

# PLATEA

Herne Bay's Catholic Parish Magazine  
Lent/Easter 2017 (issue 2)

Marvellous Minsteracres ♦ Margaret Bridger  
Fr Malachy's Diamond Jubilee ♦ Maggie Irvine  
Parish Mission: One Year On ♦ Gerry McWilliams  
Seven Last Words ♦ The Parish Team





### **The Way of the Cross by Virgil Cantini [c.1964]**

**T**he Way of the Cross, more often referred to as the Stations of the Cross, is a traditional devotion that is often prayed during Lent. From the very realistic to the abstract, the final hours of Christ's life has inspired creations such as this by Virgil Cantini.

In 1953, Time magazine named Italian-migrant Cantini one of the "Hundred Leaders of Tomorrow". Six years later, Cantini was considered among the most prominent contemporary enamelists, with his work included regularly in New York's Museum of Contemporary Crafts exhibitions. He was awarded the Pope Paul VI Bishop's Medal in 1964 for "outstanding contribution in the field of liturgical art". This series of 14 enamels, depicting the 'stations of the cross', are on display at the St John Paul II shrine in Washington, DC. Having been professor of art at the University of Pittsburgh in Oakland for 38 years, producing public art for the city throughout his career, Cantini died in 2009.

Cantini's enamel stations were used as the basis for a Lenten meditation by Cardinal Wuerl (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQ5-QVnt3FQ>)

# In this Issue of **PLATEA**

## Highlights



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## PLATEA

### Herne Bay's Catholic Parish Magazine

[www.ourladyhernebay.co.uk/magazine](http://www.ourladyhernebay.co.uk/magazine)

**PLATEA** features original stories and other articles, ideas and creative content intended to inspire the Catholic parish in Herne Bay to ever deeper discipleship of Jesus Christ.

**PLATEA** includes contributions that we believe are worthy of our readers' consideration, whether or not we fully agree with them. Views expressed by our contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the editorial position of **PLATEA** or of the parish community. Adverts are not necessarily endorsements of the businesses featured.

Editorial team: Annette Ballard, Connie Cairn, Richard Carr, Gabrielle Davis, Marian Green, Mark Nash, Rachel Nash, Trisha Scott, Deacon Barry Walker and Fr Mark White (if you would like join in, get in touch) Contributions to be sent to: [plateamag@gmail.com](mailto:plateamag@gmail.com) or by post: The Retreat, 3 Sea St, Herne Bay, CT6 8SP

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Cover image: Jesus Taken Down from the Cross (13th Station of the Cross) at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart

# Welcome to **PLATEA**

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the second edition of **PLATEA**, the parish magazine of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Herne Bay. The team have been busy preparing this Lent/Easter edition over the last few weeks and there is a variety of interesting articles for you to enjoy.

The Parish Pastoral Council made the decision, rather than handing out or selling copies of the magazine at the back of church, to hand-deliver a copy to each person on the parish register. The parish was broken up into a series of postman's 'walks' and the deliverers have done a sterling job. This approach has yielded many benefits; connections have been made between people who've not come to church in a while and readership is much wider than it might otherwise have been. People have been sharing the magazine with friends in the town and further afield and the content on the website is being viewed across the world.

This edition, timed prior to Easter, features pieces on Lent and Easter. We also have an excellent article on our Passionist Centre in Minsteracres – if you would like to join us on the parish holiday/retreat this year, please get in touch (details on page 12). You will also likely enjoy the stories about Fr Malachy Steenson, who celebrated his 60th anniversary as a priest last December.

As in the first edition, we have book reviews, letters, lists of the recently baptised and dead (please keep them in your prayers) and important dates for your diary. We also thank our advertisers for their continued support.

Please consider joining us this Easter, service times are on the back of the magazine, and at our summer event on Saturday 24 June.

With an assurance of my prayers and best wishes,

Fr Mark White CP  
*Parish Priest*

# PLATEA LETTERS

## Why is the magazine called **PLATEA** and what does it mean?

**W**e've been asked this question by a number of people since the magazine re-launched last year. Looking through editions from 50 years ago, we found an answer given by the editorial team. Have a read and see what you think!

Why 'PLATEA'? Perhaps this is the most frequent question we have been asked. Ingenious explanations have been offered as to its meaning and our reason for choosing it. Even more numerous have been the various pronunciations. To clear up the last point first – 'PLATEA' is pronounced 'PLAH-TAY-AH' and for the benefit of those who went to school, the accent is on the penultimate syllable.

We may have puzzled you, but at least we have achieved the ambition of every publicity seeker and caused you to talk about us. However, we still have not answered why PLATEA.

Before we do so, may we ask you to consider – what would you suggest as a name for a Parish magazine that is not banal, hackneyed or been used before (**ahem!** – ed)? We are reminded of the late Sir Thomas Beecham who said of the English people 'they are great music lovers – they don't understand a note, but they like the noise it makes.' So with us, when we chose the name 'PLATEA' we too did not know what it meant. After hours of discussion and many a stimulant we clicked – PLATEA – we did not understand it but we liked the noise it made. In producing our first edition we frequently had recourse to the records kept in the Retreat, which we discovered is known by our Passionist Fathers as PLATEA (**down through the history of the Church a handwritten book of events was kept in all monasteries. During the Dark Ages, when the barbarians wreaked havoc with the libraries of Europe, the plateas kept in monasteries were the chief method by which an account of people and events were preserved – ed**).

Having picked the name, and in anticipation of your enquiries we had to find a credible explanation for our choice. This produced very interesting results. We learned the reason why the Passionists called their record PLATEA was because the word meant 'Pleasing things' being a corruption of 'Placita,' therefore a record of pleasing things they wished to remember. Our magazine too is meant to be a record of pleasing things. Further research told us that PLATEA in Italian means 'A Square' or 'An Open Forum.' We wish our magazine to be just that – Square? No! – An Open Forum.

If you have a question or a comment, please email us at: [plateamag@gmail.com](mailto:plateamag@gmail.com) or post your submission to **PLATEA**, The Retreat, 3 Sea Street, Herne Bay, CT6 8SP



# Parish in Review

## Fr Malachy's Diamond Jubilee Celebration

13 December 2016

“What a great evening we had: a full church with many members of Fr M's family, friends he has made in Walderslade and Sittingbourne where he has regularly said Mass; Sisters from Sturry Convent, members of the Huguenot congregation from Canterbury Cathedral and friends from St Helens. The Hall was overflowing with visitors and at least 200 were able to enjoy the excellent fare provided by our new team of cooks and helpers. Truly a night to remember”

Parish Newsletter, 18 December 2017

*For more on Fr Malachy's jubilee see Maggie Irvine's article on pages 16-19.*

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## La Sainte Union Service

24 February 2017

“The service was very well attended with over 60 past pupils and 10 La Sainte Union nuns from Bexleyheath and Dagenham, cards were also sent from convents in Dublin and Bath. After the Mass, reminiscences and photos of the convent school were shared.”

Cloe Maple

*See [www.ourladyhernebay.co.uk/](http://www.ourladyhernebay.co.uk/) magazine for the full story with photos*

## House Mass

15 February 2017

“Derek and I were very excited to be hosting a House Mass to be celebrated by Fr Mark. It had started as a beautiful sunny day, heralding spring. Later that afternoon a gorgeous rainbow appeared - most appropriate for the readings of the day about Noah. Fr Mark preached about beauty. We can believe and scientifically have rationale for evolution but God created beauty in the beginning and it is still with us now just to give us pure joy at His creation.

Fr Mark wore a beautiful stole presented to him and other priests who had attended a gathering in Brazil. There were 9 of us with 3 people more unable to join us due to health reasons. This intimate celebration of Mass recalled how the early Christians shared their faith and fellowship. We sang and prayed together and were able to have a dialogue to make the homily more personal and meaningful to each of us, as did voicing our prayer intentions.

How blessed we all were to share this joyous and special experience.”

Annette Ballard

*If you would like to have Mass celebrated in your home, please contact either Fr Mark or Fr Patrick - 01227 375095*

If you wish to share a short reflection on something that has happened in the parish or have a photo of a recent event please either email: [plateamag@gmail.com](mailto:plateamag@gmail.com) or write to Platea, 3 Sea Street, Herne Bay.



# Marvellous Minsteracres Retreat Centre

Herne Bay's Catholic parish, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, has been taking annual holiday retreat weeks at the Passionist Monastery at Minsteracres, Co. Durham, since 1963. Some of our congregation may be a little unsure of what the holiday retreat involves so we decided to ask one of the regular participants, Margaret Bridger, what actually happens there and why it appeals to her.





*What made you first decide to go on a retreat to Minsteracres?*

For several years I had sat in church and listened to the announcement of a week away in August to Minsteracres but I had no idea where that was. My only experience of a retreat was a silent one held over a weekend when I was about 14 in the convent attached to the school I attended. I found not talking really difficult and wrote the longest letter to my Mother she had ever received. So in my mind, I was not cut out for making a retreat.

However talking to a couple of people who had been made me change my mind. They described the friendly, relaxed atmosphere of the place and assured me it was a happy experience. When I learnt that Minsteracres was in County Durham, that absolutely clinched it for me as I am a Geordie by birth and know how beautiful that area is.

*How many times have you been to Minsteracres?*

2016 was my 13th visit and I hope to continue for many more years. In fact, most of the people who go on retreat there tend to return year after year. It becomes an important part of your life and age and infirmity tend to be the main reasons why people sadly cease to be able to continue to go there. However the spirit of the place remains with them.

*Can you describe a typical morning on retreat for us?*

We start with morning prayers at 8.30am on most days, so a friend sleeping in the room next door knocks to check I'm awake. I sleep more soundly at Minsteracres than at home, probably because the pace is so much calmer than my usual week and I relax more.

We sit in a circle not in rows so it feels more inclusive. Father Mark or Deacon Barry always give a reflective comment before our communal prayers and it is a peaceful start to the day.

At 9am it's breakfast and on the days porridge is on the menu most of us grab a bowl. Minsteracres porridge is the best I've tasted, nicer than my own!

Each year there is a different theme for the retreat talks – in 2016 it was “Blessed are the Merciful” to celebrate the Year of Mercy. There is a daily talk at 10am, sometimes in the chapel or in the exquisite setting of the ballroom, led by one of the Community. The format varies each day but is always imaginative and leads to lots of discussion both in the session and at coffee afterwards. The atmosphere is so peaceful and sympathetic that people feel a closeness that doesn't necessarily come with just sitting in a church service.

Coffee and homemade biscuits or cakes is at around 11am and if it's sunny we often sit outside or if you fancy being quiet the magnificent grounds are perfect for a walk.

Then we have Mass at noon in my favourite place – the chapel – with its bay windows overlooking the beautiful Tyne Valley; a perfect backdrop to the altar and crucifix. In August the swifts and swallows swoop past and I marvel at God's creation.

At one o'clock it's lunchtime. The food is marvellous at Minsteracres and the cooks are fantastic. So much is homemade and lots of the fruit and vegetables are grown in the Peace Garden in the grounds.





### *What happens in the afternoons?*

That is the time for the holiday outings by coach on each day, except Sunday and Friday to give the driver a needed rest for the journey to and from Herne Bay.

Every year there is a varied selection of destinations to try to have wide appeal. Minsteracres is ideally placed for visiting the Roman Wall sites, the market towns of Hexham and Corbridge, Newcastle, the beautiful Northumbrian Heritage Coast and various National Trust and English Heritage properties. On a Thursday we have a full day's outing. This year we spent a most enjoyable day at Beamish Open Air Museum in glorious sunshine and last year we visited the market town of Alwick with its famous castle and gardens.

### *How do you spend the evenings?*

There is another tasty cooked meal at 6.30pm then, after communal night prayers in the chapel, people are free to do as they wish. By far the most popular pursuit is buying a drink (or two) from the nightly bar and sitting chatting in the lounge until sleep calls them. I usually turn in about 10pm but I'm one of the earlier ones!

### *What is the accommodation like?*

Most rooms have twin beds in but if you are a single person (as many of us are) you have a room to yourself without paying a single supplement as at most hotels. The bedrooms are simply but nicely furnished and have washbasins. Some people are put off from going to



Minsteracres because the rooms aren't en-suite but I feel they are missing out on a wonderful experience. This year the facilities have been renewed and there are 12 lovely bathrooms on the second floor each containing toilet, washbasins and shower so it's having your own facilities just a stone's throw from your bedroom. Last year they installed a lift, so climbing stairs is no longer an issue.

### *Why is Minsteracres such a special place for you?*

It's hard to put into words how much I love being there. I feel as if I'm coming home when the coach turns through the narrow arched entrance (we all clap!) and travels up the mile long drive past the magnificent Californian Redwood trees which are over 150 years old. The Community come out to greet our

coach and you know it is going to be another wonderful week.

I'm an outdoor person and so walking in the grounds (over 100 acres) is perfect. I love it when we have a communal spiritual outdoor session; sometimes a reflective walk through the shrubbery or mass in the Peace Garden. Every year the hard-working volunteers make the grounds more accessible for walking and 2 years ago Father Mark led us to lakes I didn't know existed in the grounds. As the house was once a stately home, I feel privileged to be in such wonderful surroundings. It sounds over the top but there is a spirit of love, friendship and closeness to God that I haven't experienced anywhere else, even on pilgrimages abroad. I would love other people who haven't been to Minsteracres to come and share the experience.

The 2017 Annual Holiday - Retreat Week at Minsteracres will take place from **Saturday 12 August to Saturday 19 August**

The cost will be £500 which includes the retreat, all meals, accommodation, travel and outings. Reduced rate for under 21s

For more speak to either Deacon Barry [368685] or Dave Kendall [794899]

# Fresh Impressions

While Margaret Bridger has been going to Minsteracres for many years, the Smithermans are recent fans. Peter shares his impressions after last year's stay.

As a family, Grace and I decided that we would join the yearly retreat group to Minsteracres. This wonderful place has fond memories for me, as this was my first trip since I converted to Catholicism 2 years ago. Overall though this was my second time going up to Minsteracres, as I came up with my late father Dick Smitherman in the 1980s when the yearly retreats were run by Deacon James Foley. It also holds an emotional place in my heart as well, as my late father Dick passed away almost 20 years ago in the main house of Minsteracres. My mother, Jennifer, gave a crucifix that they had above their bed at home - that crucifix is now situated on the landing of stairs where he fell as a memorial.

Minsteracres itself is surrounded by Sequoia Redwoods that run up the mile-long drive which is very impressive, though the narrow gate is tough for the coach driver! After being greeted by the friendly staff and shown our rooms, we could relax and enjoy peacefulness of this wonderful Northumbrian place.

As a family we enjoyed all the facilities including 30 minute of prayer in the morning, and daily Mass. After breakfast you had the option to go for a walk around the beautiful grounds or join in the discussions. We went to some of the morning discussions as a family, and were made very welcome. This was also the first year for a very long time that they had two younger members going, our girls Asia (10) and Alyssa (6 at the time). They thoroughly enjoyed themselves, particularly in Fr Mark's shop.

During the week, we went on the afternoon excursions with some of the group. Last year these included the Beamish Museum (a full day out) as well as Chesters Roman Fort and Museum (Hadrian's Wall) and Corbridge. Minsteracres is a great retreat for all ages, I highly recommend it to all.



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The Resurrection by Pietro Perugino [1496-98]

## The Easter Season

**Easter**, the feast of the Resurrection of Christ, is the oldest and most important Christian celebration. Despite its importance, not all Christians celebrate Easter on the same date owing to different calendars (Julian in the East and Gregorian in the West) and methods of calculating its date (the earliest it can be in the West is 22 March, the latest 25 April).

**With an historical emphasis** on Lent and fasting, it is sometimes missed that Easter, the highpoint of our Liturgical year, does not take up one weekend, but is a season of fifty days of feasting, ending with Pentecost! So, while Lent may seem like a long time, six weeks of fasting and abstinence, we have seven weeks, once more than Lent, in which to celebrate the joyous rising of Christ.

**The Paschal Candle**, blessed at the Easter Vigil, is lighted at Mass during the entire Easter season, and the water that is blessed at the Easter Vigil is used for Baptism throughout these fifty days. This season is also the time for the newly baptised (neophytes) to continue their catechetical formation.

**Of particular celebratory** significance is the eight-day period (Octave) from Easter Sunday until the Sunday following Easter. During the Octave of Easter, a double Alleluia is added to the dismissal at Mass. The Sunday which ends the Octave was historically known as St Thomas Sunday (recalling the appearance of the Risen Jesus to 'doubting Thomas'). It was designated as Divine Mercy Sunday by Pope St John Paul II in 2000.

Following the fasting of Lent we have seven weeks in which to celebrate so don't do it all at once on Easter Sunday! Baking, using the eggs, fat and sugar traditionally subject to the Lenten fast, is a wonderful way to celebrate Jesus' victory over death and sin. Recipes & other ideas can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/nu6pal3>



a young father malachy



ordination prayer card



goodison park!



'not so bad for a wee fella'



parish outing





# DIAMOND geezer

Fr Malachy Steenson cp celebrated his 60th year as a priest last December. We asked some of those who've known him over the years to share their memories of a dear part of the parish's past and present. You'll just have to ask him about the burglar!

Thanks to Maggie Irvine

**F**r Malachy is a priest that has been loved and respected by all members of the Herne Bay parish for many years (he has escaped on several occasions but thankfully always returns).

He has a forever charming, witty and inspirational manner about him that instantly puts people at ease.

Personally, I was first introduced to him in the mid 70s by my late mother-in-law Marie. She very much enjoyed his visits despite the fact that she once tripped whilst rushing to open the door to him, after a pleasant chat with her favourite priest, that I'm sure included tea and biscuits, it was discovered she had broken her wrist!

In 1979 Fr Malachy baptised my first child after the priest that was to perform the ceremony was unavoidably called

away. Thirty-three years later, to our families utmost delight, he baptised her first child. Both services were made extra special by his presence.

**O**n another occasion I was hiding at the back of the church trying to comfort my crying small baby during a Sunday morning mass Fr Malachy took her off me and carried her up to look at the altar, she was smiling within seconds and twenty years later that huge grin is still there whenever they meet.

These are just a few examples of how Fr has brought joy, happiness, laughter and inspiration to so many members of the parish over numerous years.

**A**s Fr Malachy will probably read this and then tell me I'm getting soft in my old age, I will finish with a

story told to me by an unnamed member of the parish (JP!).

One morning after a certain football team had won a very important match Fr M visited St Philip Howard school. He led the children in a rousing rendition of that well known hymn:

*Here we go!  
Here we go!  
Here we go!*



*giving his speech in 2016*



Anyone who knows Fr Malachy will know that he is an avid supporter of Everton. And most people with an interest in football will know that Everton wear blue. Everton's arch rivals are Liverpool; their grounds are only a few hundred yards apart. And Liverpool wear red.

Fr Malachy was great friends with a family whose daughter, Kelly, had been stricken with meningitis as a child, and this had left her deaf and paralysed. She was a wonderful child, and full of fun. One evening at Mass, Fr M asked Kelly's mum if she could get Kelly to use the sign language to say Everton, the Blues, are the greatest. Kelly was only too happy to co-operate. After she had signed the message, Fr Malachy said something like this to the congregation: You see, Kelly is so clever, she knows that the Blues are the greatest. But he could not quite understand why Kelly was in kinks of laughter as were one or two others who could understand sign language. Eventually the reason became clear: Kelly had signed that the Reds (the team her dad supported) are the greatest. So this was one game Fr Malachy's team did not win!!

Story shared by Fr Mark White cp





*on a swing and a prayer?*



*dear friends*



*students at st saviour's*

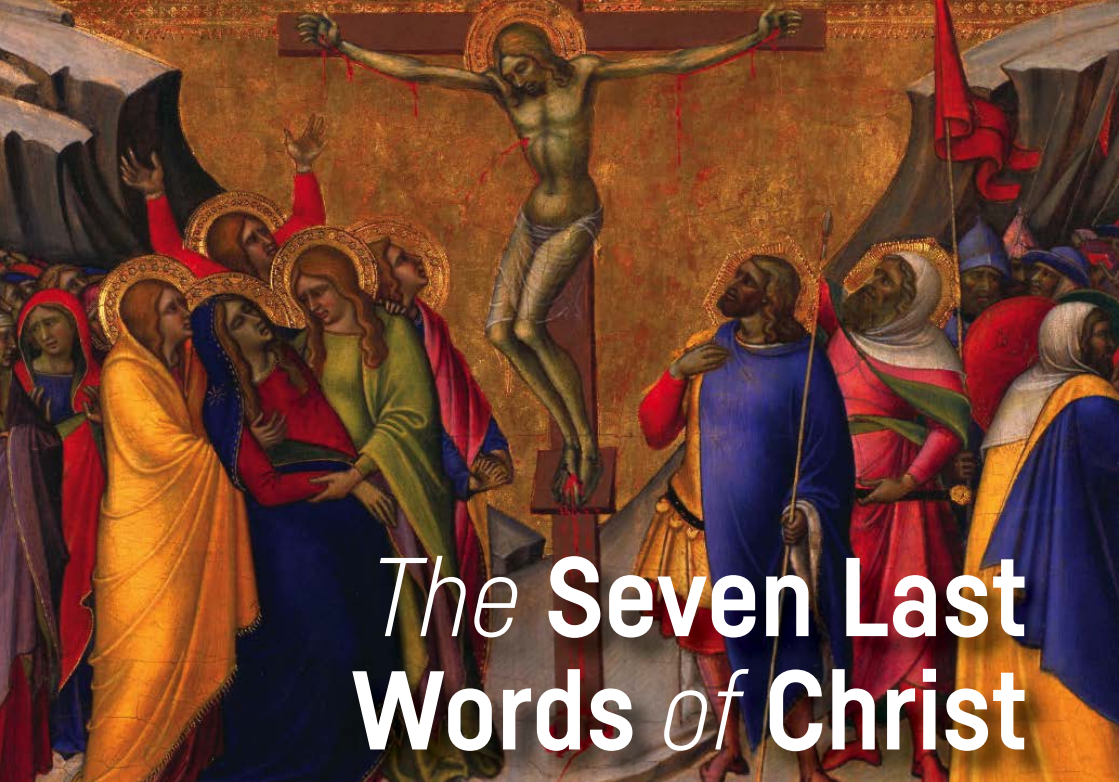


Every Sunday in a small chapel to the left of the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral there is a Huguenot religious service held entirely in French. I went for the first time about 2 years ago and was fortunate enough to be there when they had as a guest speaker Fr Malachy Steenson who was not only an interesting speaker but preached in English.



There are very few members of the congregation and to keep the little band together they all go off and have tea and cake so I joined them and Fr Malachy had me in stitches with a comment he made. We were talking about what we would do if we had serious money. Apart from helping my nearest and dearest and my favourite charities I would love to be able to travel all over the world - there's so much I want to see. Fr Malachy said in his gorgeous Irish accent 'Sure Jan, you should be a Nun' - you can imagine how funny that was to me who has been married several times. He then explained that the Passionists have houses/retreats all over the world so he gets about for the cost of an airfare.

Thanks to Jan Leeming. This story first appeared on Jan's blog on 31 October 2010



# *The Seven Last Words of Christ*

**THE SEVEN LAST WORDS** spoken by Jesus from the Cross have always been a special part of Passionist Spirituality. In them, Jesus speaks words of hope, of strength, of faith, of forgiveness and of love. These short reflections have been abridged from those given on Good Friday 2016 by the Herne Bay Passionist community and our Deacon Barry.

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## **Forgive them for they know not what they do** [Luke 23:34]

For a long time, I heard this as Jesus asking the Father to forgive those who were actually carrying out the barbaric act of crucifixion, those who were banging nails into his hands and his feet. But who, really, is the ‘they’ to whom Jesus was referring?

Is it the Execution party – hardened by discipline and cruelty; the teachers who hated him, the priests who bought his life, Pilate? Perhaps, it is the band of

disciples who ran away. Each group, actively or passively crucifying him. Each a representative of a much wider group. It was the sin of the world, the whole world that crucified Jesus. Humankind was so corrupted by sin that we reacted violently to the purity of Jesus; we may not realise but we still do.

However, from the cross flows forgiveness. Forgiveness pours out with every drop of our Lord’s blood, it continues to be poured out in the Eucharist for the forgiveness of sins. His is a plea of mercy, echoing through time (BW).



**Today you will be with me in paradise**  
 [Luke 23:43]

A bit like the prodigal son, the good thief turns back to Jesus at end of his life, he turns to the light. Like the prodigal son who doesn't manage to get out the list of things he's sorry for, the good thief turns in desperation and the immediate answer, without a request for a full inventory of transgressions and failings, was 'you will be with me in paradise'.

Rose a young mother, whose young son died in the 80s of AIDS. She cried out, saying it was the only way to have the sense that all would be well.

John McCarthy, kept in cell in Beirut for years found his life disintegrating, shouted out help. He received an assurance that never left him, even through later depression. It was if he had heard 'this day you will be with me'.

'This day' is important too, harden not your hearts. Don't put things off, don't shelve resolutions, seek reconciliation today. The present moment is the only one we have, be confident in the Lord's presence and invitation (MW).



**Woman, Behold your Son!... Behold your mother** [John 19:26-27]

True devotion to Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Church, is solidly based on this text from the Gospel of St John, 'Woman behold your Son, Son behold your mother.'

The reformers at the time of the Reformation decided that devotion to Mary got in the way of devotion to Christ the saviour. They can't have realised the value and significance of these words; the wonderful commitment that Jesus Christ made, to give his mother to us.

The Second Vatican Council reiterated the point that, since Mary is the mother of Jesus, and since we are his sisters and brothers, we can call Mary mother as well. This is the honour and privilege that we have, a mother who looks after us. That's why in so many places there is great devotion, Lourdes, Fatima... We can never doubt her love.

These words fit in so well to the end of the life of Jesus. Mary mother of the Church, mother of all, will never leave us if we take her to our hearts (CO).



### **My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?** [Mark 15:34]

Matthew, Mark and Luke each tell us that darkness fell for three hours when Jesus was crucified. This darkness, which covered the land, enveloped and penetrated the soul of Jesus.

It was bad enough to be denied and forsaken by his followers, betrayed to the authorities. But to be forsaken by his Father with whom he lived in intimate relationship. You can explain the others, only human, weak, but his Father...

One explanation, maybe the only one, is that Jesus chose to experience human suffering in all its depth, even to the point of feeling forsaken by God.

Most will know the darkness of Calvary: betrayal, ill-health, bereavement. Some people go through so much that they actually feel forsaken by God. Surely it is helpful to remember that Jesus has been where we are now. Ultimately the Father did not abandon his son, he raised him from the dead. Whatever sacrifices we are called to make, God is love and God is always faithful (PMcK).



### **I Thirst** [John 19:28]

One of my favourite films, Ben Hur, won 11 Oscars in the 1950s. Two prominent scenes centre on thirst and the reward for providing drink.

Firstly, Ben Hur taken to work on the galleys, roped together with other slaves and is dying of thirst. The centurion refuses him drink because of the trouble he's caused the powers that be. Ben Hur prays for God's help and we see Jesus coming out from the carpenter's shop with water. The soldier, moves to intervene but realises that Jesus is special.

The cleverness of the film comes where the roles are reversed. Ben Hur is desperate to find healing for his leprous mother and sister when he comes upon way of the Cross. He pushes himself through the guards, looks in Jesus' face, the one who helped him, and provides water.

God is thirsty for our love and we must be thirsty for God's love. There is so much real thirst in the world today. Psalm 62 sums this up, 'O God, for you I long,' read and pray this Psalm and, when you do, really mean it (CO).

The Seven Last Words will take place this year at 7pm on Good Friday, 14 April 2017.



### **It is finished** [John 19:30]

Gathered around the cross of Christ, three long hours coming to a close, we see man's inhumanity to man seen in all its violence and cruelty. A strange and pregnant silence falls over the hill overlooking Jerusalem as the sky goes dark, yielding a feeling of expectancy. Jesus' voice, drained of strength through pain and suffering, breathes – 'it is finished'.

The work that the Father had given him to do had been done; his labour of love was well and truly been fulfilled – it was time to return to the Father.

These words were not a cry of defeat but a cry of victory. In his life and dying he had redeemed the world and opened up a new relationship between men and God. He establishes the kingdom of peace and justice whose guiding principle was love. Jesus lives on in you and me. People of every generation can meet Jesus in you and me, we are living Gospels – we are God's way of sharing himself. It is finished, yes, but for us it was only the beginning (MS).



### **Father, into your hands I commend my spirit** [Luke 23:46]

Here Jesus uses a verse from Psalm 30, with one difference, he addressed the Lord as Father. The Psalm's theme is confidence in God in the midst of distress and the last 24 hours of his life were certainly ones of distress - Judas' betrayal, abandonment, the mockery of the guards, Herod's contempt. An almost overwhelming feeling of being forsaken by his friends and by his Father makes this prayer, one of utmost confidence in God, all the more remarkable.

As his reaches his final moment, abandoned by man and God, he finds it within himself to abandon himself to God. Jesus teaches us a profound lesson. However great our distress, however weighed down we feel, Jesus would have us unite with him and make his confident prayer our own.

Entrusting ourselves to the Father's loving care as we go to sleep, rising in the new day, is a symbol of our dying and rising with Christ. Father into your hands **I** commit my spirit (PMcK).

May the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and the sorrows of his holy mother be ever in our hearts.



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"He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matthew 28:6)

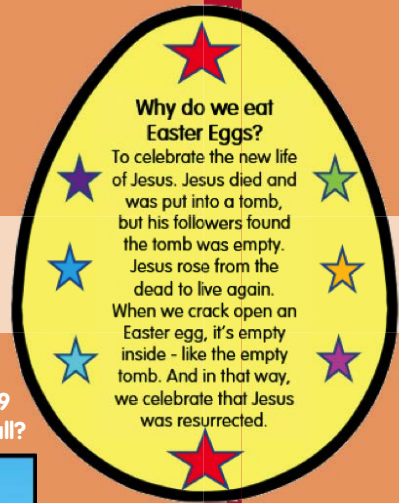
Because He died and then came back to life, Jesus gave us a life in Heaven if we follow Him. Here are some ways we can try to be like Him. Can you draw a line to join the words to the pictures?

## Easter Children's Page thanks to Trisha Scott

At Easter time, God makes new life everywhere. There are 9 different kinds of new life in this picture. Can you find them all?



Answers (clockwise): calf, hen chicks, baby ladybirds, daffodil buds, ducklings, froglets, baby rabbit (kittens!), lamb, baby birds.



### Why do we eat Easter Eggs?

To celebrate the new life of Jesus. Jesus died and was put into a tomb, but his followers found the tomb was empty. Jesus rose from the dead to live again. When we crack open an Easter egg, it's empty inside - like the empty tomb. And in that way, we celebrate that Jesus was resurrected.

Write your own special Easter prayer to Jesus of how you will try to be like Him.



## TOPSY TURVY TEAM

If you were God (which you're not) then the chances are there are some things that you'd do differently. For instance would you send your only Son (Jesus) down to earth, to be born as a baby and to take the punishment for all the things we've done wrong? Not sure? Well, God did.

Or would you create human beings (like God did), make a wonderful world for them to live in (like God did also) and then leave these human beings in charge of your creation? Not sure again? Well, God did this too.

If you mulled it over long enough I'm sure that one of the things you'd do differently would be something to do with who Jesus picked to be His disciples. (These were the band of twelve guys who went everywhere with Jesus while He was on the earth.) Jesus wasn't stupid. He knew all along that once He'd gone back to heaven (with His mission accomplished), this motley bunch of guys were going to be left running the show. So, when I tell you that some of them were uneducated fishermen, one of them was a tax collector who probably diddled people out of their money and the rest were just a bunch of ordinary guys, you'd start to get a bit worried that it would all go wrong once Jesus was off the scene, wouldn't you?

Even while Jesus was with these fellas they sometimes

made a mess of things. One of them (Peter) made out he didn't have anything to do with Jesus to protect his own skin. A couple of them (James and John) were more concerned about getting a front row seat in heaven than anything else. And one of them (Thomas) took a lot of convincing that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

But what seems absolutely barmy to you and me makes complete sense to God. God isn't looking for people who've got it sussed. He's looking for people who will rely on His life and power. Not convinced that Jesus can make a difference to a person's life?





# Picture Windows

## By Stephen Race

Time was when fields unkempt  
Ran back from crumbling cliff:  
Where seabirds, rigid, hung wide-winged  
Then swept in wild glissade  
Down romping north-east gales  
That buffeted the cringing green:  
To see cold Winter's sodden coat  
Flex and twitch  
Like a cat's angry back.

But now foreshortened vista.  
Imposing lines  
Of perpendicular domesticity  
Encroach:  
Ever a tidy step closer.  
Burnished in the bloodshot hues of sunset,  
In spectral clarity, blind angular lenses  
Display his captive image –  
The solitary walker striding on the last edge.

If, like Stephen, you would like your poetry or art featured in a future edition of **PLATEA** please email: [plateamag@gmail.com](mailto:plateamag@gmail.com) or post your submission to: Platea, The Retreat, 3 Sea Street, Herne Bay, CT6 8SP. Thanks for getting the ball rolling, Stephen!

# The Windhover

by Gerard Manley Hopkins

Gerard Manley Hopkins is regarded by different readers as the greatest Victorian poet of religion and of nature. However, because his style was so radically different from that of his contemporaries, his best poems were not accepted for publication during his lifetime, and his achievement was not fully recognised until after World War I when his poems were championed by W.H. Auden and T.S. Eliot.

Born in 1844 to a wealthy High Anglican family, Hopkins went to Highgate School and then to Oxford. In 1866 he converted to Catholicism, and decided to join the priesthood. While training at a Jesuit seminary near St Asaph he learnt Welsh; the rhythms of the traditional Welsh verse he read were to influence his own poetry. His most famous technical innovation, 'sprung rhythm', counts stresses rather than syllables and propels the reader forward. Hopkins' poems were crammed full of repetition and alliteration giving them real energy and he even borrowed symbols from musical notation to help express the rhythm. His priestly ministry took Hopkins all across the country and he died of typhoid in 1889, unpublished in his lifetime.

## To Christ Our Lord

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-  
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding  
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding  
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing  
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,  
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding  
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding  
Stirred for a bird, – the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here  
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion  
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion  
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,  
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.



For a reading of this poem visit - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMlwqpy4dk0>



# LOVE one another as I LOVE you

# Our Parish Mission

One Year On (13-28 February 2016)

A MISSION HAD NOT BEEN HELD at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart since the turn of the century. For two weeks, at the start of 2016, the parish invited members of the Sion Community to help us rediscover our purpose, to deepen our prayer and to celebrate our faith in Jesus Christ. Gerry McWilliams, Moyra Feathers and Annette Ballard share their memories of last year's mission.



It hardly seems like a year has gone by since our parish mission. When the idea was first floated at the Parish Pastoral Council on 3rd June 2015 we scarcely imagined just how much work would be needed.

Thankfully parishioners volunteered to co-ordinate teams for the various preparations necessary to ensure the mission's success. The prayer group chose the design of the various mission leaflets and the Parish Mission Prayer was composed by one of them. The Visual Display team beautifully decorated the church with some artistic help from the children's liturgy and youth groups. The co-ordinator of the team, Peter Green, presented his artwork "Prodigal Son" as the centre piece and this is now on display in the reconciliation area. The Hospitality and Accommodation teams ensured that the



Mission members would be well looked after and have lodgings for their stay.

We finally welcomed members of the Sion Community to our parish on 13th February last year to lead the mission on the theme "Love one another as I love you". With that theme in mind they set out to meet as many parishioners as they could. During that first week they visited more than 400 addresses from our parish records making contact with 267 but found a number had moved away. The enthusiasm, friendliness and openness of the Mission Visiting Team ensured that they were warmly welcomed even at some of those homes where parishioners no longer lived. Since then their work has been a massive help to us in updating the parish records.

Through week two the various well attended





Mission services were both thought provoking and spiritually uplifting. There was a special Family Service for the younger children who very much enjoyed it and there was also a service followed by a pizza event for the youth. The “Question of Faith” session in the Retreat Hall was very popular and quite informative but some felt it could have gone on a bit longer. There was clearly a thirst for further exploration of the questions. Perhaps we should organise our own question time with an invited panel? The Parish Celebration with a live band, dancing and food was so popular the hall was packed and all present totally enjoyed themselves. What a great and joyous way to end the mission.

Overall I feel that the Mission was a great success, reached out to all ages and gave the parish a boost of enthusiasm and an extra little bit of feel good factor. While it also seems to have encouraged more widespread active involvement in parish life the Mission certainly proved that all the work and contributions by the many parishioners were well worthwhile. (Gerry McWilliams is the chair of the Parish Pastoral Council).



**D**uring last year’s Mission I volunteered to accompany Sion members and volunteers in visiting homes on the Parish Register. I went out four times, each time for about two hours and with a different person. We were hoping to invite parishioners to



SION CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FOR EVANGELISM was founded in 1984 by Fr Pat Lynch, from the Diocese of Nottingham. He was given permission by his Bishop to work full-time in evangelisation. Within a year, Fr Pat had brought together seven other people to found Sion Community. Since then their ministry has expanded to include: Secondary & Primary School Missions and Family Ministry. The Sion Community has also worked to share the beauties of our faith in Christ through missions in prisons, ecumenical missions to whole towns and they organised the Catholic evangelistic outreach that took place around the Olympic Games.



Right: Fun at the End of Mission Social  
Far right: Peter Moran and our music group



come to the Mission services the following week. As a novice visitor my role was to be prepared to pray while the experienced visitor was engaging the occupants of each house. We used the lists from the Parish Register which had been compiled in postman delivery order. It turned out that whatever time of day we visited there were a good number of people out. In that case we left a printed card and an invitation and list of the following week's events. We also found that the register needed updating as the present occupants were somewhat bemused at our arrival. The most interesting visits

were where the occupant of the house had time for a good chat. These varied in length and depth but were a great way of making contact both with those who regularly attend Mass and others who had lost contact. Although my chief role was to pray I was also able to join in the conversation, especially where I knew the person involved.

It's difficult to assess the impact of the Parish visiting programme but we hope that the seed we sowed may bear fruit through the power of the Holy Spirit. I thoroughly enjoyed my part in visiting and would recommend it to others.



Clockwise from top left: Allegra signing the Lord's Prayer with the children; Peter Green's Prodigal Son painting, now above the reconciliation room in the church; having a ceilidh; Deacon Quentin at the Family Service



Being a cradle Catholic I was very excited to be part of a mission in a parish. I cannot recall ever partaking in a mission before. I was quite new to the parish and already loved it here and then to know we were having a mission, it was amazing. I had met people from the Sion Community before so knew that many blessings would be coming our way. I loved having the opportunity right from the start of being involved as much or little as you desired. I wanted to help with the hospitality so it was great meeting people in the parish and to share my passion for cooking and providing hospitality for our visitors. I was also very excited that parishioners and members of the Sion Community would be doing house visits. I couldn't wait for them to come to our home and thought what a wonderful opportunity to be reaching



out to our church community. The services and testimonies were inspiring and the music & signing outstanding. Signing for the deaf always leaves me feeling quite emotional, it was beautiful to see.

The final celebration was such a joyous and happy way to draw the fortnight to a close. The gingerbread church was an outstanding piece of art work.

I hope that many people were blessed and inspired to treasure and nurture the faith they have and to share it with all those around them. I am most grateful to the parish and organisers for an amazing two weeks of learning, blessings, outreach, sharing, singing, growth, hope and light. I hope that the waves from the

mission are still touching peoples lives and I know for myself that it has helped me to deepen and strengthen my faith commitment.

AB

## Prayer for the Parish Mission (revised for one year on)

**L**OVING FATHER, we praise you and give you thanks for the opportunities opened up for our parish during the Parish Mission.

**P**our out your Spirit upon us and draw us into an ever deepening relationship with your Son, Jesus Christ.

**M**ay we continue to work together to share the joy of the Good News with love, enthusiasm, simplicity and courage.

**E**nable us to reach out to share your loving presence with the lost and lonely, with those searching and those who have turned away.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **AMEN.**

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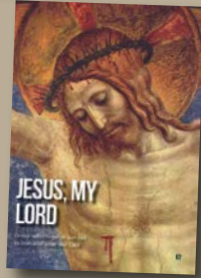
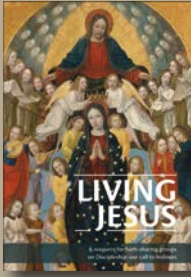
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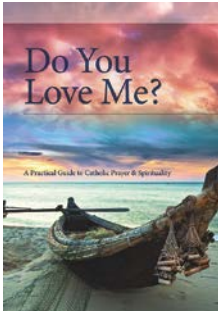
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**Do You Love Me?**  
**A Practical Guide to Catholic Prayer and Spirituality**  
*CTS [£5.95]*

This book, produced for the Bishops' Conference, responds to the growing interest within the Catholic Church in how we can deepen our faith and prayer life and understand more of the distinctive nature of Catholic spirituality.

*Do You Love Me?* is divided into six chapters and uses scripture as the start of a process of prayer and personal reflection, drawing on the writing of many of the saints and reflecting on what Catholic spirituality has to say on each of these areas of reflection.

This is not a difficult academic study of the nature of God's life in us, but a practical way of engaging (as groups or individuals) in your own prayer life. **MM**



**Docat: What to do?**  
*CTS [£9.95]*

Docat is a question and answer catechism which tackles the Church's social doctrine in a similar format to the incredibly successful and popular Youcat youth catechism published in 2011. Docat concentrates on the actions that need to follow on from the Church's social teaching in order to establish a civilisation of love.

It covers all the areas one would expect: from the person to politics, economics, work, war, morality and the environment. The questions are relevant and to the point; although some answers start with a preamble which aren't always clear.

The layout and format is innovative and brilliantly pitched for people whose reading is often done online. The short chunks of text are surrounded by

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pictures, quotes, definitions and snippets of magisterial teaching which enrich the reading experience enormously; like visiting a really good website but without the danger of being distracted by cat videos or worse. The quotations are well chosen and wonderfully eclectic, ranging from Thomas Aquinas to Bruce Willis and everyone in-between. Several sections contain 'digressions' which deal with pressing issues such as the use of new media for Christians and bioethics, and each section is followed by a short anthology of the most important sections of magisterial teaching.

The text is aimed at ages 15-18 but it is the type of book which is very enjoyable and informative for anyone to dip into. Docat is also accompanied by an app priced at £3.99 giving access to an electronic version. **PF**

# PLATEA RECALLS NOV 2016-JAN 2017

## BAPTISMS

**B**y one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether slave or free; and have all been made to drink of the one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Evelyn Ross  
Jak Payne

20 November  
27 November

## DEATHS

**W**e are the Lord's. Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living (Romans 14:7-9).

Rita Giordanella  
Christopher Arnold  
Oliver Gosnell  
Denis Courtney  
Maureen Calderwood  
Michael Penfold  
Sonja Duncan  
Jacqueline Nichols  
Philomena Reilly

17 December 2016  
28 December  
28 December  
29 December  
30 December  
2 January 2017  
5 January  
5 January  
14 January

## We pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ

In each edition of **PLATEA** we will feature the names of all of those who have been baptized, received the sacraments of first holy communion, confirmation and holy matrimony in the preceding months. We will also include the names of those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that 'by prayer every baptized person works for the coming of the Kingdom' (2632). We are called to pray for the living (James 5:16) and the dead (2 Maccabees 12:38-46). Intercession - asking on behalf of another - is a characteristic of a heart attuned to God's mercy. In intercession, we look 'not only to our own interests, but also to the interests of others.'

If you have someone or something for which you would like the community to pray, please email [ourladyhernebay@gmail.com](mailto:ourladyhernebay@gmail.com).



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Christ Washing the Feet of his Disciples by Duccio (c.1311)

You are warmly invited to Our Lady's this Easter  
[and, of course, at any other time of year]

## Easter Triduum Services

**Maundy Thursday, 13 Apr** Mass of the Lord's Supper (8pm)

**Good Friday, 14 Apr** Walk of Witness (leaving church at 11.15am)  
Solemn Liturgy of the Lord's Passion (3pm)  
Seven Last Words from the Cross (7pm)

**Holy Saturday, 15 Apr** Mass of the Easter Vigil (8pm)

**Easter Sunday, 16 Apr** Masses (9.30am and 11.15am)



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Lent/Easter 2017 issue 2