, poems or anything else that might be of interest.

The International Day was, again, a resounding success. The weather was very kind to us. After expenses were deducted a profit of £10,300 was made and the Parish share was £5,150, an even bigger profit than last year. Many thanks to all those who worked so hard and supported this wonderful event.

It has been decided to put The Pylon on the Parish website this year—www.stjohnfisheronline.org.uk, but if you know anyone who would prefer to receive a printed copy, please let one of the Parish Team know.

Happy New Year to you all.

Please send all contributions to The Pylon via e-mail to barbara-towell@sky.com, geraldine2906@gmail.com or via the Parish House.

Barbara Towell, John Towell and Geraldine Kennedy

The Editorial Team

CONTENTS



4	Love In Action—Parish Plan
10	Talent— A Poem
12	Cradle Song—William Blake
13	Traditional Italian Fare
15	St John Fisher School at 10.00 a.m. Mass
16	St John Fisher Church Parish Council Members 2016
20	Desert Island Discs—Neil Cocking
23	St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal
25	The Storm by Arutsigka Christhuthananther
28	Parish Singalong
32	Theology on Tap—Dylan Middleton
34	Parish Women’s Group Book Evening
36	St John Fisher Knitting Group
38	A Homily for the Closing of the Holy Door
43	Christmas Carol—Sara Teasdale
44	Christmas Quiz
46	Parish Contacts List
50	Answers to Christmas Quiz
51	The Last Word—Fr Shaun



Recently our parish has experienced a wonderful exploration of Catholic Social Teaching which was delivered through the Love in Action programme. From this we have worked towards developing a parish plan which will try to embody the various elements of CST as well as honouring the Corporal Works of Mercy which we have tried to explore during the Holy Year that Pope Francis called us to. In a nutshell our parish will be taking on four challenges.



The first is to become a founding member of a new campaigning organisation called Harrow Citizens. This will be a branch of Citizens UK.

Citizens UK is the largest and most diverse alliance in the UK of active citizens and leaders from local institutions who are committed to working together for the common good. It is a growing organisation. Currently, there are over 350 local institutions in dues-paying membership.

Community organising starts with the recognition that real change can only come when community rooted organisations pool resources and learn the arts of public action – building enough power to oblige the State and the Market to consider and respond to the real needs of ordinary people whilst also leading the way ourselves on the issues and good practices which are the responsibility of Civil Society.



Citizens UK has trained more than 7,000 community leaders in community organising and leadership

techniques and built strong relationships of trust between diverse organisations. Through this training and by putting it into public action, we have given people the confidence to participate in public life for the good of their communities and the safe and peaceful governance of the City, Borough or Neighbourhood.

The charitable aim of the organisation is to develop the capacity of the citizens of Britain and Ireland to participate more fully in society and to strengthen the member community organisations of civil society in the process.

But Citizens UK is only as strong as the local people who participate and take action together to bring about change. Ideally each member of an alliance includes an identified team of people who have attended Citizens UK training, and are taking action regularly alongside people from other local institutions. In order to encourage more depth in the engagement between member institutions and Citizens UK, each member institution with a turnout of at least five individuals at Assemblies will receive one vote (and each member with a turnout of ten will receive two votes) in the internal democratic decision-making process. Member institutions with less than five individuals will be allowed to participate in debates but not to vote. Members are expected to use their vote(s) in a considered way and to contribute to debate inside the organisation.

Citizens UK members operate within the law and the spirit of the law; to promote equal opportunities, including eliminating discrimination, non-harassment and non-victimisation; to train

and develop leadership; to develop good relations with neighbouring institutions; and to act on our members' interests and concerns.

As members of Harrow Citizens we should be relational in all that we do and stand out as friendly and inclusive in our neighbourhood. We are judged by what we do, not what we say. We should feel responsible for the wellbeing of our local community by reaching out to our neighbours in pursuit of the common good.

Secondly, we will try to reach out to members of the parish who may be feeling isolated. For us, this means young mothers who may be at home, far from their family, coping with the new responsibilities of parenthood.



Then there are those people who come to our parish from other parts of

the world. They too may feel isolated and alone. In some cases their spoken English may not be too good so we will be trying to extend the hand of friendship to them. This will be a self-referral service so that we will be invited by those who need us into their lives.

Care for our planet has been a great theme of the journey that we have made and this is our third priority. With the help of our green fingered parishioners we will be working with our school to re-instate the

“Garden of Awe and Wonder” at St John Fisher School. When the time is right the Head Teacher will contact us and we will meet together to plan out



what we can do to build the garden so that our children will develop care for the world in which they live.

Our fourth priority is to do something really practical to help those who are less fortunate than us. The idea here is that annually there will be an opportunity to extend the hand of friendship by donating much needed items. This will involve organising the collection of goods and delivering them as well as providing our people with the background to the organisations we are trying the help.

MARYS MEALS: This initiative is already in place and early in the New Year we are asked to donate our old clothes to Mary's Meals. They sell the clothes and the money that is raised goes towards providing a meal for a school child in a developing country.



BECAUSE YOU'RE WORTH IT: We will be asking parishioners to donate toiletries which will be given to the residents of Bakhita House. These are safe houses where women who have been trafficked as domestic and sex slaves are given a place of safety to live. You can imagine some of the horrors that they have been through. Getting a small gift of toiletries would mean the world to them.



SING A SONG OF SIXPENCE: Food poverty is one of the scourges of the society in which we live. We will be supporting those Food Banks where there is the greatest need. We have been advised that tinned pies and other tinned goods are really useful items to give to people who need to be fed. So once a year we will be asking parishioner to donate tinned goods.



THE TINY TIM APPEAL: This appeal will take place before Christmas and we will ask parishioners to donate a new toy for a child whose parent is in prison. We will link up with the Prison Advice and Care Trust to help us facilitate this effort.

This new departure for our parish encourages all our people to get involved at a level which is appropriate for them. With this plan we can all contribute, we can all do something to extend the hand of friendship to those who need us.

When he called us to celebrate a Holy Year of Mercy, Pope Francis wrote. “Mercy is the very foundation of the Church’s life. All of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness she makes present to believers; nothing in her preaching and in her witness to the world can be lacking in mercy. The Church’s very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love. The Church “has an endless desire to show mercy.”



Perhaps we have long since forgotten how to show and live the way of mercy. The temptation, on the one hand, to focus exclusively on justice made us forget that this is only the first, albeit necessary and indispensable step. But the Church needs to go beyond and strive for a higher and more important goal. On the other hand, sad to say, we must admit that the practice of mercy is waning in the wider culture. In some cases the word seems to have dropped out of use.

However, without a witness to mercy, life becomes fruitless and sterile, as if sequestered in a barren desert. The time has come for the Church to take up the joyful call to mercy once more. It is time to return to the basics and to bear the weaknesses and struggles of our brothers and sisters. Mercy is the force that reawakens us to new life and instils in us the courage to look to the future with hope.” (Misericordiae Vultus 10)

By committing ourselves to working for justice and by setting our parish within the framework of a call to merciful action I believe that we will be awakened to that new life and courage to which the gospel calls us. However, all of this depends on your willingness to be involved which of itself calls us to remember the words spoken by Jesus when he said to his disciples. ‘Come, follow me.’”

Fr Shaun Middleton.

Fr Shaun Middleton, Parish Priest.



Harrow Times Poetry Competition Winner - May 2016

TALENT

by John Towell

I didn't know I had it - I never knew I could,
Until one day my teacher said, "You know, that's really good!"
I must have beamed from ear-to-ear; it gave me such a lift,
It made me want to find the time to exercise my gift.

My teacher's praise had given me, such new-found inspiration,
I practised more and more each day with real determination.
That seed my teacher planted, so many years ago;
I wonder if she realised how it would grow and grow.

Yes, there were times when it was hard to find the hours each day,
But that was when inside my head those words I heard her say.
So thank you teacher for your words, "You know, that's really good!"
Because you knew I had it - before I knew I could.





Harrow Harmony
is looking for
new members!

Always wanted to sing in a choir? Well now is your chance as Harrow Harmony is recruiting new members.

Harrow Harmony is a mixed voices choir and is currently open for all voice parts from September 2016. We sing a very varied repertoire and always enjoy performing a wide range of styles from madrigals to contemporary in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.

There are **NO AUDITIONS** to join although the ability to read music and a small amount of previous singing experience would be of great benefit. Harrow Harmony rehearses at South Harrow Methodist Church, Walton Avenue, HA2 8QU on Friday evenings 19:45 – 21:45 during term time. The first rehearsal will be on Friday 9th September 2016.

Interested? Please contact our Membership Secretary Debbie Morgan on 07905034369 or send an e-mail to enquiries@harrowharmony.co.uk

For more information about the choir please visit our website harrowharmony.co.uk

 /HarrowHarmony  @HarrowHarmony 

Pinner Writers' Group invites all those who enjoy creative writing to join them. The Group meets at Pinner Library every last Tuesday of the month from 6 p.m. until 7.55 p.m. Other meetings and events are organised monthly for those members attending regularly. It doesn't matter whether you are a published author or simply enjoy writing and would like to improve your skills, you will be made welcome. So, if you are over 16 and would like to give us a try, why not come along? There is a small charge of £1.

For more information contact Barbara Towell at barbaratowell@sky.com or on 020 8866 6665.

CRADLE SONG

by: *William Blake (1757-1827)*

SLLEEP, sleep, beauty
bright,
Dreaming in the joys of night;
Sleep, sleep; in thy sleep
Little sorrows sit and weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face
Soft desires I can trace,
Secret joys and secret smiles,
Little pretty infant wiles.

As thy softest limbs I feel,
Smiles as of the morning steal
O'er thy cheek, and o'er thy breast
Where thy little heart doth rest.

O the cunning wiles that creep
In thy little heart asleep!
When thy little heart doth wake,
Then the dreadful night shall break.



Smiling Face



Unique handmade cards made for you
from your ideas.

All cards are made in UK and delivered by
first class mail.

Any enquires or orders contact Alex Crowe on

07944 273528

E-mail: smilingfaceuk@gmail.com

TRADITIONAL ITALIAN FARE



As Italy is a country of many regions there is not really a traditional Italian Christmas recipe peculiar to the whole of Italy apart from the Christmas Panettone cake available now in every supermarket and specialised shop. Stemming back to the old days, fish is preferred for Christmas Eve and the variety of fish on market stalls is beyond belief, certainly penance is thus obsolete! However, as winter is now here I thought I might suggest a traditional polenta as a wholesome comfort meal. Polenta was and is the staple diet of Northern Italy. Corn was introduced into Italy by Christopher Columbus who brought it back from the Americas. During the war years it sustained a lot of poor families and whilst it really has very little flavour on its own, eaten with a good rich meat dish it is upgraded from *cucina povera* to one fit for a king.

Traditional Polenta

Basically buy a packet of quick cook polenta, such as Polenta Valdostana or similar and follow the instructions. My only variation is that I use 1/3 milk rather than all water and add a good dollop of butter at the end.

For the accompaniment make a basic “trinity” of onion, carrot and celery all chopped finely and sautéed with a little oil in a pan. Add mushrooms if desired, porcini would be a luxury but any sliced mushroom will add flavour. Pour in a tin of chopped tomatoes or passata and plenty of herbs such as rosemary, sage, thyme, etc., and

and a bay leaf. Now, depending on whatever dish you wish to make add either Italian sausages, or alternatively sealed chicken, rabbit, pork, venison, etc. Half a glass of wine added is good and a little tomato concentrate to thicken helps. I also add a stock cube for additional flavour and then season. There are no hard and fast rules. Simmer this on a low heat or in the oven until rich and thickened for at least one hour. Serve over the polenta. A vegetarian option can be made by stewing together a variety of peppers, onions, courgettes, etc., made in exactly the same way but replacing the meat with the vegetables. I love a lump of dolcelatte tucked into the warm polenta but that's not to everyone's taste.

Try something a little different this New Year

New Year's Eve's celebration is interesting in Milan. One course of the San Silvestro's dinner must contain lentils as they bring luck and money. These are usually eaten with sliced cooked sausage, a good local *cotechino* or *zampone* or any cooked sausage or gammon. The lentils are made by starting off with a "trinity", add lentils (Italian or French lentils do not need soaking first). Season, cover with water with a stock cube added and cook. Add a little butter when cooked. The most important thing is that when eating the lentils you must count them individually!!!

Whatever your cultural traditions are you must exercise them and support food with provenance. Growing food globalisation by four global companies means that local heritage food is diminishing for financial reasons and we could say goodbye to them for ever. Have a good 2017!

Teresa Arrigo



St John Fisher School at 10 am Mass

Those of you who regularly attend 10 am mass on Sundays, will have noticed some new faces playing the music. This is due to the new initiative, when on the first Sunday of each month, St. John Fisher School organises the liturgy. Pupils from the school not only play with the Music Group, but also read and help with the offertory collection. The wonderful feedback from members of the congregation suggest this new venture is popular and a great success. Let us hope that this leads to more youngsters, whether from St. John Fisher School or not, getting involved.



SJF PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS - 2016

Neil Cocking	Music and Liturgy. Chair from Sep 2016
Fr Shaun Middleton	Parish Priest
Neville Bayross	
Noel McHugh	Child Protection
Claire Mendonca	Social Outreach
Kay O'Connor	Pastoral Assistant
Mike Parkinson	Finance
Johnpromise Umeh	Youth
Neville Ransley	Education & Catechesis
Elsbeth Everitt	Clerk

The Happy Potters Painting Shed



Mobile Pottery Painting - we come to you
Parties or just for fun

www.thehappypotterspainingshed.co.uk

www.facebook.com/thehappypotterspainingshed

Quality Bespoke Cakes

CHRISTENING/FIRST HOLY COMMUNION/CONFIRMATION/
WEDDINGS/BIRTHDAYS



Large cake starts at £75.00

Small cake from £52.00

For all your cakes please call Edna

07776 174590



FRANCHI SEEDS 1783

7 generations still in the same family.

Our seeds are regional varieties produced locally by US and only for YOU.

Try our 'RED PEAR FRANCHI' tomato as shown on BBC Gardeners World with Monty Don. It comes from the Alpine region of Bergamo and is pure meat with a true Italian flavour. Serve with 'Tigullio' basil from Portofino and a drizzle of olive oil.

Tel: 0208 427 5020 Fax 5051

grow@italianingredients.com

www.seedsofitaly.com

A1 Phoenix Business Centre,

Rossllyn Crescent,

Harrow, HA1 2SP



SEEDS OF ITALY is a local business specialising in vegetable seeds, vines, seed garlic and garlic sets, truffle trees, preserving equipment and we also import artisan made Italian soups.

Seeds of Italy now have an Italian Delicatessen open all day with so many goodies for Christmas and a free coffee given to anyone who calls in. There are beautiful Florentine soaps and oils as well.



Navette

Creating Individual Jewellery

It is in the creation of an individual piece of jewellery that we immortalise that special moment of a wedding, a birthday or a remembrance to someone special.



Working directly with clients on a one-to-one basis, I will help you create a piece of jewellery that will be both personal and unique. Using traditional hand-crafted skills or modern techniques, your design will be brought to life to the highest standard, thus creating a piece of jewellery that is truly individual.



My services include:
 Bespoke Commissions,
 Engagement & Wedding Rings,
 Remodelling of old jewellery & repairs.
 Specialising in Gold & Platinum

Bespoke Jewellery Design Award Winner 2014

-Goldsmiths' Craft and Design Council

Breast Cancer Care Charm Award Winner 2014

-British Jewellers' Association



*The Spirit Within
 Charms*



Member of the
 British Jewellers Association

Natalie Towell
 tel: 07474 885569

email: info@navettejewellery.co.uk
 for a local recommendation contact

Barbara Towell

www.navettejewellery.co.uk



Neil Cocking's Desert Island Discs

I am sure Neil needs very little introduction. Most of you will surely recognise him as he plays the organ at many of our Masses and services. In addition, he recently has taken up the position of Chairman of the St. John Fisher Parish Council.

Neil told me he comes from a very musical family and that, as a child, the family always had a piano in the house. In fact, their piano was bought whilst his parents were courting. It was an extremely good instrument made by Challen, as used at that time by the BBC. During the war the music shop wanted to empty their warehouse for fear of bomb damage, so Neil's parents took advantage of the situation. However, Neil's grandmother commented: "It might have been more practical if they'd bought a bed!"

Neil lives a very busy life, so I wonder how he would cope if he suddenly found himself shipwrecked and alone on a tropical island far from anywhere?

Let's find out. First, I asked him what music he would choose to have with him.

1. The overture from 'The Maester Singers' by Wagner

This is a piece that Neil studied at school for his Music GCE O'level. Not only did he really like the music, but was fascinated by the fact each tune/motif represents a character.

2. 'Bridge over Troubled Water' by Simon & Garfunkel

'Bridge over Troubled Water'," said Neil," has not only a great tune but the words are good too." He went onto say that having the song with him on the island would remind him of his teenage years as well as those when working as a primary school head. This song was one often played during assemblies.

3. 'Piano Concert no. 21' by Mozart

The slow movement is a favourite of Neil's; one he loves to play. It also would serve to remind him of the film 'Elvira Madigan' which he likes very much. This music, he told me, would be most comforting to listen to when all alone on the island.

4. 'Tocatta and Fugue' in D major by J.S. Bach

Neil has played the organ since the age of fourteen and became the assistant church organist at Christ Church, Yardley Wood in Birmingham. This dramatic piece, which displays all the qualities of Bach's composition, is a favourite and remains in his own repertoire. Moreover, as well as wanting to enjoy the music whilst on the island, it would serve to remind him of those happy days playing the organ in Birmingham.

5. 'One Fine Day' from 'Madam Butterfly' by Puccini

This song is from one of Neil's favourite operas and is a must to have with him on the island. He said: "It would enable me to recall the most impressive production in the round I saw at the Albert Hall some years ago."



6. **Cantique Jean Racine' by Gabriel Fauré**

Neil loves church choral music. This he feels is a most beautiful piece. Neil has sung and directed choirs for approximately fifty years. He still enjoys singing at Farm Street and at St. John Fisher. I am sure he would spend quite a lot of time singing on the island too!

7. **'Panis Angelicus' by Cesar Franck**

He told me that he chose this simply because it is a beautiful, sentimental song which he both loves to listen to and to play.

8. **'Fauré's Requiem' by Gabriel Fauré**

"Again, I would want this with me, just because I love it - especially the Agnus Dei, Pie Jesu and In Paradisium", he said.

Unsurprisingly, **the book** Neil chose to have with him is ... **a decent hymn book** containing the musical score as well as words! Furthermore, no surprise to learn that his **luxury item** would be ...**a digital keyboard!** **'La Cage aux Folles'** is his choice of **film**. This amusing and very entertaining musical is one he feels he could watch again and again. It would certainly cheer him up in the low moments, he declared.

When I asked him **how he felt he would cope**, he replied that he would actually enjoy the peace and quiet! Yet, after a short while he would certainly miss his family and the church community. He said he is very resourceful and practical so would be able to build a shelter from the trees and whatever materials the island had to offer. He was sure he would be able to find fruit and fish to eat. Even though he is not a good swimmer he would enjoy relaxing in the warm sea, playing music and praying – praying that by the time he'd got tired of the peace and quiet, he would be rescued.

Thank you, Neil for a fascinating interview.

Barbara Towell

All the above choices can be found on YouTube.





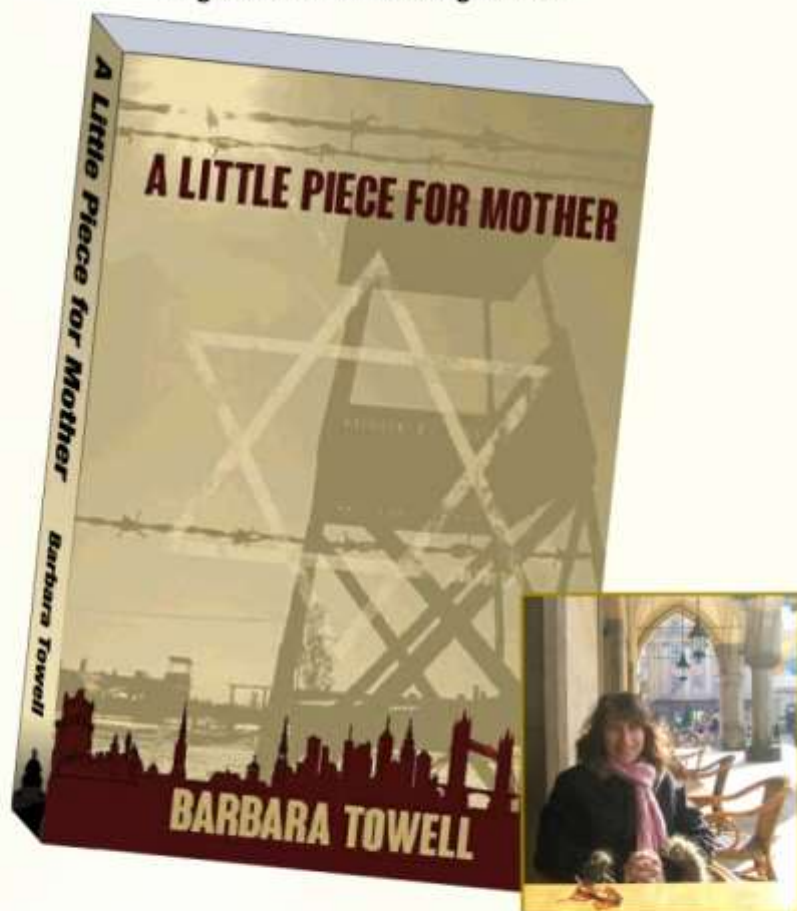
The St Vincent de Paul Society are launching their Christmas Time Appeal, but they're not asking for money. Instead they're asking for parishioners to give a little of their time to help others by joining our parish SVP group.

As you plan your Christmas celebrations, spare a thought for those who dread the festive season. For many it's a time of profound loneliness and solitude, while for others it means not being able to afford the family presents or delicious foods that the rest of us take for granted. But by giving a little of your time to help those in need could help change that and it might be the best gift you've ever given.

To find out more phone **Katherine on 8868 8512 or Tony on 8868 3205.**

The New Edition

The Kalinski family, Jewish immigrants from Poland struggle to settle in London after the Second World War. They long to forget the horrors of Nazi persecution; make a new start. But is it possible, or are the scars too deep? How will they cope when one day they find they have new neighbours - German neighbours?



*Available in paperback or Kindle
from Amazon.co.uk and all good bookshops,
or from the author: www.barbaratowell.com*

ISBN: 978-1-906755-46-1

'The Storm'

(Inspired by the thunderstorm on 15/9/16)

Is it a sign that God is angry with the world? I think to myself as I hear the sound of thunder crashing. I feel there is a sudden chill in the air. Umbrellas up. Hurrying and worrying people make their way to shelter. All at once huge drops of rain tumble from the iron grey sky. It feels as if the world's coming to an end as sheets of rain fall diagonally, blinding me as I walk down the street.

The wind catches green and brown autumn leaves, swirling across the pavement and into the roads as it slaps against the cars. Now I feel the tingly rain drops beating against my skin. I look up. What do I see? Blankets of grey sky with patches of jagged white clouds. I imagine them to be wolves howling. It seems there is a struggling battle between the sun and storm. I wonder who's going to win?

The angry voice of the storm comes again as lightning strikes and more thunder rumbles. As I look along the street, I see rivers of rain running down by the kerbs.

Almost as soon as it's begun, the storm subsides. The grey sky changes into a peachy blue with the sun peeping from behind a cloud. The rivers become lengthy puddles with ripples as the rain drips from the leafy trees. The voice of the storm has become quiet and maybe God feels kinder towards us all?

By Arutsigka Christhuthanather Age 12



STAMPS STAMPS

STAMPS

Please save your used stamps for St.Luke's Hospice.

Let us at St. John Fisher take the trouble to help our local hospice by saving yours. Please place them in either Tess Constantin's or Barbara Towell's pigeonholes in the porch at the back of the church. Alternatively, hand large envelopes of stamps or any of real value into the office in the Parish House. Furthermore, a plastic envelope folder for this purpose remains in the Sacristy Room.

Thank you. We will make sure St. Luke's receive them.

A letter received from St Luke's

"Thank you for your donation of stamps sent to St. Luke's from St. John Fisher. These help us towards providing care for our patients and families. Each year we need to raise £3 million in order to continue to provide free care to the people of Harrow and Brent and without the generous support of our community this would not be possible. Your support is much appreciated."


Keep on collecting!



Vagabonds Tennis Club

 **ARE OFFERING A SPECIAL
TRIAL SUBSCRIPTION RATE OF
ONLY £39.50*** 

**Covers Full Membership until 1st May 2016*

 **We are a local club in Pinner and welcome:**
EXPERIENCED PLAYERS - wishing to come back to tennis.
'RUSTY' PLAYERS - wanting to improve their game.
BEGINNERS - who are thinking of learning the game.

-  **ALL LEVELS, ALL AGES**
- NO JOINING FEE** 
-  **SMALL FRIENDLY CLUB** 
- CLUB HOUSE & BAR** 
-  **SOCIAL EVENTS & BBQs**
- COACHING AVAILABLE** 

*Table Tennis and Bridge sections also available with
separate subscription rates applying.*

For further details: 
020 8427 2039



The Vagabonds Club
 Clubhouse, Holwell Place, Eastcote Road, Pinner, HA5 1DY
www.vagabondstennisclub.co.uk

Singalong

On Saturday 8th October our parish was alive with the sound of music. For the first time a singalong was being held. What's a Singalong some of you may be asking? Well, it entails singing unrehearsed songs whilst following the words which are projected on a screen. And great fun it is too.

Our St. John Fisher Singalong was well attended and enjoyed by an audience of all ages. It was the brainchild of Agnes Lee. However, Neville Bayross helped to organise the event and a band of other dedicated helpers to make it a great success. Neil Cocking accompanied the singing on the piano whilst the 'Young at Heart' choir led the singing from the front.

Many of the songs chosen came from shows such as: 'The Sound of Music', 'Joseph & His Technicolor Dreamcoat' and 'Oklahoma'. There were popular numbers from the war and four songs were chosen to represent each nation of the UK. Indeed, Father Shaun joined the choir and sang heartily, 'We'll Keep a Welcome' which went down well with the audience.



In addition to the singing, Keith Bayross entertained everyone by reading poetry. The bar was also a popular feature of the evening as was the raffle and the refreshments served during the interval. Many of the delicious cakes were baked by members of the choir. Thank you to Teresa Arrgio and her team who served the cakes and hot drinks.



The grand total came to £700. So well done all involved in giving us a wonderful evening. Let's hope Singalongs will become a regular feature at St. John Fisher.

Barbara Towell



CityLimits Chauffeur Services

07768 922 828

CityLimits provides personal chauffeur service for all occasions. We specialise in accommodating families, group or individuals with our flexible approach and competitive price.

Our service includes

- Airport Transfers
- Long distance travel
- Individual/Corporate hire
- Leisure/Community/Culture centres
- Central London/Theatres
- Events/Functions around the country
- Weddings/Private Party
- Shopping trips
- Hotels/Restaurants
- Ports and Train Stations

Call Kamlesh



Officially licensed private hire operator PCO licence no 07869/01/02

TUSCANY RETREAT IN THE CHIANTI REGION

An Italian family of our parish is renting their Tuscan villa as a holiday home for people seeking peace and quiet in a beautiful rural setting. An old stone house dating back to 1800 sympathetically restored, is set high on a hill with



stunning views of the Arno valley beneath, complete with vineyards and olive groves. It is within easy reach of Florence, Arezzo and Siena, with the picturesque village of Loro Ciuffenna only 2.5 kms away providing excellent local cuisine. The house sleeps up to 8. For more information, please go to

www.rondonivilla-tuscany.co.uk ,
email rondonivilla@gmail.com or

call Riccardo on 0780 5333 613.

MILLEY HAIR LOUNGE

Need a new hairdresser? Why not try us?

MILLEY HAIR LOUNGE

Roxeth Hill, Harrow

Please call 020 8864 2866 or 020 8422 8666

Open seven days a week. You will not be disappointed.

THEOLOGY ON TAP

By Dylan Middleton

Well Daddy, you chose me to be part of your community and I am very grateful. I must say with a little pride that I know you made the right choice. I know you are my Master and I adore you. I am completely dependent upon you. You give me so much food and warmth and comfort and look after my whole being. Perhaps I am a little capricious sometimes, but you know life is a learning journey and I will try to get my head around that discipline thing as I get older.

You can see in my gorgeous eyes how sorry I am and really I do try to please you throughout the day, I just forget sometimes. My favourite moment is at the end of the day when there is just the two of us and you wind down and cuddle me, then I know how close you are and how much you love me. I know the eminent Greek theologians and Peter Keenan will woof woof this, but I am simply Dylan, your child.

PS. Now do I get a sandwich or a treat!





Bubsy Pre-School Ltd

Early Education Provider for children aged 2 – 5 years old

Business Address

Bubsy Pre School Ltd

Beacon Community Centre

Scott Crescent

Harrow, HA2 0TY

Telephone Number: 020 8432 9629

Email: Info@BubsyPreSchool.Org

Website: WWW.BUBSYPRESCHOOL.ORG

Register before 1st December and pay no registration fee- normally £35.

15 hours of free education for all eligible 2 to 5 year olds.

Parish Women's Group

Book Evening

Another successful Book Evening was recently enjoyed by the Parish Women's Group. The book featured on the evening of 13th October was, 'The Watercress Girls' by local author Kay Seeley. Not only was this Victorian mystery novel discussed, but Kay came in person and read from the book and answered a mass of questions. Kay explained to a fascinated group about her research into Victorian times, crafting her novels and short stories and indeed how she gets ideas. Everyone was amazed to learn that Kay has over fifty stories published in national women's magazines. Then during a short break refreshments were enjoyed by all. Following on from this, books were recommended to each other. Please find the list below.

Books recommended by group members

October 2016

1. The New Mrs Clifton by Elizabeth Buchan
2. The Light Between Oceans by M.L. Stedman
3. The White Lie by Andrea Gillies
4. Harvest by Jim Crace
5. The Last Train to Istanbul by Ayse Kulin & John W. Baker
6. The Breadwinner by Deborah Ellis

7. The Sunrise by Victoria Hislop
8. The Girl Next Door by Ruth Rendell
9. The Gustav Sonata by Rose Tremain
10. This is London: Life and Death in the World City by Ben Judah

The Parish Women's Group is a friendly social group that meets most second Thursdays during term time. In the church porch there are leaflets with details of our events. Please do take one. Give us a try if you haven't yet come along. You will be made most welcome.

Barbara Towell

Kay Seeley, author of *The Watercress Girls*.



SJF KNITTING TEAM



One sultry night in July and suffering from an espresso too many that evening, I lay awake, my mind wandering from one idea to another as to how our Love in Action programme could progress. Caritas was going around and around in my head. I thought of the lady in the village who made ravioli and sold them, the volunteers who care for the bewildered immigrants pulled out of the sea at Lampedusa and then my thoughts turned to my dear friend who knitted all sorts of things to sell at market for Caritas. I had had such fun up in the mountains when she had a market stall one day selling knitted hats, bags, scarves, children's clothes, in fact amazing knitted items. That's it I decided, we could make goods for The Passage or Bakhita House.

Shamefully not being a knitter, I consulted Neville who I could see just knitted and knitted. He was very encouraging and excited. We decided to have a meeting before the summer holidays and thus a notice was put in the bulletin asking for donations of wool and announcing the first meeting of SJF Knitting Team. To our surprise about 20 people turned up, not only from SJF but other churches around. We were off. Sister Doreen came and spoke to us about the trafficked girls staying at Bakhita House who were always cold and never had any new clothing. Thus Neville, Ena and I host our knitting team in The Fisher Room once a fortnight and so far we have consigned two packs of scarves, gloves and hats to Sister Doreen (not from me, I still am struggling to knit but I do make a good cup of tea). Sister Doreen said that the girls are thrilled to receive them knowing they have been lovingly knitted for them.

Of course, the aim of the team is to knit, but being a community event we often see parishioners just drop in for a cup of tea whilst we are there and to our delight we have friends with us who do not belong to our church. We would like to welcome ladies who are housebound or lonely, please be vigilant and let us know of anyone who would like to join us. Dates are announced in the bulletin. We have a good laugh every time over a cup of tea and biscuit. It's good.

Teresa Arrigo

A letter received from Bakhita House

"We are very grateful for the wonderful hats and scarves. Within an hour of them arriving at Bakhita House, two guests were already proudly wearing them. So a big thank you from all at Bakhita House."



A Homily for the Closing of the Holy Door at the end of the Year of Mercy

I am sure that at Mass this morning many of you heard some wonderful homilies on the prayer uttered by the tax collector as he made his offering at the temple in Jerusalem. "Lord be merciful to me a sinner." Now once more we come together to reflect on the theme of mercy in the context of the closure of this Holy Door here in Stanmore. This door has acted as a powerful symbol of welcome and of concern for our neighbour in what has been an extraordinary year.

Last year, as the Holy Year began, an editorial was published in a Jesuit magazine, *Civilita Cattolica*, entitled "A merciful Church for a Wounded World." Just think for a moment of the power of that phrase. It seems that the image of the Church as a fortress of Christian propriety, as a place of battle with secular society has been realigned and has been replaced by the model of the church as a merciful servant.

From the beginning of his ministry as Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis has wanted to place the reality of God's mercy at the centre of his pontificate. In his first Angelus address after his election on 17 March 2013, the new Pope quoted a book by Cardinal Walter Kasper called "*Mercy: The essence of the Gospel and the key to Christian life*". The Pope told the crowd who stood below the Apostolic Palace in St Peter's Square "this book has done me so much good". I believe that the year of Mercy, which will soon conclude, is Papa Bergoglio's attempt to tell us that the essence of our faith is found in Mercy. Because in our merciful encounter with each other, we encounter the mercy of God. Indeed the Pope's own motto, "*miserando atque eligendo*," recalls that moment when Jesus encountered the tax collector, Matthew, and 'having mercy chose him.'

Jesus would have realised that Matthew, the tax collector, was an outcast. He was despised and ignored by his own people because he had colluded with the Roman authorities. But Jesus also knew that if he could reach out to this man, this sinner, he could bind up his wounds and begin the process of the healing and reconciliation that Matthew so badly desired.

In looking to a wounded humanity with the eyes of mercy, the Church imitates her Master, healing the wounds of those who have suffered as well as warming the hearts of the faithful by being close to them. By offering herself as a 'field hospital' where those who have been injured by the way that we and life itself has sometimes treated them, the Church can offer a place of peace, healing and belonging.

When he promulgated the Bull for the Holy Year, which he entitled "The Face of Mercy" the Pope said that during this Holy Year we had to look into the faces of our brothers and sisters who suffer and recognise our common humanity. Recognise the suffering of others and most importantly, do something about it.

It was Pope Francis' spiritual father, St. Ignatius of Loyola, who stressed that "love ought to be shown in deeds more than in words." And so those spiritual and corporal works of mercy have been high on our agenda over this past year. Let us just take a moment to remind ourselves of what they are, and let us think of the ways in which we have responded to the demands that the corporal and spiritual works of mercy make of us.

The Corporal Works of Mercy

Feed the hungry, Give drink to the thirsty, Clothe the naked, Shelter the homeless, Visit the sick, Visit the imprisoned, Bury the dead.

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

Admonish the sinner, Instruct the ignorant, Counsel the doubtful, Comfort the sorrowful, Bear wrongs patiently, Forgive all injuries, Pray for the living and the dead.

It was the Pope's intention that our consciences should be re-awakened and that we should recognise that in the Gospels, Jesus had special concern for the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalised. We cannot escape this fact and, like Jesus, we too need to place those who suffer at the centre of our Christian ministry.

So it is with a certain amount of trepidation that we recall the words of the 25th chapter of St Matthew's Gospel. The famous Last Judgment text.

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’ “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

It’s not enough to “talk the talk”, we also have to “walk the walk”. And we will all find a way of exercising that merciful ministry of accompaniment which is our duty. This work of accompaniment of being with those who suffer and doing something about their suffering is made explicit for us in the story of the Good Samaritan.

The parable of the Good Samaritan reminds us in the words of the Latin American theologian, Gustavo Gutierrez. That it is the need of the other person which is paramount and that sometimes “we need to abandon the path we are on to be close to him”. So the key person in the parable is not the Samaritan, but the bruised and bloodied one who lies abandoned on the road and whose name we do not even know.

This Year of Mercy has, I believe, been instrumental in helping us to become a Samaritan Church. A Church that is not afraid to abandon the high ground, to bend down and to look into the faces of those who suffer and to respond to their needs with compassion.

As for us priests, well perhaps we could call to mind a different story which will help us to exercise our vocation as pastors. Our model is the old man who runs out to embrace his prodigal son as he returns from his long and disastrous journey. The father, carrying the burden of years, is full wisdom and grace. He acknowledges the young man's wrongdoing, but he is overcome with love for his son and he wishes nothing more than to treat his boy with dignity, to forgive him and to welcome him back home. The paradigm is set for us as we exercise our ministry, especially within the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Acknowledge the sin, love the sinner but also be prepared to create within our communities that place of welcome, acceptance, forgiveness, healing and love.

So embrace the woman who has had an abortion and dry her tears. Encourage the young man who is gay and who lives a life which feels so shallow. Care for the person who is in a loveless marriage but who does their best because they took their vows before God. Give strength to the family who are finding it hard to manage when an elderly relative with dementia seems to demand all the energy that they have. Be there for the new parents who don't really understand what it is to be a Catholic, but they want their children baptised. Point out to the man who has had an affair and has betrayed his wife and family that there can be a way back, and that he has to work hard to restore the relationship with his wife and family that has been so profoundly damaged. Point out to those who suspect that those who are different are dangerous that we are all God's children, created in his image and likeness. This is the mission of each one of us. This is what it means to be 'a poor church for the poor.'

I wonder how many people have walked through this door which has been such a part of the life of this parish over the past year. What have they been thinking? How have they understood the mercy of God? Have they experienced mercy and love in their lives mediated by other people? I know that here, valiant efforts have been made to bring the experience of that mercy to life. I am aware that in all our parishes in Harrow we have done something to announce to our neighbourhoods that God loves his people, that he cares for them and that we are here to be of service.

Our Catholic faith is a precious gift, but like any good gift it needs to be unwrapped. Like any good gift, you don't just look at it and admire it, but you use it and by using it you come to understand it.

done something to announce to our neighbourhoods that God loves his people, that he cares for them and that we are here to be of service.

Our Catholic faith is a precious gift, but like any good gift it needs to be unwrapped. Like any good gift, you don't just look at it and admire it, but you use it and by using it you come to understand it.

If you want to begin to understand the merciful face of God which can be mediated in a very practical way, then why not use DOCAT. This is a book written for young people and it focuses on the social teaching of the church. It looks at those issues which affect us and the society in which we live. It provides us with a framework so that we can make a truly Christian response to questions about politics, economics, human rights, the family and the environment. It will help us to build what Pope St Paul VI so memorably called "a civilisation of love." The social teaching of the church constantly reminds us that mercy is not just about being, it's about doing. So the challenge for each one of us is, what am I going to do in order to help build the "civilisation of love"?

Our call to be the merciful face of God to the world will not end with the conclusion of this Holy Year. Instead we will, I am sure, find creative and dynamic ways of continuing to put love into action and to live the reality of being, "Merciful like the Father."

Fr Shaun Middleton.

Shaun Middleton

23rd October 2016

By Dnalor 01 - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?>



The Holy Door by [Vico Consorti](#), cast by [Ferdinando Marinelli Artistic Foundry](#) of [Florence](#), is the northernmost entrance of [Saint Peter's Basilica](#) in the Vatican. It is cemented shut and only opened for Jubilee Years.

CHRISTMAS CAROL

The kings they came from out the south,
All dressed in ermine fine;
They bore Him gold and chrysoprase,
And gifts of precious wine.

The shepherds came from out the
north,
Their coats were brown and old;
They brought Him little new-born
lambs-
They had not any gold.



The wise men came from out the east,
And they were wrapped in white;
The star that led them all the
way
Did glorify the night.



The angels came from heaven
high,
And they were clad with wings;
And lo, they brought a joyful
song
The host of heaven sings.

The kings they knocked upon the door,
The wise men entered in,
The shepherds followed after them
To hear the song begin.

The angels sang through all the night
Until the rising sun,
But little Jesus fell asleep
Before the song was done.

Sara Teasdale (August 8, 1884 – January 29, 1933)



Christmas General Knowledge Quiz

How many questions will you get right from the questions below?

Test yourself, family and friends to see who has the best general knowledge.

Perhaps turn this into a Boxing Day game with a prize for the winner or winning team.

1. In what profession does one "eat one's terms"?
2. Who wrote "In Dulce Decorum Est"?
3. What was the nationality of the brothers Grimm?
4. What is the capital city of New Zealand?
5. What musical does "I Don't Know How to Love Him" come from?
6. Name the smallest state in the U.S.A.
7. Where was Florence Nightingale born?
8. In which continent are the Andes Mountains?
9. Monet, Renoir and Cezanne belong to which school of painting?
10. Who is the world number one men's singles tennis player?



shutterstock - 266291965

11. What is the saying: “a living death” an example of?
12. What size is each of the angles of an equilateral triangle?
13. In which country was Paddington Bear born?
14. Which novel begins with: “It was the best of times: it was the worst of times.”?
15. What is Abbot’s Gold?
16. In which sport would a puck be used?
17. If a message is given viva voce what does it mean?
18. With which conquest do we associate Edmund Hillary?
19. Who was the last wife of Henry 8th?
20. Who is the patron saint of music?
21. How many books are there in the Old Testament?
22. What is a Portuguese Man-of War?
23. Who wrote the novel “War Horse”?
24. Which football club’s ground is The Stadium of Light?
25. Each year when is St. Stephen’s Day?



Answers on Page 50

PARISH CONTACT LIST

Group	Contact Name	Telephone Number	Email Address
1:1 Club	John Towell	020 8866 6665	johnowell@sky.com
Altar Servers	The Presbytery	020 8868 7531	harrownorth@rcdow.org.uk
Baptism/Communion/Confirmation Marriage Prep/ Children's Liturgy/Sat Classes/RCIA	Kay O'Connor	020 8429 5682	kayoconnor@rcdow.org.uk
Bethany Group/Church Cleaning	Alison Jackson	020 8427 2910	alisonjackson2000@hotmail.com
Coffee Morning	Deirdre Deeley		deirdredeeley@aol.com
Counters	Claudia McHugh	020 8429 5681	claudiamchugh@rcdow.org.uk
Ecumenical Diocesan Rep	Angela Daley	020 8866 3318	daley47@yahoo.co.uk
Faith Sharing (3 groups)	Tony McWilliams Clare Finney Neville Bayross	020 8868 3205 020 8427 7870 020 8863 8876	mcwilliamsma@hotmail.co.uk FinnClai@aol.com

Finance Committee	Mike Parkinson	020 8426 0066 07801 737796	vanfriday@yahoo.co.uk
Flower Arrangers	Ann French	020 8868 5163	
Knights of St Columba	Peter Quinton	020 8866 5066	p.quinton398@btinternet.com
Music	Pat McWilliams Jan MacDonald Julien Melville Barbara and John Towell	020 8868 3205 020 84290954 020 8422 0826	mcwilliamspatricia@hotmail.com janmacdonald10@hotmail.com julienmelville@talktalk.net (See Parish Women's Group/1:1 Club)
Parish Council	Neil Cocking	07850 790747	neilcocking@outlook.com
Parish Women's Group	Barbara Towell	020 8866 6665	barbara-towell@sky.com

Readers/ Eucharis- tic Minis- ters	Mary Evans	020 8868 2884	mary- yjeffevans@gmail.com
SJF Ladies Club	Teresa Arri- go	020 8427 3063	t.arrigo@virgin.net
Social Club	JeromeLe Forestier	07721 788000	<a href="mailto:jeromeleforesti-
er@gmail.com">jeromeleforesti- er@gmail.com
SVP	Tony McWilliams	020 8868 3205	<a href="mailto:mcwilliamsma@hotmail.
co.uk">mcwilliamsma@hotmail. co.uk
Tai Chi	Barbara Towell	020 8866 6665	barbaratowell@sky.com
Traidcraft Stall	Elspeth Everitt		<a href="mailto:elspeth.everitt@talktalk
.net">elspeth.everitt@talktalk .net
Welcome Rota	Sue Moriarty	020 8868 0473	suemoriarty@sky.com

**It would be appreciated if any changes are noti-
fied to one of the editors so that these page can
be kept up-to-date.**

NEED HELP WITH YOUR TAX OR ACCOUNTS?

A friendly chartered accountant based in Rayners Lane
offers help with:

- ◆ self employed, partnership and company accounts preparation
- ◆ statutory filing and
- ◆ tax services.

Please contact Stuart on 07884 262803 or e-mail at

rylandconsulting@aol.com

durley
electrical ltd

OUR SERVICES INCLUDE:

Full & Partial Property Rewires
Landlord Periodic Inspection Certificates
Portable Appliance Testing (PAT Testing)
Garden & Outhouse Lighting Installation
Exterior & Security Lighting Installation
Electrical Installation & Maintenance
Additional Sockets & Switches
Electrical Fault Finding
Emergency Call-Outs
Testing & Inspection
Free Quotations



020 8868 2536



durley.electrical@ntlworld.com
www.durleyelectrical.co.uk



Cheekatrade.com
Member since 2011



Answers to General Knowledge Quiz

1. Legal
2. Wilfred Owen wrote the poem
3. German
4. Wellington
5. "Jesus Christ Superstar"
6. Rhode Island
7. Florence, Italy
8. South America
9. Impressionist
10. Andy Murray
11. Paradox or an oxymoron
12. 60 degrees
13. Peru
14. "A Tale of Two Cities" by Charles Dickens
15. Cheese
16. Ice hockey
17. By word of mouth
18. First to climb Mount Everest
19. Katherine Parr
20. St. Cecilia
21. 39
22. A jelly fish
23. Michael Morpurgo
24. Sunderland
25. 26th December



THE LAST WORD

As we approach the great season of Christmas I am naturally drawn to give thanks for all the gifts that I have received. I am not talking about material things, as nice as they are! I am talking about the kindnesses that have been shown to me and the acts of support, friendship and solidarity that have come my way over this past year.

This was especially so when I lost my mother earlier this year. It was a real gift to be able to celebrate her Requiem Mass here at St John Fisher and to give thanks to God for all that she had been. Her loss was made easier to bear by the very fact that I felt surrounded by a sea of concern and love, both for me and for my family. It was a true example of merciful Christian witness, and I shall never forget it.

Because of the Holy Year called by Pope Francis our thinking about mercy has been at the heart of Parish life this year. This was really brought to life as we followed the Love in Action programme and elsewhere in The Pylon I have written extensively about how we intend to live Love in Action through a number of new initiatives that will be put into place over the coming months. This will be an exciting time in the development of our parish and if you feel that you can be involved especially with Harrow Citizens then please contact me and I can tell you all about it.

One of the worrying things about our neighbourhood is the fact that Harrow is now such an expensive place to live. There is no doubt that we are seeing a shift in population and this means that the size of the parish seems to be shrinking. House prices continue to increase because of an undersupply in stock and the rents that people pay are exorbitant.

I hope that in the midst of all this the parish can continue to be a place of encounter, where we not only meet God but each other. A place where we can voice our concerns about the community in which we live and try to seek answers to our problems with other like-minded people.

Am I hopeful for the future? Yes I am. Because I know that God can work in the most seemingly impossible situations. At this time of year I think of a young woman who just escaped a ritual execution, who left her home and family and who gave birth to her son in abject poverty. Yet in these inauspicious circumstances the Saviour of the world came to us. His life and his love continue to be made known to us. We follow him, we trust him and we know that with Jesus in our lives we shall stand together united in solidarity and concern for each other's dignity.

I hope that you have a wonderful Christmas.

Fr Shanu.

