

# SHINE





# Footsteps

*Footsteps is a series of presentations by invited speakers who can help us as we journey in our Christian faith.*

Here's what we're planning for 2020.

Each event takes place in our large parish centre. There's no charge, plenty free parking and good wheelchair access.

Come and follow in the footsteps of these special people:

Thursday 16 January at 7.30pm	<b>Pastor Lloyd Gordon</b> unpicks the Our Father for us in "Discovering hidden promises"
Tuesday 25 February at 8pm	<b>Mary Hardiman</b> shares the story and impact on her of Jeremiah's conversion story on Death Row, Louisiana "Ain't no man put them damn clouds in the sky"
Thursday 26 March at 7.30pm	<b>James Gallogly</b> helps us on our Lenten journey
Tuesday 19 May at 8pm	<b>Owen Le Blanc</b> examines "The call to holiness". How do we grow towards it? How does it fit into the lives of ordinary Christians?
Tuesday 30 June at 8pm	<b>Anthony Delaney</b> suggests how we can make a difference to others in "From lost and alone to found and at home"
Thursday 24 September at 7.30pm	<b>Mary Hardiman</b> offers her insight into some of the scriptures
Tuesday 3 November at 8pm	<b>Columban Missionaries</b> explain more about "Sharing gospel joy"

All are welcome to come to each informal, friendly occasion to listen, chat, reflect on and drink in whatever spiritual and actual refreshment is on offer each night. Footsteps began in 2018.

We provide a café-style setting in our parish centre, serving light refreshments and nibbles along with a good sprinkling of humour.

*Be inspired, relax, be spiritually nudged! You'll be very welcome.*

*Come and follow our Footsteps.*

**St Peter's Parish Centre, Green Lane,  
Hazel Grove, Stockport SK7 4EA**



## FROM THE PARISH PRIEST

Another summer has nearly gone, although I still have my holidays to look forward to! It means that there is another issue of Shine on the way with a look back at what has been happening in our two parishes. You will see that all sorts of activities in our parishes and schools have gone on and I am sure you will have plenty of good reading.

We were sorry to learn that Richard Lawry the Vicar of Norbury has moved from Hazel Grove and we await his replacement and also Rob Green the curate in Norbury is retiring this autumn and we wish him well. Changes are also afoot in the Methodist Circuit in Stockport.

After Easter a group of priests from the diocese went to Poland, staying at the Divine Mercy Shrine outside Cracow. During the stay we visited the birthplace of Pope John Paul 2 as well as the notorious death camp at Auschwitz. The late Pope still has a great influence on the life of the Polish Church and it was impressive to see how busy the churches are there. Auschwitz was like no other place I have visited and I doubt whether I would go again.

Later on a number of parishioners went on pilgrimage to Lourdes with the annual diocesan pilgrimage and it was good to see Fr Pat Munroe well enough to attend. In the autumn a number of young people will be going to the Holy Land with our diocesan Youth Pilgrimage at the end of October. We look forward to reading their thoughts about it in our next issue of Shine.

Of course our parish activities are not all about trips, pilgrimages and holidays; there is the ongoing work of bringing the gospel message to the people around us and the production of this magazine is an important part of this work. Thank you to all who have contributed to this issue with your articles and thank you to those who have put it all together and produced it. When you have read it then pass it on to somebody who doesn't know anything about our parish so that they can see what is going on.

Fr Peter

*News from the parish communities of  
St Peter's, Hazel Grove and  
St Philip's, Offerton.*

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## Where we are . . .

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16 Green Lane, Hazel Grove,  
Stockport SK7 4EA

Tel 0161 483 3476

**St Philip's Church**

Half Moon Lane, Offerton,  
Stockport SK2 5LB

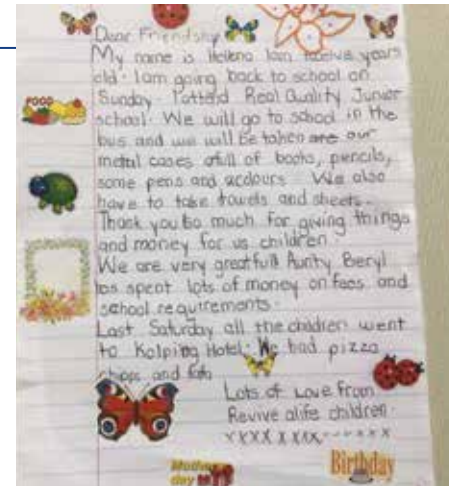
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Our joint website is [www.stpeterscatholic.church](http://www.stpeterscatholic.church)



# Shining a light on our parish communities



## Woman of faith

**Shelia Smith** updates us on a local initiative.

Over the past 15 years the Friendship Group at St Philip's has evolved into an ecumenical group of people with differing faiths and no faith; everyone has been made welcome. In a previous issue of Shine you will have read of the help we gave to Revive a Life Uganda Mission run by Beryl Clarke in High Lane.

In May we had a visit from Beryl who goes regularly to Uganda. Her faith in Divine providence was an inspiration. Until recently she had a stall in Stockport market (which was where we first met her) to raise funds. Due to changes in our local market she is now trying to establish herself in Hyde Market.

She has been helping a number of girls with their education and they are now growing up, so Beryl is hoping to start a vocational training school and sewing workshop.

At present she is in the process of gathering together sewing machines, material, cottons, buttons, Velcro etc amongst other things, to be able to fill a container, which is the cheapest way of transporting goods.

The photographs are of the goods we had gathered on the day of her visit, either for the market stall or for sending to Uganda. The letter is from one of 'her girls'. You can read more about it here: [www.revivechurch.uk/mission/revive-a-life](http://www.revivechurch.uk/mission/revive-a-life).

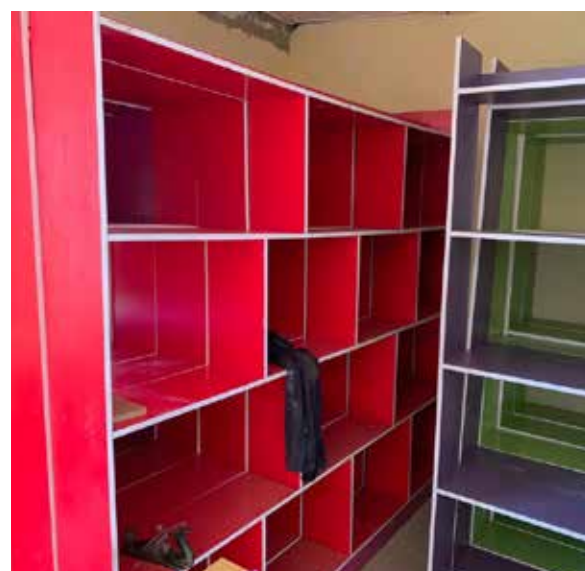


## 65th wedding anniversary joy

Mary Lebon and her husband Burt celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary at St Philip's. At the 6pm Vigil Mass on 6 July, the happy couple renewed their vows then afterwards walked together down the aisle to the well known Mendelssohn's Wedding March, played on the organ. Mary and Burt generously offered all the congregation a glass of wine and some celebration cake. Congratulations!



Yakubu Gadzama has the latest update from his brother Paul who has been to Lassa to monitor the progress of the EMCI library which St Peter's parish is furnishing. Work was slowed down because of recent sporadic attacks by the Boko Haram, who often try to come to the village to steal food. The local vigilante group are trying their best to show their presence and are reducing the attacks.



## Farewells and welcomes

Since our last issue at Easter the following parishioners have gone to their rest:

Jean Cheetham

Diane Earlam

Maureen Ashley

Derek Moss

Sheila Durley

Frank Laverty

Noah Whalley

Maggie Lee (McKeown)

Leslaw (Les) Wazydrag

Elizabeth Colette Garry

May they rest in peace.

+++

We have welcomed the following people into the church through baptism:

George Hallam

Ralph Wroe

Bradley Birchenough

Beatrice Platt

Thomas Little

Jackson Barratt

Orla Lee

Lilly Rose Pearson

Harriet Hannan

Elsie Crooks

Ellis Armstrong

Leo Begley

James Burr

Edward O'Toole

Frankie Wharton

Frederick Parry

Oliver Dunn

Margot Ross

+++

## MARRIAGES

Joseph Cawley and Suzanne Bianchi on 21 July

Tom McCaffrey and Katie Hyde on 23 August

Toby Brook and Katrina Kreekor on 24 August

+++

## FIRST COMMUNIONS

Between May and July 34 children received Holy Communion for the first time.

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## CONFIRMATION

On 2 July Bishop Mark came to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation for 22 of our young people from our Local Missionary Area



John Mercer, just limbering up for his 70th birthday next year!



At the beginning of the 10am Mass on Sunday 28 July, Fr Bernard McDermott announced "We have three very special birthdays this weekend: a 70th, an 80th and a 90th". He mentioned Pat Dorrian on her 70th, Tricia Byrne on her 80th (who wasn't there) and Bernard Elsdon on his 90th. There was a great round of applause and this started a very happy weekend, so many thanks Fr Bernard.

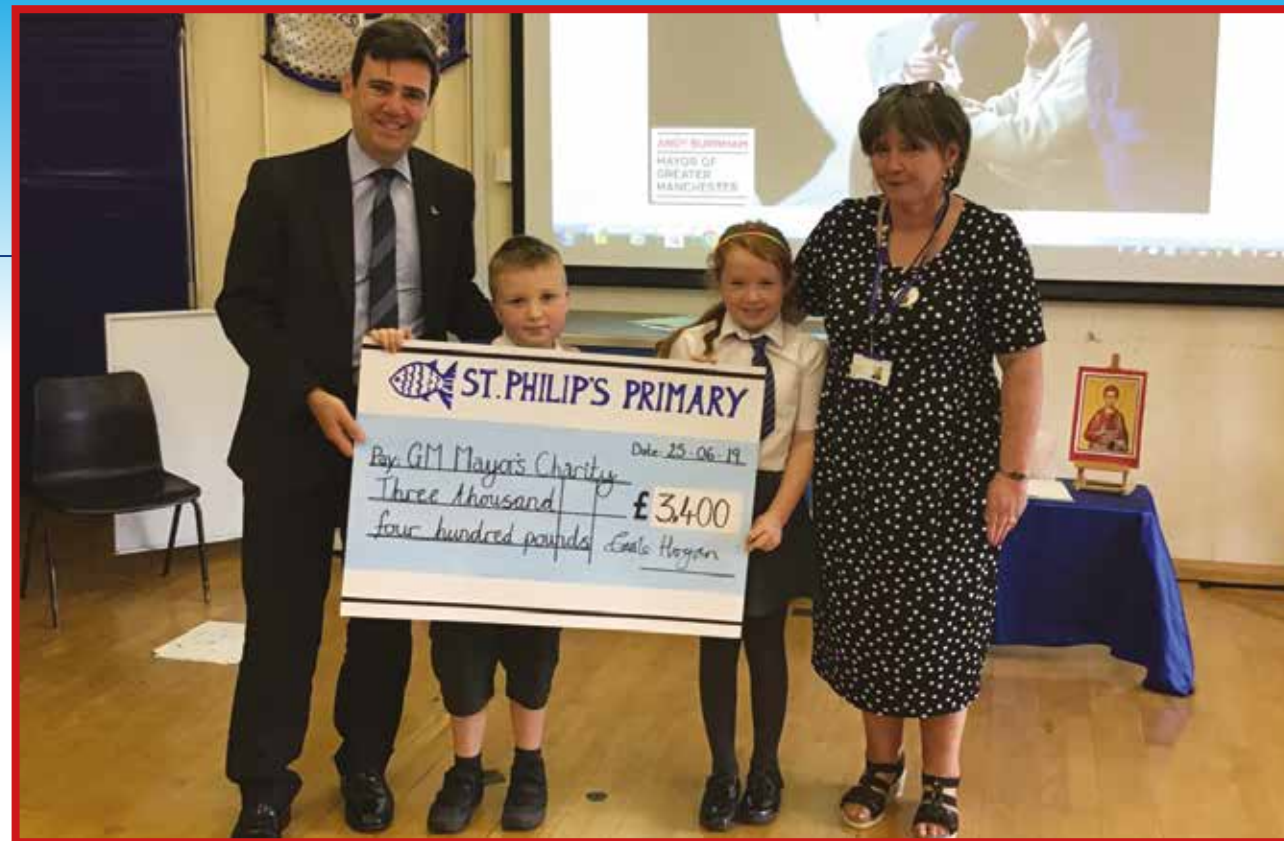
After Mass, in the parish centre David Small called for both Pat and Bernard to come and be the centre of attention – alongside tables bearing several gorgeous cakes. Helen Lyons had baked and iced a beautiful cake for Bernard's 90th with nine candles on top. As Rachel tried to light the candles, Chidike one of our little children decided that they needed to be blown out. This caused much laughter. However, his persistence paid off as Bernard invited him to come and help him blow out the candles. We all then shared in the delicious cakes and sang 'Happy Birthday' to Pat and Bernard.

Bernard would like to say a very big thank you to Fr Bernard (it was good to have him amongst us again) and to our wonderful congregation for all the cards and gifts he has received along with so many good wishes. We count ourselves very blessed to be a part of this caring, loving and supportive community here at St Peter's. May God bless you all.

The picture on the right, was taken at Tricia's 80th celebration at The Deanwater Hotel, Woodford and shows Moira Murray (née Glennon), Tricia Byrne (née Fennell) and Maureen Regan (née Gaffey). They have been friends for nearly 70 years having all started at St Joseph's Technical High School, Victoria Park, Manchester in 1950. They've had a year of celebrating!

## Special birthday celebrations

*David Young recalls a special weekend*



Andy Burnham collecting the cheque at St Philip's Primary School

## Fantastic fundraising

On Tuesday 25 June, St Philip's Catholic Primary School had a very special visitor. Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham spent the afternoon in the school getting involved in a range of activities including participating in an assembly, answering questions from the Pupil Leadership team and collecting a cheque for the Mayor's Charity, A Bed Every Night.

Each year the children participate in Lenten fundraising to raise as much money as possible for a chosen charity. This year Mayor Andy Burnham's charity had been chosen for all of the outstanding work that it does supporting the homeless in Greater Manchester. The children and their families raised a fantastic £3,400, which will provide overnight accommodation for over 100 homeless people and make a significant difference to a great number of lives.

The children raised the funds in a variety of creative ways, including participating in a sponsored run, singing in local supermarkets, paying to throw wet sponges at their teachers and even washing cars to help to raise as much money as possible for this worthy cause. Supporting the homeless is a cause at the forefront of the children's minds, as each year over 30 children give up a Saturday to provide support at the Wellspring Homeless Centre. But the fundraising for the Lenten charity has even surpassed this, with the whole school devoted to raising an impressive amount of money.

The children were then rewarded for their amazing efforts when Mayor Andy Burnham visited and accepted a cheque in assembly from two Year 4 children (the class who raised the most money). The assembly also consisted of a brilliant piece of drama representing the plight of homelessness in Greater Manchester, and a series of video clips to display to the Mayor the inventive ways that children have raised the money. In accepting the cheque, the Mayor told the children how grateful he was for their fundraising and explained the fantastic ways in which the money will be used. He also outlined other ways in which the children can be supportive of those in need.

Headteacher Carole Hogan explained, "I am amazed by the children and the dedication with which they have approached the fundraising challenge. As a Catholic school we encourage the children to think about how they can help others in need, and the way they have embraced the concept of supporting people without a home makes me feel extremely proud!"

Year 4 pupil, Matilda Phillips said, "The different ways that we raised money were really fun, but the most important thing is that it all goes to help people who need it. It was so exciting to actually meet Andy Burnham and to hear from him how helpful our money will be!" The occasion of meeting the Mayor has been extremely special and is something that the children will never forget, whilst the ethos of helping others and supporting worthy causes will likely become instilled in children throughout their lives.





## *Footsteps is bringing new meaning to the term 'reaching out'.*

- The invited speakers are so varied, coming from a whole range of backgrounds, so we have quite diverse topics to offer
- The audience reaching us is coming not just from Stockport but from all parts of the North West, from Ormskirk to Middlewich, Bolton to Macclesfield, from many parishes and church communities
- The numbers of people coming to each event are regularly reaching greater heights
- So we've been reaching out into other meeting rooms to bring more chairs into the main hall
- And at the last two events, we've had to reach further into the kitchen cupboards for cups!

"We were down to our last six cups in the whole place, so it was getting a bit concerning!" laughed Linda Cordes who leads a team of kitchen helpers to provide a hot drink to everyone. And not just drinks, hot or cold, Linda lays on nibbles in the form of biscuits, grapes and crisps all around the hall.

The small tables are covered in tablecloths and set with some flowers, a candle and plates full of tempting eats. It all adds to the informal, café-style ambience. It doesn't seem to take too long now for those areas to be snapped up. When we've used all the small tables, we set up rows of chairs and leave more nibbles handy there. When we run out of chairs, people sit on the side bench seats in the hall.

# Reaching out

## Looking back

On Tuesday 14 May the parish centre was jam packed – and yet hushed; you could have heard a pin drop as **Mary Hardiman** was sharing her experience of meeting a man on Death Row in Texas. Her most powerful and poignant explanation of daily life in what must be the harshest of prison experiences stunned people. Chuck Mamou, with whom she had been corresponding for over a year, had written some of Mary's presentation, so we could hear his own words. His most eloquent reactions were humbling and inspiring – as of course were Mary's.

If you weren't there that night to hear it all, you can listen to a recording of Mary's talk on our parish website. Go to our Media page and scroll down to find Mary's talks and select "Finding God in unexpected places".

Mary suggested to the audience that they write a short message to Chuck to support him and left a number of A3 sheets and pens. It was so moving to see queues forming around the hall as people waited to send their words of prayer, encouragement, support and love to this hitherto unknown man across the other side of the world. When he received them from Mary, he immediately wrote back this note:

*"Wow! What do I say? I have become an emotional person over the years. And I don't share my tears publicly because I don't want to break down and suffer the Humpty Dumpty fate where I fell off the wall, had a big fall and could not be put together again. But there are times, and as I read all the short, though impactful messages that were written on the paper that you had arranged...*

*the tears fell on their own. I wasn't upset. Rather, I was just so overcome with the thoughts, prayers and the acknowledgement that I am more than just a number... more than a symbol of dogmatic injustice, more than what naysayers say I am. These people... these strangers from far away reached out to offer me their 'thoughts'; their consideration of my wellbeing was more than humbling. It was ataractic. And I cried 'cause this attention has never happened to me. I was and still remain overwhelmed.*

*I wish I could group hug each and every one of those people who signed that paper card. I wish I could hug you because you have lifted me up on your back and made me more than an inmate. More than I have ever been in the free world and in the not so free world. You are an amicus humani generis."*

This message was shared with everyone at the next Footsteps event on Tuesday 18 June and was so very much appreciated.

That night, in total contrast, the crowds again arrived to hear **Fr John Boles** whose sister Eileen is married to Fr Peter's brother Bernard (work that one out!). Fr John was home on a sabbatical after 25 years in Latin America as a Columban missionary priest. He shared with us some of his work and experiences in Chile and Peru and some of his thoughts about the future direction of the church. His energy and enthusiasm were inspiring – as someone commented, "he boled us over!". Our Footsteps programme has taken us – and the parish

centre – to new heights. The series of events we've held this year is drawing fantastic numbers of people keen to hear the speakers we can offer. All the speakers have a message for us, some way to help us on our Christian journey. We try to ensure that each evening is inspirational in some way for people, that they get some kind of message, something to think about or even pray about. Nothing too deep but it's hopefully safe to say, everyone seems to go home with more than they came with and the parish centre is chock full of smiles and warmth and laughter.

## Looking forward

After a break over the summer, the next Footsteps event is on **Thursday 26 September** at 7.30pm when **David O'Neill** from our own parish will explore the Christian tradition of learned ignorance about God as he considers "...not knowing God". David studied theology and has taught religion amongst other subjects to primary school pupils and adults, and all ages in between. Do come and hear what he has to say; he's bound to get us thinking.

And the treats keep on coming because on **Thursday 31 October** it's our pleasure to welcome the **Fransiscan Sisters of the Renewal** who are coming from Leeds to talk about "For love alone". This order of Sisters was formed just over 30 years ago and they have enjoyed real growth. The maximum age for becoming a Sister is 35. They have been described as Sisters who are "joyful, engaging, funny and fit the description of the New Evangelisation to a T." It would be wonderful to give them a warm welcome.

*Look on page 2 for our 2020 programme so you can get the dates in your diary. We are delighted to have attracted a range of speakers from different backgrounds and Christian traditions. Leaflets will be available shortly.*





Meet Samir and one of his daughters. His family was sponsored by the parish community of St Monica's, Flixton through the Community Sponsorship Scheme.

# Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative



The UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, states that as at May 2019 there are 70.8 million forcibly displaced people in the world – of those displaced people, 25.9 million are refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18. Just 92,400 refugees have been resettled and Turkey, Pakistan, Uganda and Sudan are the top refugee-hosting countries.

As Catholics we know that the works of mercy are the foundation of our faith. Jesus spoke clearly in Matthew's Gospel when he said, 'I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.' Matt 25:35. Pope Francis reiterated this message for us today when he spoke in September 2015, "May every parish, every religious community, every monastery, every sanctuary of Europe, take in one family." In his message for the 2019 World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Pope Francis reflects on how we can all contribute to building the 'city of God' if we welcome, protect, promote and integrate those seeking a better way of life.

When Amber Rudd was Home Secretary, she launched with the Archbishop of Canterbury a scheme to encourage community groups to sponsor a refugee family. At that time she said, "I hope that this new approach will help bring communities together and support these often traumatised and vulnerable families as they rebuild their lives, and contribute to and thrive in our country." Community Sponsorship of Refugees enables community groups including charities, faith groups, churches and businesses to take on the role of

*St Peter's Justice and Peace Group explain the background to a new and challenging initiative which is on the horizon.*

supporting resettled refugees in the UK. At present, sponsorship offers resettlement to refugees from the Syrian conflict and 'at risk' children with their families who have fled conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa. The UK government partners with UNHCR to identify the most vulnerable people for resettlement in the UK; refugees are selected and screened in the same way as refugees coming in via other schemes as the government aims to meet its pledge to resettle 23,000 refugees by 2020. On arrival in the UK, the sponsored families have full refugee status and the right to work, education, healthcare, State benefits and English language tuition.

The Caritas Social Action Network found at [www.csan.org.uk](http://www.csan.org.uk) explains how the Community Sponsorship of Refugees works in practice. It is a two year programme that has three main elements:

- housing – finding and preparing a suitable, affordable home
- funding – raising a support fund to cover additional needs (£4,500 per adult, so £9,000 for a family)
- support – planning and delivering a programme of resettlement

The Sponsorship Scheme is effective because the family are placed into a local community with the help and support of committed volunteers. Those volunteers are able to provide

- friendship, understanding and empathy
- shared motivation and commitment



Samir with members of St Monica's parish.

- access to the social capital of a whole community

In November 2016, St Monica's in Flixton, Salford diocese, became the first Catholic parish to welcome a Syrian family under the Community Sponsorship Scheme. The family they sponsored fled Syria in 2012 and came to the UK with nothing. Samir, the father of three young children said, "we had nothing and knew no one – but the kindness of ordinary Mancunians changed everything." The Manchester Evening News ran an article on 13 May 2019 stating that 'Christians in Trafford worked with their bare hands to transform the lives of a Syrian family.' Samir Hamwyeh arrived in the UK two and a half years ago fleeing from the war-torn city of Homs. Initially, Samir volunteered at The Boaz Trust's winter night shelter but has now opened his own restaurant on Chester Road in Stretford called

Samirs. The National Co-ordinator for the Caritas Community Sponsorship of Refugees programme, Sean Ryan MBE, who is a parishioner at St Monica's says, "this is an example of grassroots communities having control and a direct say in how migration works in this country and having a stake in that."

The parishes of St Peter's and St Philip's will be starting the process of becoming a sponsor and a support for a refugee family in the autumn. It is going to be a big responsibility but we hope with our courage and goodwill we will be able to make a huge difference to a family who, through no fault of their own, have lost everything.

*“ I know people say what you are doing is just a drop in the ocean, but then the ocean is made up of drops. ”*

**Olwen Thomas**  
Fishguard Sponsorship  
Group Member

Please look out for announcements in the parish newsletters and keep this wonderful initiative in your thoughts and prayers.





*The Justice and Peace group describe a truly exceptional event in the parish centre on the evening of Sunday 23 June.*



# Our Festival of Friendship and Diversity



This highly successful event was a wonderful concept that came from past refugees themselves. Their idea was that in Refugee Week, instead of looking at fundraising or handouts as a project, they would try instead to create an event that would light up blighted lives with some joy and friendship and bring back smiles to faces that had almost forgotten how to smile following the traumas of terror, war, destruction, destitution and long journeying that many of them had endured on their way here.

They wanted especially to get away from the very label 'refugee' as it holds such connotations of misery and despair. For this one evening the aim was to make all those who gathered in the parish centre, regardless of their status, feel they were there on an equal footing; human beings before all else, worthy of respect, dignity and above all friendship. It was not going to be an event done by the host group for the benefit and enjoyment of the other, rather the plan was a combined sharing of talent and time for the entertainment of the whole gathering. When we in the Justice and Peace group were approached by members of Sheba Arts (a volunteer group of immigrants and UK residents who work together to

help keep alive the cultural heritage of new migrants) to assist with such a plan, it was seen as a practical application of our parish mission and we agreed with enthusiasm. At our initial meeting our first task was to agree a title for our event in line with the above aims. After long discussion the title agreed on was: 'Festival of Friendship and Diversity' which we felt nicely combined our different talents and customs with our desire to reach out to each other in warmth and fellowship.

Once we'd struggled with deciding what our event was going to be called – a hard task – we then had to decide what exactly we planned to do on the night – an even harder task! In the end the agreement was that we at St Peter's would go and fish in our parish pool to see what catch of talent we might haul in, whilst our immigrant friends would do the same among their own! We had about six weeks before the arranged date for the festival so it was on with our flippers and in at the deep end. We agreed to keep in touch by text so that we would have some idea how successful we were being in our fishing trip and whether the catch was too small and we'd need to start panicking. In the event we had no need at all to worry. It was quite astonishing to discover what an amazing array of talents lurked in the pews







at St Peter's every Sunday and, once people got wind of our plan for Refugee Week, the information of where the talent was to be found was quietly passed on to us. Our Kerala community was approached after Mass one Sunday and asked if they were able or willing to contribute to the festival. In no time at all the answer came back that they were.

When the final programme was put together we were able to contribute both community and classic dance from our Kerala friends, which was inspirational; our own young Irish dancing troupe who brought the house down; a young singer with an angel's voice; two grave and dignified senior members of the community (!) who turned out to be astoundingly athletic Morris dancers; a virtuoso violinist, and a brilliant trio of teachers from one of our primary schools comprising a guitarist, a pianist and a bodhran player.

Our migrant friends were equally successful. They brought to the programme talented musicians from Kurdistan; a poet; an outstanding artist who painted a vibrantly beautiful piece of abstract

art using mostly his hands, whilst giving himself up to the music played by the wonderful ensemble of piano, violin, guitar and bodhran. This combined music and art presentation most vividly emphasised the intentions of the festival in its deliberate sharing of talents between hosts and migrants. There was also a dancer from Guatemala in beautiful national dress and a group of female dancers in national costume also from Kurdistan.

Some thought was also given to the entertainment of the children present whilst parents enjoyed the programme itself. An impressively organised young lady appeared on the day and ran an interactive art and craft workshop that kept many youngsters entranced. Another extremely popular activity was a drumming workshop run by our remarkably versatile bodhran player who, when he was not himself performing on the stage, engaged with 8 or 10 young people at a time, all enthusiastically hammering on the drum kits set up in the meeting room.

Although planning and sourcing the actual programme was a huge part of organising

the festival, there were other aspects of the night that were a cause of some amusement to us all but also some little anxiety, mainly because of our cultural differences. We like a programme to run to time and be fairly rigidly controlled so that everyone gets to do their bit after preparing so diligently. Our migrant friends are much more laid back and we had a worry that things would get woefully out of time and we might have to call the festival to a close before all our volunteers actually got to perform. Our anxieties were shared at a meeting in the hope of them falling on fertile ground – and they did! Everyone appeared at the right time and kept to their time slot, which was truly remarkable. The Holy Spirit was obviously working overtime.

Another worry was refreshments. Our migrant friends are so hospitable and generous that they were planning a marathon cook-in among themselves so that there would be a plated meal for everyone who came. We had to gently lay that plan to rest. We had only three hours for all performances and thirty minutes earmarked for refreshments, so service had to be smart and snappy thus no time for plates and cutlery and glasses. In the end our Kurdish team of chefs came up with a compromise. They would still meet up to shop and cook on Saturday, but they would serve up their dolman in foil takeaway dishes that could easily be served out. In the parish we put out an appeal for cakes of every kind and what a marvellous response we got. Whilst the Kurdish ladies served their dolman, a group of generous-hearted parishioners who came in to help without any prior requests, served tea and laid out numerous portions of cake on trays. Refreshments were completed in the assigned half hour and ne'er a cake was to

be found at the end of the time! Helpers cleared everything away as the festival continued so there was absolutely no mess to deal with at the end of the night. It had all been done!

The reaction of the audience to the various performances was unadulterated enthusiastic pleasure. Our young singer got a warm reception. The young Irish dancers seemed to cause particular delight, possibly because they were so young and yet performed like professionals with great precision and concentration. The Indian dancers in their beautiful red saris did a charming dance and kept their cool despite trouble with their music which refused to play. (A young man from the audience stepped forward and sorted it out much to their relief.) The second dance done by a solo dancer was a classical dance which astounded the audience because the young person, who was stunningly dressed, danced on a tray with a bowl on her head and yet performed some amazingly complex moves. Our musicians, both Kurdish and local, added liveliness and rhythm to the proceedings. It was without doubt a most enjoyable and successful night.

For the majority however the highlight of the evening came at the end, when firstly our Morris Dancer 'callers' summoned us onto the floor to teach us all a simple English country dance, which people, guests and hosts, flung themselves into with great gusto and much laughter. This was followed by the Kurdish women doing



one of their national dances. After a while they summoned their men to join them and finally everyone was invited to get onto the floor and learn the simple steps required to participate. This final act of 'togetherness' was a time to cherish. If someone had placed him/herself in the centre of the circle of dancers (and a camera man did) and slowly gone round the faces of every person there, teenagers, children, migrant children, parents, migrant parents, mature

parishioners, men and women, dark skinned and fair, movers with grace and movers with difficulty, even a wheelchair-bound participant, what would have struck the observer forcibly was that every person present was either smiling broadly or laughing out loud. Differences forgotten, all present were united in a shared humanity and delight in each other's company – a visual reminder of what our Creator had and has in mind for His people.





# First Holy Communion

“The parish is very special and this shines through in everyone”

The Morgan family



“We really felt welcomed by Teresa and Terry when we came to meet them for the first time and they were so understanding of our situation.”

Scarlett said “It was really helpful to be able to taste the bread and wine beforehand, even though it wasn’t blessed and I liked that Teresa invited other family to come up for a blessing. Thank you.”

The Ware family

“We felt well supported by the church throughout the preparation for Holy Communion. The ‘rehearsal’ ensured the children knew what to expect on the day and therefore could thoroughly enjoy the celebration. Many thanks to all involved and their hard work and dedication x.”

The Morrey family



A beautiful service. All the children were made to feel special. Lovely music had us all singing and I have a little boy asking to go to Mass every week. Thank you St Peter’s for welcoming us”

The McLeverty family



“I felt Mia and the family were guided well through the journey and really included and valued. Mia really enjoyed being part of the group that took their holy communion this year. She enjoyed the sessions she attended in the lead up to her Holy Communion, these gave her guidance for her journey. Mia had a really special day that she shared with friends and family”

Lyons-Finch family

“We had lots of fun preparing for Holy Communion. I liked being able to ask all the questions about the Church, it was really interesting. Holy Communion day was very special. I loved going up to the lectern to read my prayer because I had never done that before.”

The Sethi family







"Thank you to Teresa, Terry and all those involved from preparation to the Holy Communion day. It was nothing but amazing in every way. The guidance we were given as a family really helped Noah and us to make the journey with God and the Holy Spirit very special indeed."

**The Morgan family**



"A wonderful celebration which brought a lovely group of children together on a very special day x."

**The Peak family**



"A personal thank you for all your help leading up to Reuben's Holy Communion, and for all the personal touches you and Terry made for yesterday - it was a lovely service, and our family and friends loved how extra special you had all made it. Reuben loved it all too."

**The Farrell family**



"I can not thank you enough for making Zac's day so special. It will be a day that Zac and the whole family will never forget. Everyone complimented you on how lovely the Mass was and especially how well you knew the children. Thank you so much."

**The Hodgson family**



"As a family new to the church we were made to feel welcome as a family. Allowing all the children to take their Holy Communion together made the day feel that extra bit special. Thank you for all the hard work leading up to the celebration."

**The Duo family**



"All three of my children have now made their First Holy Communion at St Peter's as did my sister and I many years ago. Each of my children have followed different programmes and each one has been fantastic in different ways. The support offered was second to none. Many thanks once again."

**The Holebrook family**





# St Peter's pilgrims in Lourdes

**Daniel Bates** writes:

After two previous years of visiting Lourdes, you'd think I'd know what to expect, but this place continually defies all of the expectations I thought I had. It is a place of incomparable peacefulness and serenity, where it is almost impossible to feel sad or alone. In the build-up to my third year in a row coming to Lourdes I had many people ask me the same question, why do I go to Lourdes? And in many ways, that's a tricky one to answer, but in so many other ways, it's not.

Addressing the main reason, it's the people. Never before have I felt so incredibly humbled by the pilgrims I get the chance to meet and help throughout the week. Their unmatched gratitude and joy throughout the week never fail to put a smile on my face. Lourdes is a chance to not only help people to further their own spiritual journeys, but to further your own, whether that was your intention or not. The opportunity to take these people to services or around the town of Lourdes is never a burden, but a privilege that you only get to experience in a place such as Lourdes.

The friendships I have made in Lourdes are second to none, and again, there is absolutely no way of telling where such friendships are going to spring from. There is an enormous sense of camaraderie and solidarity between the youth of St Peter's, one that I firmly believe can't be



**32 young people travelled to Lourdes in July this year for the diocesan pilgrimage.** *To help pay for their trip they organised several fundraising activities in the parish during the year. Barely unpacked after they got home, three of the young volunteers offer their reactions to their time there.*

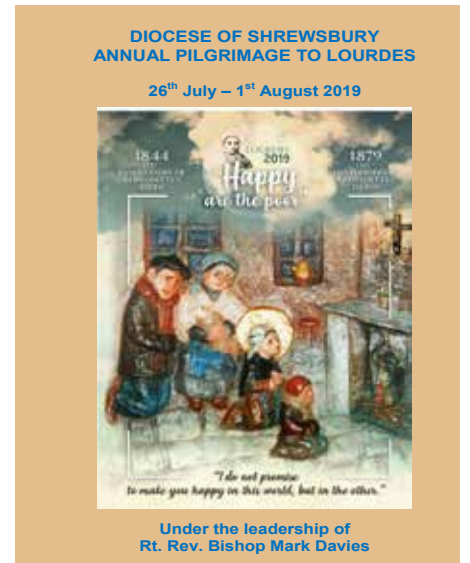
found elsewhere. Whether we're working together during the day, with a pilgrim or if we're socialising in the evening, the support and enjoyment we experience together is something that will stick with me forever.

The yearly 'guardian angel' is almost not needed in our group as everyone is always so welcoming and kind towards newcomers and returning youth, but regardless, it's a nice thing to be part of and adds a fun

sense of mystery to the week. Making my hospitality commitment was such a rewarding experience. Standing up at the front of church with some people that had been with me since my first year in Lourdes, or even people I'd seen in passing throughout my times there, was a special experience. It gave me an overwhelming feeling of pride and achievement, even though it has never felt like a chore or even work to, well, work in Lourdes.

A noticeable change from previous years has been our choice to fly to Lourdes this year, rather than taking a coach and train, giving us an extra day at the end of the week which we had off work. This meant that we had a chance to relax and unwind after a busy and challenging (but never tedious or irksome) week of work.

I am enormously grateful for the donations of the parish of St Peter's throughout this year for funding part of our trip to Lourdes and it goes without saying that we kept the people of the parish in our prayers throughout the week. For financial reasons, I had originally planned not to return to Lourdes for a fourth year, at least not for a few years, however after such an enjoyable and rewarding week my mind has been changed and I am looking forward to at least one more year in one of my favourite places in the world.



**Jenny Wright** writes:

This year was the third time I had decided to volunteer in Lourdes, and the year I would make my hospitality commitment. I can honestly say it is one of my favourite places to visit. The group of volunteers who go with St Peter's are always so lovely and welcome newcomers every year into the group. Throughout the week we always bond so well and always look after each other. We are given a 'guardian angel' every year to look out for, which really helps with getting to know the new people. The pilgrims who we accompany are also amazing. They are always so pleasant and grateful to be helped by the volunteers. They make a huge impression on us, in the stories they tell and lessons they have learnt throughout their lives. It's always a pleasure to meet so many of them while in Lourdes. We decorated the parish candle together as a group and did a small service and prayed for everyone who could not be with us in Lourdes.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first three years in Lourdes and hopefully will be continuing it in years to come.





# St Peter's pilgrims in Lourdes

## Ruth Gallogly's thoughts:

This year's pilgrimage to Lourdes was my second time in Lourdes as a volunteer, representing St Peter's parish. Yet again it was an amazing experience and for many of us young people, it gave us a chance to reconnect with God in such a special place.

When the St Peter's group first arrived in Lourdes we got a bit of a shock as it was pouring down with rain. Some of us even wondered if the plane had really taken off from England or not! However nothing was cancelled due to the rain and the pilgrimage began with an opening Mass on the Friday evening.

The International Mass which took place in the underground basilica on the Sunday was led by our very own Bishop Mark. During his homily Bishop Mark reached out to everyone in the congregation and everyone watching from home as he called us all to be saints and to be witnesses of the Lord in today's world.

What I love most about Lourdes is meeting new people and being able to get to know the assisted pilgrims. Being able to chat with people who have been coming to Lourdes for years and years shows me how important the place itself is and how important the work we do there is. I met a lovely assisted pilgrim from the hospital

during the week and had the honour of taking her around the stations of the cross. She was so grateful and happy to have the opportunity to come to Lourdes even though she is sick; this is what makes volunteering such a rewarding experience. Being able to work in Lourdes has taught me how important it is to follow in Jesus' footsteps and do good work as he did.

Every year we have a trip as a group to a lake near Lourdes to relax and spend time with each other. This year we were blessed with sunshine and heat. We had a great day of swimming, synchronized jumping, and for most people snoozing! Having this time to relax made us more ready for our work as volunteers. After a day's work, most of the volunteers go out in the evening. This gives all the volunteers from Shrewsbury a chance to meet up and get to know each other, reminding us that we are not only part of own parishes, but we are part of a bigger family of Shrewsbury.

Just like any other year, Father Pat Munroe greeted the volunteers every morning to start our day with a reflection and prayer, asking God to help us with our work. It was amazing to see Father Pat so strong in his faith after a difficult year and even more amazing to see him standing alongside Father Peter and the other priests during the Masses.



Towards the end of the week, all the pilgrims from St Peter's group gathered together for a reflection of our trip led by Father Peter. We then took our parish candle decorated by our young people to the Chapel of Light where it was lit to represent our parish. It was lovely to come together as a group and pray for all those back home who need our prayers and to also thank all the parishioners of St Peter's who made this year's pilgrimage possible.

Speaking of candles, I'm sure every year Shrewsbury diocese have an issue with the diocesan candle. This year, I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. At the Hospitality Mass, like many of the other volunteers I was waiting for the pilgrim I was looking after to be seated and ready for Mass. However, I was stood right next to the altar just as the Shrewsbury candle fell and made a very loud bang for the whole congregation to hear. When people looked up to see what had happened, all they could see was me slowly picking up this candle with a large crack through it. As you can imagine, many people assumed it was I who caused the candle to fall. I can promise you all, I was not responsible for the candle but I now will forever have a reputation for breaking candles.

No pilgrimage will go ahead without any hiccups, whether it's a candle breaking or rain during the torchlight procession. However, everyone from the St Peter's group had a wonderful time in Lourdes this year and we are already very excited for next year. The young people from our group would like to thank all the parishioners for your support and prayers throughout the year.



Every Easter for the past five years, along with many other young members of this parish, I have attended a conference called Joel's Bar and I find it one of the best weeks of my year! Joel's Bar is the youth branch of Celebrate, an organisation that puts on Catholic Charismatic events across the UK. Joel's Bar (JB) is held in the grounds of Worth Abbey, a Benedictine monastery located in the beautiful Sussex countryside.

JB aims to bring fellowship and faith to life through a timetable of speakers, worship, Mass, prayer with the monks and times of ministry, while encouraging the formation of relationships through opportunities such as shared mealtimes, a daytime café and an evening bar – to name a few. Throughout the week a variety of speakers unpack the theme of JB. The theme this year was Joshua 1:9, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go".



## Joel's Bar

*Jenny Small is excited to share her experience of Joel's Bar with any 17-25 year olds!*

I found reflecting on this piece of scripture both incredibly motivating and comforting. Attending this conference over the past five years has helped me enormously on my faith journey. During this time I started university, which has challenged my faith in many ways. I've found it so valuable to be able to chat openly and honestly about faith with other young people at the same stage of life as me. Through JB, I've gained new friendships and strengthened existing ones, and now have a network of friends who really encourage me to live boldly in Christ. Last year I took part in a JB-linked leadership initiative called the Release Programme, along with Sarah McKay from this parish. Without the support and

encouragement from the JB community over the years I don't think I would have enrolled in this programme, but I'm so glad I did as I learnt a lot about myself and about working with other people.

After attending the conference for two years, I was delighted to be asked to help serve on the JB planning team under the Liturgy ministry, a role which I've thoroughly enjoyed. This year I had the pleasure of leading the Welcome team, a ministry that is at the heart of the conference and, the importance of which, this parish has demonstrated to me. Part of this role involved helping run a murder mystery evening for a bit of organised fun! Whilst I'm not expecting an Oscar anytime soon for my performance, I had a great time dressing up as a cook and acting as one of the suspects of the murder mystery!

So, if you're in the age bracket between Year 12 to 25 years old, I'd love to invite you along to Joel's Bar 2020! (or if you're outside that age bracket, check out the Celebrate North West weekend in Macclesfield next April!). Booking will open soon, so keep an eye on our social media options for the latest updates.

Instagram – @joelsbar

Facebook – Joel's Bar

Twitter – @joels\_bar

Website – [www.joelsbar.co.uk](http://www.joelsbar.co.uk)



***Peter Whittam** was keen to share his reaction to the 6pm Mass on a special day in the life of the Church, Sunday 9 June. But first, let's look at what happened at the other Masses.*



*The 10am readers – and Chidike!*



*The welcome tree, thanks to Julie Williams*



*Large TV screens so all the congregation could follow every Pentecost reading or prayer in English.*



*Matteo, Fabio and Luca*



*The celebrations continued in the parish centre after the 10am Mass*

# Pentecost Sunday at St Peter's

**Pentecost Sunday at St Peter's has become a very special feast day. It's the day when we celebrate the multi-lingual capability in our parish community, when the Holy Spirit shares His gifts so generously. Our God-given ability to communicate in effective ways almost knew no bounds as we covered most of the continents during the day - our cultures and languages united in the one Spirit.**

The main difference this year was that, since Holy Week, we have had the luxury of the large TV screens above the two side altars in our church, so all the congregation could follow every Pentecost reading or prayer in English. There are many benefits from these screens: apart from no need for hymn books or other sheets of paper, the sound of the congregation singing and praying with uplifted faces has made such a positive difference. And the content is always so tastefully done.

They've been a big hit!

At the 8.30am Mass the international line-up was great. Ian Gregory read the first reading in Spanish, Amanda Welch gave the Psalm in German and Matteo read the Epistle and Gospel Acclamation in Italian. His two sons Luca and Fabio read bidding prayers in Italian, followed by Brigitte in French, with Mary Hardiman reading in German, French and Russian.

At the 10am Mass the diversity continued with Jess Azmy doing the first reading in Arabic, Sinead Dempsey read the Epistle and Gospel Acclamation in Gaelic and the altar was filled for the bidding prayers offered in a vast assortment of languages: Steph Azmy (French), Sindu (Malayalam), Andrei (Polish), Augusta (Igbo), Anne-Marie (Italian and German) and Esther in Nyangia. Esther's intoning of the Hail Mary from the lectern was a beautiful example of

the universal church brought together that day under our roof.

The celebrations continued in the parish centre after the 10am Mass with not just our usual teas and coffees. Helen Lyons had made a special Pentecost cake which we could all share, after the candles had been blown out! It was delicious.

## **Peter writes**

I'm not quite sure where to start! The 6pm Mass on Pentecost Sunday was yet another memorable evening in the life of the parish including, as it did, the reception into the Church of Toby Brook. Natasha Thornton received the same blessing at the 8.30am Mass.

They were warmly welcomed by the congregation and we look forward to seeing them at the various activities of the parish and we can assure them of our help if or when they need it. After all, we have hundreds

of years of life experience amongst our parishioners. At Fr Peter's request, and in addition to the red chasuble that he wore, one saw red ties, red scarves, red jackets, red jumpers, skirts and dresses, all to remind us of this day of the Holy Spirit's descending on the apostles. When He appeared before them, Jesus told them that, armed with the gifts that had been bestowed on them, they were then able to spread the good news of the Gospels and to forgive sins in the sure knowledge that God would send His grace and forgiveness to the recipients: "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven, whose sins you shall retain they are retained".

The children who are due to be confirmed next month enacted the words of the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles. It was surely something they'll remember when they receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and, please God, for many years afterwards.

To mark this great feast when Jesus told his disciples to "feed my lambs, feed my sheep", and off they went to foreign parts to spread the good news in their new-found languages, we had a number of people from different parts of the world dressed in their local attire reading the bidding prayers in their native tongues.

We were able to follow them by reading the words in English on the screens. A lovely example of the Catholic faith spread across the world. Our thanks to these readers who were Valicka in Slovakian, Kiri in Chinese, Gerry in Gaelic, Tiam and Parissa in Farsi, Nicole in Italian, Juan in Spanish and Yakubu in Margi.

Fr Peter's homily from the steps of the sanctuary is well worth listening to again on the parish website: [https://stpeterscatholic.church/webcam-2/Sunday Mass: 1800 on 09-06-2019](https://stpeterscatholic.church/webcam-2/Sunday%20Mass%201800%20on%2009-06-2019). I thought it was one of Fr Peter's best

and could have been given by his apostolic namesake. It was a most encouraging and positive sermon reminding us that the Acts of the Apostles written by St Luke are still being written by us as we go through life doing God's will and following His ways and teachings. Our everyday lives should be examples of our Catholic Christian faith. Fr Peter reminded us that actions speak louder than words; to use the words of St Francis, "always preach the Gospel but only use words when necessary."

The youth and the musicians led us in the singing and enhanced the service which, I like to think, was enjoyed by the whole congregation. The large screens above the side altars are great for helping us to join in the prayers and the singing more lustily. It's always good to hear the whole congregation praying and singing together. Thank you, Fr Peter, for producing this excellent Mass.





**Stop scrolling.  
Try Alpha.**

#TryAlpha

***The new Alpha course is coming!  
For more information please contact:***

**Rachel McKay: 0161 487 1659  
mckay7897@hotmail.com**



Sean with his Alpha group

## ***My Alpha Experience***

I didn't know what to expect when I was asked by Rachel McKay to "try Alpha"; I wasn't entirely sure what it was. I had seen the adverts around St Peter's church and the banner with Bear Grylls but that was it! It was explained to me that it was a way that I could explore my faith more deeply with others and it was an environment where all questions are welcomed about all kinds of topics and about getting to know Jesus Christ. It is an honest and non-judgemental environment.

I was brought up in a Catholic family. I was baptised in the local church; I went to a Catholic primary and high school and I married my wife in a Catholic church. I went to Mass on a Sunday, but something was missing. It felt like I was going through the motions without any deeper understanding. I wanted to know what it meant to me to be a Christian and I needed to understand my faith myself rather than going along without exploring. I had so many questions but there were never any real answers that fully explained what I wanted to know.

By nature, I like to know the facts about things and I believe that understanding is key to progress, so

**Sean Downey**, took part in the latest Alpha course that was run in the parish and offers his thoughts on how he found it.

***"I cannot wait for the next course! If you want to know more, then I recommend that everyone should 'try Alpha'."***

Alpha came at the perfect time for me. It was exactly what I had been looking for although initially, I was very apprehensive.

When I came to my first Alpha session all my reservations went away. I was greeted warmly, and I felt a sense of belonging. I was among a few familiar faces but mostly people whom I had never met before.

People attended from all different backgrounds, some Christians and others not religious at all. The common bond was that we all wanted to know more about Jesus and Christianity. Aside from the course content there is no better way to break down barriers than to share a good meal which was prepared so generously for us each week.

Over the next ten weeks, we were taken on a journey, we were shown videos as a larger group which provoked thought and conversation. Many topics were covered from 'Who was Jesus?', 'Is the Bible an accurate authentic text?' all the way to 'How is Christianity relevant today?'. For me, the best part of the course was the discussions that followed each week as we split into our smaller groups. Aside from the insights that they brought, I have made some good friends who I will stay in contact with as a result of the course. I was privileged to meet some brilliant, interesting people!

Alpha has changed many things for me, it has given me a new perspective on Christianity. It has filled me with the passion to continue exploring my faith. The course has changed my life for the better and it has allowed me to know Jesus in a way that I did not before. The ideas and explanations given by Alpha are relevant not only in a spiritual context but can be applied to all areas of life.





**Tony Cordes** looks back on the Bible Weekend we enjoyed in the parish on 17-19 May.

# Bible weekend

**First a little background to the Bible Weekend.** In 2016 Pope Francis wrote, "It would be beneficial if every Christian community on one Sunday in the liturgical year could renew its efforts to make the sacred Scripture better known. It would be a Sunday given over entirely to the Word of God for the faithful to become vessels for the transmission of God's Word."

In response to this Fr Peter started to plan not just for a Sunday, but for a whole weekend for parishioners to share in a mission-style event. A working party was set up to plan, liaise, co-ordinate and implement the Bible Weekend. The Catholic Bible School (CBS) agreed to provide and deliver the liturgical content. The weekend would include participants

eating together in fellowship, it would also facilitate discussion, reflection, prayer, adoration, reconciliation and music ministry and it would cater for all age groups: children, youth and adults.

A comprehensive programme emerged which embraced all this and, with a publicity campaign, it got underway. Information was provided in the parish newsletter, on the parish website, in leaflets with a registration form, and talks after Sunday Masses. Parishioners could register for the whole event or select any of the elements within the programme.

The Bible Weekend got underway at 7.15pm on Friday evening. Tea, coffee, biscuits and cake (TCBC) were followed by a welcome to all and a music ministry led by Andy McGarr. The presentation was given by David

Beresford from the CBS who, in a precise and informative way, traced 2,000 years of the Old Testament from Abraham to Jesus and the apostles. The evening ended with prayer – the Bible Weekend was off to a great start.

Saturday started at 9am with TCBC and also pastries and an opportunity for people to meet and chat. The morning workshop started at 9.30 and was presented by Sarah Beresford from CBS. It was entitled "The story of salvation" and explored the stories of key characters in the Bible and how it all fits together and how we find our place in that story. The interactive workshop came to a close at 11am. TCBC was available, then we moved from the parish centre to the church for adoration and the opportunity for reconciliation. As the adults were

leaving the centre, the children aged 7-11 and their parents were entering for the children's workshop – a presentation of the Bible using drama, storytelling, visual aids and creative time with straws and tape, to explore scripture stories and the importance of building our lives on Jesus. It sounded like great fun.

We had Mass at 12 noon with music provided by a group from Our Lady's in Stockport led by Dave Fitton. We returned afterwards to the parish centre to have our packed lunch. TCBC was hosted by the young families from the First Communion group – again a great time to mix, chat and make new friends.

The afternoon workshop at 2.15pm saw David covering the gospel parables and why Jesus told his stories in parables.

 <b>BIBLE WEEKEND</b> Friday 17th May	
Evening to be hosted by parishioners	
TIMES	
7.15 pm	Teas and coffees
7.30 pm	Welcome and Music ministry
7.45 pm	Presentation & Discussion: CBS Team lead the presentation. We begin with a whistle-stop tour through the story of the Scriptures with an innovative range of props and dynamic story-telling. Our gathering includes time for discussion, questions and prayer.
9.00 pm	Closing Prayer and Announcements
9.15 pm	Finish





# BIBLE WEEKEND

## Saturday 18th May

**TIMES**

9.00 am  
9.30 am

Teas, coffees and pastries

Workshop 1: The Story of Salvation - We take some time to explore the stories of the key characters in the Bible and how it all fits together and finding our own place in the story.

11.00am  
11.00 am

Refreshment break

Adoration and Reconciliation

11.30 am

Children's workshop (1 hour) Bible explorer's interactive presentation. For children aged 7-11 with their parents/carers. We use drama, story-telling, visual aids and a creative time with straws and tape to explore scripture stories and the importance of building our lives on Jesus.

12.00 noon

Mass

Teas and coffees at lunch hosted by young families from Holy Communion group

1.00 pm

Parish Centre: Bring packed lunch

2.15 pm

Workshop 2: Gospel Parables - Why did Jesus tell his stories using parables and what even is a parable? Why are parables a useful tool for exploring complex ideas? Let's explore the parables of Jesus as a tool to grow in our own faith.

3.45 pm  
4.15 pm

Refreshment break

Church: Lectio Divina - Let's take time to pray using this ancient to pray using this ancient scriptural technique - no previous experience or knowledge necessary.

5.00 pm

Refreshment break

Evening to be hosted by youth groups

5.30 pm

Parish Centre: Worship and praise led by youth groups

Bar open/teas etc

Evening meal

Using drama and creative prayer we explore together the parable of the sower and its message for us as a parish community.

6.00 pm  
6.30 pm

8.30 pm

Finish

We probed why parables are a useful tool in exploring complex ideas and how they can be used to strengthen our own faith. There was ample opportunity for discussion in small groups, where each group chose a parable to analyse, then fed their thoughts back to the whole group. It was very informative and thought provoking and at 3.45pm we had a break for TCBC! At 4.15pm we returned to the church for a

session on Lectio Divina, where David taught us how to use this ancient technique to read the scriptures. It was a deeply moving experience and much appreciated by all. By 5.30pm we were back in the parish centre for a praise and worship session, led by our parish youth groups - their tremendous musical talent was so evident and inspiring. The bar opened at 6pm in anticipation of our evening meal. The



whole evening was hosted by our youth groups: they manned the kitchen and served our meal - a delicious roast dinner with all the trimmings and some tasty desserts from a local caterer. Having enjoyed our meal, we then enjoyed a presentation from David and Sarah as they explored the parable of the sower. A large model of the 'ground' described in that parable was assembled in the middle of the room. Each of us in turn scattered seeds over this model where we felt our own thoughts would be: Would they be on stony ground or fertile sole and so on? The evening was really excellent for



fellowship and ended with a prayer about 9pm. Many of us had put in a full 12 hour shift, but how rewarding that was.

Sunday began with the 8.30am Mass with music led by Eileen Rigg. The main Mass for the Bible Weekend participants was at 10 o'clock with music led by Steph Leyden and the parish folk group. During this Mass David gave the homily, using a can of Coke as a prop. The fizz in a can remains dormant until the can is shaken and opened - then the fizz bursts out. Does this analogy remind us of the Holy Spirit within us, waiting for us to pour



# BIBLE WEEKEND

## Sunday 19th May

**Sunday**

Teas and coffees after 10am mass hosted by the Kerala Community

**TIMES**

8.30 am Mass

10.00 am Mass

11.30 am Gathering in parish centre: Includes a more specifically family focused presentation. Story telling takes the forefront of this all-age session as we focus on the story of Peter walking on water.

12.30 pm Shared table

2.00 pm Closing prayer and finish

our faith onto others? We headed to the parish centre after Mass not just for TCBC but also some varied and very tasty Indian snacks hosted by the Kerala community of the parish. At 11.30am David and Sarah gave us their final presentation - a family-oriented storytelling activity focussed on the story of Peter walking on water. Such a very entertaining and accessible way to present scripture - can we learn from this technique? A 'shared table' lunch provided the final opportunity to mix, chat and enjoy parish fellowship. On a personal note my lasting memory of the weekend is how fantastic it was.

The number of people involved was staggering. All of us who participated gained from it and our perspective of the Bible was broadened and deepened. Our thanks must be given to the organising team, to all who worked in the kitchen or served the food, to all who provided the music or were helpers and welcomers, to the Catholic Bible School and of course to Fr Peter. Now, do we need to reflect on a different way of presenting the scriptures to others and think seriously about that 'can of Coke' effect on others?

## Family workshop

We had a great time at the family workshop. David and Sarah did a great job at engaging all ages. It was really helpful to the children and us to have the stories acted out to aid their visual learning as well as the practical teamwork activity of building our houses on strong foundations.

Max aged 5 - I liked Sarah and David and doing the spraying on the houses built by the wise man and the foolish man.

Scarlett aged 8 - I really enjoyed the children's workshop, I especially liked making our own house together.







These notes were prepared for enquirers who had very little knowledge of the Bible but who had attended Mass and had asked where the readings at Mass came from and what the relationship was between the Old and New Testaments.

We believe that God speaks us in the Bible and we listen to extracts from the Bible during the Masses on Sunday and during weekdays. But what is the Bible? What do Catholics believe about it? Who wrote it? I think it would be true to say that for a good number of Catholics, the Old Testament was, until comparatively recently, somewhat of a mystery, unless you were either an ordained minister or a biblical scholar.

The Second Vatican Council gave impetus to the whole question of Bible study, by issuing on 18 November 1965 a document or decree entitled 'The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation' (Dei Verbum). Paragraph 11 says "The Church accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author and have been handed on as such to the Church itself. To compose the sacred books, God chose certain men who, all the while he employed them at this task, made full use of their powers and faculties, so that, although he acted in them and by them, it was as the authors, that they consigned to writing whatever he wanted written, and no more."

Translating that into simple terms we call the Bible 'the word of God' because it is inspired by God and has God as its author. It reveals God to us and His plan of salvation for us. He speaks to us in the Bible mainly in the writings of our fellow human beings.

But what is the Bible? It is a collection of 73 different books divided into the Old Testament of 46 books and the New Testament of 27 books. The word Bible is derived from the Latin and Greek words

# Notes about the Bible

*Following on from the Bible Weekend, Tony Martin offers an extract from a session on the Bible for the Enquirers Group and adds some flesh to the detailed talks held then.*

(biblia) meaning books. It is not a single literary composition. Modern study has detected four distinct literary traditions in the Pentateuch alone (the Pentateuch being the first five books of the Old Testament and what the Jewish people know as the Torah or Law). NB: the Catholic Church uses more books; the last book in the Old Testament, Malachi, is not in other Bibles.

Who wrote it? Biblical scholars as mentioned above have detected at least four different authors and if you read the first two chapters of Genesis you can clearly detect two different versions of the creation story. This is because there were two authors involved, both telling creation from their perspective and for their own particular community. One is an ordered account, the other a more human account.

The whole of the Old Testament is the story of the Jewish people – not of their achievements but of their disloyalty to the God who had chosen them as his own. Every event, however, became a time for positive reflection upon the past and a hope for a new beginning. But overriding all that it is the account of the Covenant between God and his people given firstly to Abraham and then ratified on Mount Sinai with Moses.

The Bible is a story of God's constant love for his people. He had chosen them and as life became somewhat better they consistently turned their back on God and rejected him. God always forgave the Israelites and gave them another chance. The Bible therefore is a highly critical exposé of the

faults and failings of the chosen people. Even their monarchy does not escape censure. David, who became regarded in later times as a model king, is spared nothing. We can read about him in the second book of Samuel, about his adultery with Bathsheba and the subsequent breakdown of relationships within his family.

The criticism of Israel, which runs through the Old Testament, is an important clue to its origin and purpose. It is not the national literature of the ancient Israelite people. It is a collection of religious books and it is probably the work of a smallish group who, generation after generation, bore witness to God often in the face of official disapproval, persecution and even death.

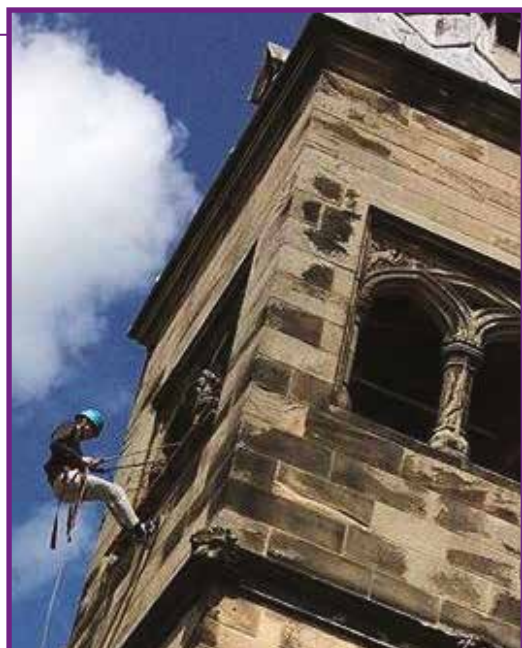
## To summarise then:

1. Although it has many books, we have to look at the Bible as one book with a common focus: the Kingdom of God. The continuity is emphasised by the fact the Old Testament is cited some 350 times in the New Testament.
2. We believe that the Bible was God-inspired, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And In the New Testament in the letter of St Paul to Timothy it says "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching." (2 Timothy 15-17)
3. The Old Testament is about the Covenant on Sinai and constantly refers back to the whole rationale

for the Israelites. "I am your God and you are my people." (Genesis 17:7)

4. The Bible as a whole contains all we need for our salvation; there is nothing more to be added.
5. The first books of the Old Testament known as the Pentateuch were brought together by Ezra in 575BC. The New Testament then follows on in the Catholic Tradition from the book of Malachi and the link is the promise in the Old Testament that God would send a Messiah who would, once and for all, seal an everlasting Covenant by suffering death.





Ready to  
abseil



Ready for  
a bath!

# Life Teen camp

**Aiden Walker** shares his experience this summer for teenagers

**I was a bit hesitant before I went to the Life Teen camp on 11–14 August held at Alton Castle but I was really glad I went.**

I enjoyed the many activities that they had – extreme sports like abseiling, biking, messy games and the inflated soccer bumper balls which you run around in.

I enjoyed the many talks and group discussions that we had about ‘Fiat’, the theme of the week. Fiat means Let it Be and it’s about how you can give something up to God. My ‘fiat’ would be to give up my technology to God and allow Him to change it or reform the time I spend with it into something better. Technology time can then just be more than addiction and be something more meaningful that can make people come together for something good and inspire people to come to God.

I also loved meeting all the people there and hearing all the stories that they shared. I was inspired by Jimmy Mitchell, my group leader. Jimmy is the founder of the ‘Love Good podcast’ which is about talking, hearing and listening to God’s beauty and how to build a better culture in our world.

We slept in the castle in dorms. The food was good but small portions; I ended up having fourths!!

A final treat was visiting Alton Towers. I really enjoyed the rides – they remind me of how life works. They can look quite scary, like you’re going to die if something goes wrong before you get on, but when you finish it, you’re glad you did it! I really enjoyed the camp and, if given the chance, I would definitely go again next year!

## School trip to Germany

**Matthew Haines** looks back on his school trip this year

**The Germany trip to Monshau with school was a great experience. We did lots of fun activities. For me, the highlight of the trip was the trip to Phantasialand (a theme park). It had loads of really cool rollercoasters and fun family rides.**

Other activities included a trip to the Lindt Chocolate Museum and a river trip. A fancy dress competition was held and me and my friends all dressed up as the German football team (with the football kits and face masks) – and we won! It did take some organising! Both the fun and enrichment aspect of the trip really helped our education, gave us the opportunity to speak the language and develop relationships (without our parents)! It also helped us to learn about Germany, its culture as well as its history.

Auf Wiedersehen!



**Last time I shared with you my thoughts on how prayer works in my life and offered the Lord’s Prayer as a way to spend a week with God, reflecting on the prayer one line and one day at a time.**

How did you get on? Did you start it? Did you complete it? Did you start and then get lost along the way, maybe busy with other things? Did you put it on the side, to return to later but then forgot? Well, whichever path you took, you will be glad to know that you were not on your own. This is all normal in our busy lives when we try to form a regular quiet time with God.

Now to really get to know our God, we need to spend that time with Him. So, gift yourself a set period of time with God every day in the coming week; a week to put your relationship with your God in a really great place. By deciding on the time in advance, there is a chance that the prayer will actually happen, which is really important. Otherwise we can end up reading about prayer, learning about prayer and talking about prayer without ever actually doing it!

This time, I offer you an ancient and beautiful form of prayer: that of praying with the psalms. The Bible is all about God letting us in on Himself,

**Joe O’Brien** follows up on her thoughts on prayer in Issue 7 of Shine with some more helpful ideas.

revealing who He is to us and what our relationship is. The psalms are a beautiful resource for prayer as they are so varied. I would like to suggest Psalm 139. This is a favourite of mine, reminding me that God knows everything about me and is always there for me, even if I don’t know or feel it.

Get yourself comfortable, have a minute to relax and then let God know that you are ready to spend time with Him (keep it simple!). Read the whole psalm through and then repeat. See if any word, line or phrase stands out for you. If it does, spend time with it.

Repeat it, savour it and listen to what God is saying to you through it. If nothing jumps out, that is OK, you

have spent time with your God – time that has never been wasted. When you feel your time is at an end, thank God for it and ask Him for help to do it again the next day...

A really good habit to have that can help your prayer time is journaling. This is a fancy word for having a notebook in which to maybe write the piece of Scripture, doodle or colour whilst you pray and write your thoughts in afterwards. This can help to focus a busy mind (like mine) and is good for looking back on to remind us what we have discovered during our time spent with God.

Remember, prayer doesn’t just happen, it takes time and practice. Above all, be kind to yourself and be patient.

## Psalm 139 (Good News Translation) God’s complete knowledge and care

Lord, you have examined me and you know me.  
You know everything I do;  
from far away you understand all my thoughts.  
You see me, whether I am working or resting;  
you know all my actions.

Even before I speak,  
you already know what I will say.  
You are all around me on every side;  
you protect me with your power.  
Your knowledge of me is too deep;  
it is beyond my understanding.

Where could I go to escape from you?  
Where could I get away from your presence?  
If I went up to heaven, you would be there;  
if I lay down in the world of the dead, you would be there.

If I flew away beyond the east  
or lived in the farthest place in the west,  
you would be there to lead me,  
you would be there to help me.

I could ask the darkness to hide me  
or the light around me to turn into night,  
but even darkness is not dark for you,  
and the night is as bright as the day.  
Darkness and light are the same to you.

You created every part of me;  
you put me together in my mother’s womb.  
I praise you because you are to be feared;  
all you do is strange and wonderful.  
I know it with all my heart.

When my bones were being formed,  
carefully put together in my mother’s womb,  
when I was growing there in secret,  
you knew that I was there –  
you saw me before I was born.  
The days allotted to me  
had all been recorded in your book,  
before any of them ever began.

O God, how difficult I find your thoughts;  
how many of them there are!  
If I counted them, they would be more than  
the grains of sand.  
When I awake, I am still with you.

God, how I wish you would kill the wicked!  
How I wish violent people would leave  
me alone!  
They say wicked things about you;  
they speak evil things against your name.  
O Lord, how I hate those who hate you!  
How I despise those who rebel  
against you!  
I hate them with a total hatred;  
I regard them as my enemies.

Examine me, O God, and know my mind;  
test me, and discover my thoughts.  
Find out if there is any evil in me  
and guide me in the everlasting way.





## Mary's corner

*Time now to settle down in a quiet space and let Mary Hardiman's reflection on a gospel story.*

### Luke 10: 38-42

In the course of their journey Jesus came to a village, and a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. She had a sister called Mary, who sat down at the Lord's feet and listened to him speaking. Now Martha who was distracted with all the serving said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister is leaving me to do the serving all by myself? Please tell her to help me." But the Lord answered: "Martha, Martha," he said "you worry and fret about so many things, and yet few are needed, indeed only one. It is Mary who has chosen the better part; it is not to be taken from her."



## Mary and Martha and Mary

**For those of you who don't know me, my name is Mary and when I read this gospel story I often think that my parents gave me the wrong name! I am quite a restless person and there's nothing I like better than a good bit of housework! So I find I can really identify with Martha. I would like to share with you something that I have learnt from this story, which we heard just a few weeks ago at Sunday Mass.**

A number of years ago I took part in a guided prayer week here at St Peter's and at the time I was looking for direction from God about my future. I was struggling to feel the presence of the Lord in my life. I knew at the time that something had to change but I wasn't sure what it was or what to do about it. So, my wonderful prayer guide, Eve, gave me this reading and asked me to meditate a while with it by putting myself into the story as one of the characters and seeing what came out. And it's that that I'd like to share with you here.

There was never any doubt that I would be Martha and as I read the story, I found myself planning this event weeks in advance. The Lord was coming to my house for a meal and bringing his friends. I went round the village and I asked people to help by cooking their best dishes to bring on the day. I was up early co-ordinating and organising everything and everybody.

It was a real 'coming together', not just a meal but a party in his honour. My house was spotless and I was in a state of high excitement.

When Jesus and his disciples arrived, there was absolute chaos! The villagers were all there, the place was noisy and I was rushing around making sure everyone had something to eat and drink. And my stress levels were rising. And then the straw that broke the camel's back... as I went into the hall (and this is in my imagination), there were shoes scattered everywhere, just masses of shoes. And I couldn't believe that after all the cleaning I had done that people would just kick their shoes off and not stack them up neatly. I was so cross and I went out into the garden to cry.

And Jesus came out to me. And he stood just behind me at my shoulder. And I blurted out how mad I was about the shoes and how Mary wasn't helping and that he should get her to help me because she would listen to him. There was I, telling Jesus what to do!!

And, you know, Jesus was so gentle. He is the wonder counsellor, acknowledging my feelings but showing me a

new way to be free. At the time I was on this guided prayer week, I was working so hard and hitting one brick wall after another. Martha, Martha, you worry and fret about so many things and yet so few are needed. Mary has chosen the better part and it shall not be taken from her. Don't let this worry and fret block the life I want you to have. Stop over-complicating things and let me be the Lord of your heart.

Martha served the Lord a meal and there is honour in that, just as there is honour in our service. But what I learnt in that story is that Jesus came to me when I was in a mess and when I didn't know which way to turn. And he comes to us, just as we are, in our bad moods, in our stubbornness, in our blindness and in our petulance. For me in that story He left the 99 to come and find the missing one and to bring her back. He wasn't criticising Martha or belittling her for her efforts. No. He was just showing her a different way.

And Jesus still does that today, for each of us when we sit at his feet, when we root our lives in prayer and when we use the gift of our imagination to discern his purpose.

Say what you like; I served the Lord a meal, and Mary, for all her listening, knew not my joy.

**Would you like to join me now in prayer:**

***Lord, we thank you for the gift of Martha, this great woman, and for the example of loving service that she is to us. Help us to learn from her and to know how to put you first.***

***We ask you to bless all those who are busy caring for others. Grant them this day a little time of peace and tranquillity to spend with you and to know your gentle presence.***

***Lord, we bring before you all those who looking for a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives and we ask you to fill that longing with your love.***

***We pray for all those who do not feel that they are worthy to sit at your feet. We pray especially for all those who have left the church but want to come back.***

***Lord, we ask you to bless our parish. Help us to be the people you call us to be. Amen.***





*Temple church*

The train arrived in Bristol at Temple Meads station. What an interesting and evocative name. The station was built on the water meadows that used to belong to the nearby Temple Church, so called after the Knights Templars. It was circular in shape and the present 12th century church is on the same site.

This was badly bombed in the WW2 blitz and is not safe enough for the general public to wander in, though one can see in from the outside. So, on those first beautiful spring days of Eastertide we enjoyed the ruins and the flowers in the surrounding small park. Many items belonging to the church are now housed elsewhere in the city.

Our first real visit was to the church of St Mary on the Quay in the centre, which is the oldest Catholic church in the city, being the first to be built after the Reformation. It's neoclassical and is Grade II\* listed. The Jesuits were in charge until recently but now it is in the care of the Divine Word



*Bristol Cathedral*



*St Mary on the Quay church*

# A pilgrim in Bristol

*Intrepid travellers Carmel and Peter Dwerryhouse take us on a tour of Bristol and its wonders*

Missionaries. At the time of construction the river Frome ran in front, hence the 'quay' in the title, but this has since been built over (Merseyway!). Colston Avenue is now a busy road. The parish is a large and varied community, very welcoming, with good liturgies and many groups and there is also a

midday Mass, so we feel quite at home there and are welcomed back each visit to Bristol.

Perhaps the most visible church in Bristol is St Mary Redcliffe, standing high on a hill and with a soaring spire. This is a Grade I listed building and dates back eight hundred years. It is a joint parish as the people from the Temple church now go there. Because it stands above the quayside, the seafarers used to come here to pray for safe journeys, often across the Atlantic, and then return afterwards to give thanks. Bristol was always a busy port and many wealthy merchants donated generously to the churches. Inside, the lofty columns of the perpendicular style of architecture can be an inspiration to prayer, together with the remarkable fan vaulting. What amazing skills and gifts are to be seen in this church.

The Anglican cathedral is always deserving of a visit. It too stands on a hill (Bristol is very hilly!). The site was originally occupied by St Augustine's Abbey until the dissolution of the monasteries and the creation of the See of Bristol in the sixteenth century. Our second visit was to attend Evensong on a Sunday afternoon as there is a good choir and the day we went was the first of the term for the new children of the choir. We were blessed to be given seats in the choir stalls, and service sheets, so we felt really part of the community. The only part of the former church remaining is the nave, now the chancel, the Lady chapel and the beautiful chapter house, so a new nave was built in the nineteenth century. Even the Venerable Bede refers to St Augustine's Abbey in 603AD. A bit further east there is St Augustine's Parade, now a row of shops but there used to be another church here, St Augustine the Less. So many streets in Bristol are named after saints, especially in the oldest, mediaeval part and if one looks, there is usually a church nearby, like St John the Baptist,

which is built onto the city wall, though sometimes the buildings might be used for another purpose. How Christian our old cities were! And so many still are, even though we hear a lot to the contrary.

Perhaps the most holy church for me was St James' Priory. At St Mary's we had noticed there was a Mass at St James' on Sundays, so we asked where it was and found that it was within walking distance. It is truly a gem for various reasons and is also the oldest building in Bristol. It began as a daughter house of Tewkesbury Abbey in the Middle Ages and after all these years since the dissolution a Benedictine monk is now in charge.

There is so much history here, as in many of the other churches and a trip via the Internet to see them all and note what I have omitted, will be well worthwhile! This is just a sketch of all that is there. St James' was in the heart of the city and the annual St James' fair took place more or less on its doorstep. There are fascinating displays of this time, in the church. Of

course, the Reformation changed things and it was many years before it became Catholic again, around the 1980s. The Little Brothers of Nazareth now do a lot of work, mainly social support for the very needy, in adjacent buildings, and there is a very good café. But a few steps aside there is the entrance to the church, a haven of peace and tranquillity, open to all. Most days there is Exposition, an added blessing. Don't miss it if you go to Bristol!

Now we come to something more modern: the New Room or John Wesley's chapel... this is hidden away in the middle of the shopping centre and it could be missed if one was window shopping! It lies between Broadmead and The Horsefair and is a real oasis of peace. This is the oldest Methodist church in the world and has many visitors, especially from America where John Wesley went to preach. Like all evangelists, he had much opposition and the ground floor room of the New Room has no windows as a protection against a stone throwing mob. There is the main prayer room and gallery and also a museum, library and café and many instructive panels. His preaching was simple and direct, so as to be understood by the uneducated and he rode all round the countryside, speaking in the open air to reach those who did not go to church. The volunteers who staff the chapel are very helpful and pleasant and we really enjoyed our visit.

There are many other places of worship in Bristol but these are just the few in the centre which we saw. No wonder we have been back several times!



*John Wesley church*



*Lady chapel*





# Sion Mission Week

Sion Youth exists to spread hope amongst the whole church by leading young people to Christ. They do this by “evangelising, discipling and empowering” young people. These areas are reflected by the three branches of their ministry: Sion Youth School Mission Team, Sion Youth Events and Sion Youth Foundation Year.

During the week they were with us, 8 to 12 July, we had assemblies every morning which included dramas performed by the Mission Team. They showed us the theme for the day using sign language and worship songs. At the end of each assembly the team shared the ‘Rhythm of the day’ which was our version of an action for the day. An example of one ‘Rhythm’ was to tell three or more people “God loves you”. The aim of the Rhythm was to encourage everybody in the school to be involved in the Mission week.

Throughout the week the Mission Team also ran prayer sessions called ‘Prayer 4 you’ which involved the students coming to the chapel during school, sitting with a Mission Leader from Year 10 (which I was) and with a member of the Mission Team, then being prayed for. The Mission Team member would say their own prayer for the student after which the Mission Leader would read some scripture to the student for them to focus on. The student would then be free to ask for something specific they wanted to pray for; a lot of the students asked for their family to be prayed for. ‘Prayer 4 you’ was

*Clare Gallogly shares an inspirational and uplifting week in July at Harrytown Catholic High School*



open to any student to come to and have a private time to pray. One thing that struck me in ‘Prayer 4 you’ was the difference in the students from the yard at school, to in the chapel praying. Some people I wouldn’t expect to go to ‘Prayer 4 you’ were so respectful and fully engaged in the prayer and even went to ‘Prayer 4 you’ more than once during the week.

On the Thursday of the week there was a Showcase which was open to families of students and parishioners as well as the governors of Harrytown. The Mission Team attended a Mass at St Peter’s to personally invite people to our showcase and it was lovely to see a few who did attend from

the parish. At the Mission Showcase we had dramas and worship songs from the Mission Team and then we had students from Harrytown who shared their gifts and talents with the audience. This included poetry, music, dance and an extract from The Lion King jr musical in which I performed. (We will let you know when our show is on at school!) We also had many testimonies when students and a teacher shared their experiences of Mission Week and shared how it impacted them. There was a lovely atmosphere and it was uplifting that we were all able to pray together as a community.

Before the showcase on Thursday the Mission Team and our Chaplain Miss Hogan got a Chippy for dinner so they could prepare for the evening. As many of the Mission Team are from abroad, they had never had a ‘chip butty’ before – so that was a new experience for them at Harrytown!

The Mission Week involved a lot of hard work from staff, the Mission Team, the Mission Leaders and all students, however it couldn’t have gone ahead without our Chaplain, Miss Hogan. The Mission Week really inspired a lot of students in school to find their faith and have the courage to live out their faith in their lives.

**Peter Whittham**  
was moved to write this on Good Friday morning.



## Mary’s Way of the cross

**I’ve just got home from yet another most moving, realistic and professional presentation of the Stations of the Cross, produced by Julie Williams and acted by the talented young people of the parish.**

I’ve entitled this piece, ‘Mary’s Way of the Cross’ because I believe she shared the sufferings of her Son, Jesus. Mary saw, at first hand, how Jesus was suffering and struggling with the heavy wooden cross on His shoulders following His scourging and crowning with thorns. Every slow step of the way was extremely painful yet Mary could do nothing to help Jesus except pray for Him. What a journey that must have been.

The young people of the parish who took part must surely have been very touched as they showed us the way the soldiers beat Jesus and made Him get up after His falls and carry on to Calvary.

I have to admit that tears filled my eyes a few times when this horrible suffering brought home to me that Jesus was doing this for me/us to save my/our soul/s because my/our sins were the cause of it.

All the Stations showed us clearly what happened: His three falls, His meeting with His Blessed Mother, perhaps even more poignantly, the sound of the nails being hammered into Christ’s hands and feet to secure Him to that cross. Then the death of Jesus followed by His being taken down from the cross and His lifeless body being passed to His mother before His burial in the tomb. How must that have felt to Our Lady even though she knew it had to happen – as the beautiful prayers reminded us several times.

Please God, we’ll remember His suffering and death when we are tempted to sin, and seek His help and forgiveness.

**‘Were you there when they nailed Him to the cross,**

**Were you there when they nailed Him to the cross,**

**Oh, sometimes, it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble**

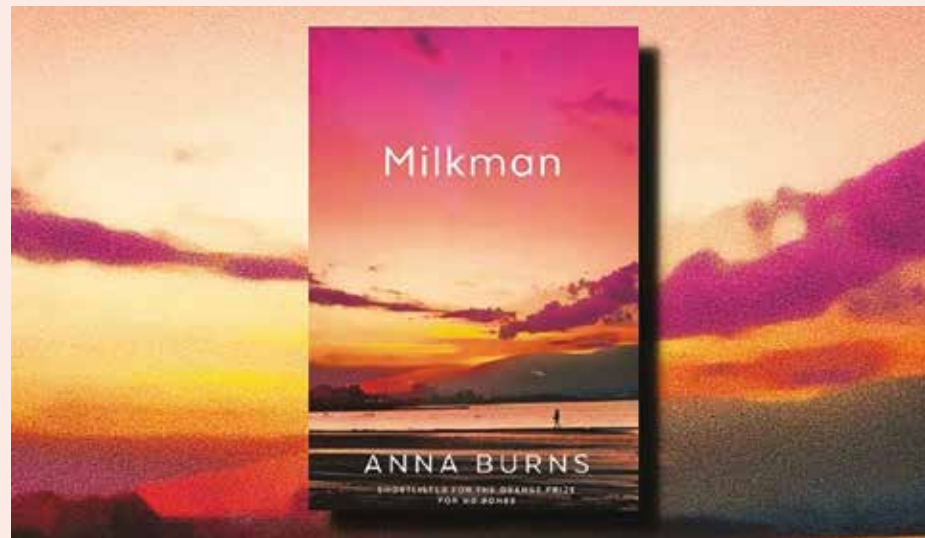
**Were you there when they nailed Him to the cross?’**

Let us remember, too, that ‘we’, by our sins, not ‘they’, nailed Him to the cross.

We owe our thanks to Julie Williams and the cast for putting on this latest St Peter’s Passion Play to remind us of the death of Jesus. The singing and the prayers were excellently rendered and every word could be heard clearly. We have some good readers there. The acting, too, was first class and forcefully depicted to me the feelings of Our Lady and Jesus and the crowds who followed them along the Way of the Cross. Thank you and well done everyone.



**Alison McGarr** reviews one of the books recently shared by members of St Peter's Book Club



## ***Milkman* by Anna Burns**

**Milkman by Anna Burns, winner of the Man Booker prize for Fiction in 2018, reflects a society where suspicion and paranoia dominate, set against a backdrop of daily violence, where the community are paralysed by fear and the rumour mill becomes the only truth.**

The story is written in the first person by middle sister, an 18-year-old woman, who lives surrounded by the conflict in Northern Ireland. The characters and the country of the novel are unnamed but the context locates the action in 1970's Belfast – a time of political and social violence when the labels of division really matter:

“‘Us’ and ‘them’ was second nature: convenient, familiar, insider, and these words were off-the-cuff, without the strain of having to remember and grapple with massaged phrases or diplomatically correct niceties.”

The novel is narrated by middle sister as she is targeted by the Milkman, a senior and much feared paramilitary figure. Middle sister tries to rebuff the advances of the Milkman, but the power balance is such that she is unable to withstand the onslaught. The local Catholic community

cannot believe that she is rejecting the Milkman and she becomes his property, to be both feared and revered. She becomes increasingly isolated and labelled as ‘beyond the pale’ – stuck in no man’s land as a social outsider. Any individual who sticks their head above the parapet and gets themselves noticed is automatically condemned.

The most startling aspect of this novel is its ability to highlight a community’s response to ongoing division and conflict – “this psycho-political atmosphere, with its rules of allegiance, of tribal identification.” There was “the right butter. The wrong butter. The tea of allegiance. The tea of betrayal. There were ‘our shops’ and ‘their shops’.” The fear and paranoia that stems from such tribalism permeates this novel and perhaps helps us to better understand the direction of travel of the world we live in today with the ever increasing rise in totalitarianism, where ‘them’ and ‘us’ is exploited for huge political gains.

***If you'd like to join the book club, check out the next monthly meeting date with Alison McGarr on 07792 107152.***

# The Alpha Marriage Course

**The marriage course is a series of seven sessions designed to help any married couple strengthen their relationship.**



## **Who is it for?**

**The Marriage Course is for couples who are in a married relationship and seeking to strengthen their relationship. Some couples take the course to invest in their relationship, others need more urgent help. Either way, the course offers a lifetime of practical ideas and tools to help keep your relationship strong.**

**The Marriage Course is based on Christian principles but designed for all couples with or without a church background.**

## **What can we expect?**

**On The Marriage Course, you are seated at your own table for two. Each session consists of a candlelit dinner, a practical talk and a time for private discussion between you and your partner.**

**Background music ensures that you can chat in complete privacy. You never share anything about your relationship with anyone other than your partner.**

**The course is to be held at 7pm on Thursdays, starting on 23 January 2020, in the main hall of the Parish Centre.**

**To register please contact David Small:  
davida.small@hotmail.co.uk or ring 07707 007749**



# Here's a list of the parish groups and activities at St Peter's

## ***Celebrating liturgy***

### **Altar linen**

Pat Tomlinson: 0161 456 7627

### **Altar servers**

Fr Peter

### **Church cleaners**

Margaret King: 0161 483 4584

### **Eucharistic ministers**

#### ***Housebound***

Maureen Horton: 0161 483 1590

mary.horton@ntlworld.com

#### ***Church***

Tony Martin: 0161 483 7720

tony.martin@ntlworld.com

### **Flower arrangers**

Colette Christie: 0161 427 4982

colette.christie4982@hotmail.co.uk

### **Lay-led liturgy**

Rachel McKay: 0161 487 1659

mckay7897@hotmail.com

### **Adult and junior choirs**

Eileen Rigg: 01625 872948

emrigg@hotmail.co.uk

### **Folk group**

Steph Leyden: 0161 456 6285

stephleyden@icloud.com

### **Piety stall**

Denise Noon: 0161 483 0217

### **Readers**

Monica Beckitt:

admin@stpetersshazelgrove.org.uk

### **Welcomers**

Anne-Marie Bailey: 0161 456 2213

ambailey@cheerful.com

## ***Creating social activity***

### **Book club**

Alison McGarr: 07792 107152

ajmcgarr68@outlook.com

### **Parish newsletter**

Monica Beckitt

admin@stpetersshazelgrove.org.uk

### **Parish noticeboards**

Outside - Julie Williams:

juliewilliams10@gmail.com

Inside - Barbara Goodier

### **Parish trips**

Fr Peter

petersharrocks@stpetersshazelgrove.org.uk

### **Parish website**

Anne-Marie Bailey: ambailey@cheerful.com

### **Special events**

Helen Lyons: 07854 928072

helenlyons1957@hotmail.co.uk

### **Tea and Coffees, after Mass**

Sandra Coleing: 0161 419 9083

### **Theatre group**

Tony Martin: 0161 483 7720

tony.martin@ntlworld.com

### **Walking group**

Tony Martin: 0161 483 7720

tony.martin@ntlworld.com

## ***Exploring faith***

### **Alpha**

Rachel McKay: 0161 487 1659

mckay7897@hotmail.com

### **Baptism programme**

Anne-Marie Gallogly

Karen Haines - justasec55@hotmail.com

### **Confirmation programme**

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### **First sacraments preparation**

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### **Marriage preparation**

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### **RCIA - Enquirers group**

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### **Vocations**

Fr Peter

*Names and contact details  
are correct at the time the  
magazine went to print, but  
are subject to change.*

## ***Sharing faith***

### **CaFE**

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### **Centering prayer**

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### **Churches Together activities**

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### **Footsteps**

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### **Holy hour and prayer ministry**

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### **Lending library**

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### **Mothers' prayers**

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### **Praise and worship**

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### **Rosary groups: adult and children**

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### **Scripture group**

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## ***Supporting families and youth***

### **Bereavement support**

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### **Childrens' liturgy**

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### **Explorers**

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### **Marriage and family life group**

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### **SPY group**

David Small: 01625 876 752

## ***Outreaching in the community***

### **Hospital chaplaincy**

Chaplaincy Office: 0161 419 5889

### ***Hospital Chaplaincy (Emergency)***

Hospital switchboard will bleep

0161 483 1010

### ***Via St Peter's***

0161 483 3476

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### **Justice and peace**

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### **LAMBS**

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### **Lenten lunches**

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Jackie Mackay: 0161 483 6348

### **Lourdes group**

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### **Luncheon club**

Margaret Hulme: 07775 162694

### **Missio**

Margaret King: 0161 483 4584

Fiona Preece: 0161 456 4319

### **Schools chaplaincy**

#### ***St Peter's***

Fr P Sharrocks: 0161 483 2431

0161 483 3476

#### ***St Simon's***

Fr P Sharrocks: 0161 483 9696

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#### ***St James' High School - Via School***

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#### ***Harrytown High School - Via School***

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### **SVP: adult and youth**

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