

PLATEA

Herne Bay's Catholic Parish Magazine

Summer 2017 (issue 3)



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FIRST HOLY COMMUNICANTS - 10.06.17

Lourdes on a May Morning ♦ Gabrielle Davis
Memories of Fr Charles ♦ His Passionist Brothers
Traidcraft at Our Lady's ♦ Moyra Feathers
Rise and Shine: HCPT pilgrims ♦ Connie Caira





Wheat Field With Reaper and Sun by Vincent Van Gogh [1889]

The Wheat Field is a series of oil paintings executed by Vincent van Gogh in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence. From May 1889 to May 1890, Van Gogh recorded the view from the window of his bedroom on the top floor of the asylum. Excluded from normal life by the rear wall of the asylum grounds; the paintings show what lay beyond this enclosure: farm land, accompanied by olive groves and vineyards, running up to the hills at the foot of the mountain range called Les Alpilles. Each work in the series shows a change in the setting: after a storm, with a reaper in the field, with fresh wheat raising in autumn and with flowers in the spring.

This particular painting ‘with reaper and sun’ shows a rich harvest and a single farmer at work. Agricultural themes were prominent in Van Gogh’s art and they were prominent too in the parables told, to his disciples, by Jesus. Harvest is a time of tremendous hard work but it also bears immediate and obvious fruits. Each Christian, by virtue of their baptism, is called to this hard work of sowing the Gospel, patiently cooperating with the grace of God as the seed grows and the crop matures and finally reaping what has been sown. Each generation repeats the process. See Matthew chapter 13 for more!

In this Issue of **PLATEA**

Highlights



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PLATEA

Herne Bay's Catholic Parish Magazine

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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 Caira, 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 or by post: The Retreat, 3 Sea St, Herne Bay, CT6 8SP

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Cover image: Parish First Holy Communicants 2017 photo taken by Hannah Maple

Welcome to **PLATEA**

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the summer 2017 edition of **PLATEA**, the parish magazine of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Herne Bay.

In this Summer edition you will find a tribute to our dear Fr Charles CP who died at the beginning of Holy Week after a short illness. He is very much missed for his infectious enthusiasm, his ready laugh and his great desire to spread the Gospel. He was a great inspiration to the children and young people he worked with.

The poem “Sunday Morning” that you will find on page 29 was written by Fr Charles’s nephew, John Bennett, a much respected poet living in Australia.

Fr Charles had a great love for Our Lady and was a very regular pilgrim to Lourdes. So it is fitting that we have articles about Lourdes and Fatima in this edition. Our parish has great links with these special places.

Enjoy these and all the articles in this summer edition. Thanks to all who contributed. And we look forward to receiving your contributions for future editions, in the form of letters, questions, articles and photos.

With an assurance of my prayers and best wishes,

Fr Mark White CP
Parish Priest

PLATEA
Summer 2017

Biblical Surprises

We really should listen to the readings in Mass! The Wednesday after Ash Wednesday had Fr Malachy declaiming the Gospel when I was jolted back to 'Tea Time' in the 1940s/1950s. There would be silence in my homes as 'Dad' checked the football coupon listening intently to the BBC announcing the football scores. Did I hear correctly the Gospel giving out the name of a Scottish football team? Yes, check it for yourself at Luke 11:31 where it is written 'Queen of the South'. It is good to listen. Have you a Biblical Surprise to share?

Fred Waters

Who do I pray to?

I pray to God the Father when I thank him for a beautiful day, a lovely sunset, flowers in the gardens and hedgerows, sheep gamboling, stars on a still quiet night, the raging seas, the wonderful wildlife.

I pray to the Holy Spirit when I enjoy the company of like-minded companions, the warmth and prayerfulness of others around me at Holy Communion.

I pray to Jesus, God the Son, who took human form, who suffered for us, who suffers with us and when I need to talk about my remorse for failing in so many ways, for comfort in bereavement and strength to try and do better.

Is this the Holy Trinity?

Anonymous

Revelations of Divine Love

Inspired by the quote in Issue 1 of Platea, we had a visit to St Julian's church in Norwich. Julian was a woman of deep spirituality and holiness, a writer and mystic who lived between AD1342 and AD1429. She wrote, among other things, the complex 'Revelation of Divine Love'. I purchased one of her smaller books for meditation: 'All will be well and all manner of things will be well.'

Julian has been called one of the greatest early English theologians. Her 'Revelations' took her 20 years to com-

plete, written in a cell attached to the Church in Norwich and is a spiritual classic throughout the world. The book's principle subject is God's love for humankind, particularly shown on the Cross. Such is a love, unending, even in trial, a love beyond all imagining, a love all-embracing and which leaves no part of creation untouched.

Julian experienced 15 revelations and she was also terribly afflicted by the evil she saw. We should pray to St Julian of Norwich and ponder the words of our Lord to her - 'all shall be well'.

Angela Jennings

Parish in Review

First Holy Communion 10.6.17



Summer Fayre 24.6.17



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 or write to Platea, 3 Sea Street, Herne Bay.



REST IN PEACE

Charlie-boy

On 21 April 2017, the parish community and hundreds of others celebrated the life and prayed for the repose of the soul of Fr Charles Owen CP. Here are the abridged homilies delivered at his Requiem Mass (Fr Nicholas) and at the reception of his body (Fr Patrick).

Shortly before he died, Fr Charles telephoned me to suggest we listen together to a Radio 3 music programme. It was Edward Elgar's musical setting of Cardinal Newman's *Dream of Gerontius*.



It begins with Gerontius' friends praying for him as he is dying. The music carries him through the moment of his death as he journeys "beyond" in company with his Guardian Angel. The climax comes when angels burst into a great song of adoration – "Praise to the Holiest in the Heights and in the Depths be praised."

Canterbury is where Gospel seeds were first sown in England, since

then the seeds spread and flowered throughout the land. Jesus solemnly tells us that unless a seed dies, it remains only a grain: but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. Canterbury is where Charles lived out his final weeks of life and where on 8 April he died. We come to mourn and to celebrate a life in whom a Gospel seed was planted and flowered.

"Tell everyone," he said, "I know you will all be sad - especially you Barbara my dear big sister who has been my constant companion, as well as you John my brother. You too, my Passionist brothers will be sad - especially you Patrick, we travelled the road together from the beginning - thank you for caring for me to the end. Say "Thank you" to all my good friends. Thank you for your love and friendship shared down the years. It was this that kept me strong and able to prepare peacefully for my death. Through your tears today, please remember all those times when we were smiling together. Remember those fits of laughter - usually you laughing at me because of something silly I had said or done! Carry these memories as

gifts with bread and wine to the altar, returned to God in thanksgiving for blessings shared as we wandered our ways together. As I reach the end of my life I realise just how much I - and all of us - have to be grateful to God for."

Something wonderful seemed to be happening in the Pilgrim's Hospice where Charles was so well cared for. Despite his increasing weakness as his body was failing, Charles seemed to be growing in spiritual stature as he approached the end. How do we explain this apparent paradox?



In his final instruction, Charles points to an answer: "Please ask Deacon Barry to read St Luke's story of Jesus and the children (Luke 18:15-16). I know it is not a Gospel used at funerals - but it means everything I believe and how I want to be remembered." Just three simple sentences: 1) children trying to come close to Jesus; 2) disciples as self-appointed officious organisers blocking them; 3) Jesus insisting: "Get out of their way: let the children come to me". Charles chose this deceptively simple Gospel because it represents his deepest intuition about the mystery who is God. As the years passed Charles has learned to listen ever more attentively to the sound of God's music playing in his unique self. He has penetrated below

the surface and gone to the heart of this deceptively simple story.

Learning to appreciate God's music in his own life he learned also to rejoice and witness it equally in every man, in every woman and especially in every child he would meet along life's path. The miracle unfolding in the Canterbury Hospice was the music of God reaching its climax and final resolution in the life of our brother and friend, Fr Charles. As T S Eliot explains it:

*"We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive back where we started
And know the place for the first time."*

The journey Charles embarked on, which eventually brought him gospel wisdom, was a long and tortuous one. Often he found his path hard and cold, for example, as a vulnerable eleven-year old Philip Owen at Blythe Hall, the Passionist junior seminary. Living apart from family and trying to cope with the



strict demands of that era was a trial. In his novitiate in 1956 he changed from his baptismal name to become Charles. After taking Passionist vows in 1957 he spent seven years studying at Minsteracres. Charles was ordained a Passionist priest in 1964.

Three years ago, some may remember a joyful Golden Jubilee celebration when

we congratulated Charles and Fr Patrick on their combined 100 years of faithful priestly ministry. As a priest, Charles began to breathe more freely. Tentatively, he began to gain in confidence looking for the key to Gospel wisdom for which he was searching.



Over more than fifty years as a priest, Charles has served in practically every Passionist parish and community: St Non's, Minsteracres, Ilkley, and Broadway - his happy years in Highgate and his final happy years here in Herne Bay. The fields Charles plunged into with his zest for life and enthusiasm were ready for the harvest.

It had not been an easy journey. Often he felt like running away. But he didn't. He kept on going. He lived out the words of a poem:



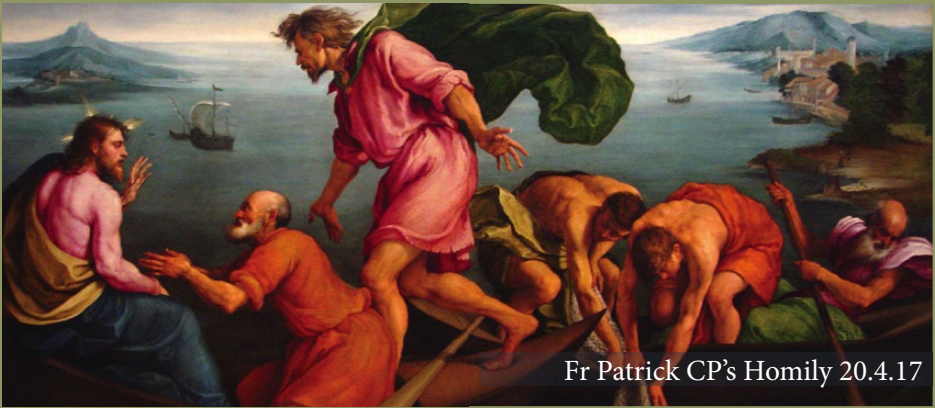
"There's a thread you follow. It goes among things that change. But it doesn't change. While you hold it you can't get lost.....You don't ever let go of the thread."

Charles never let go of his thread. Charles had found the key to unlock God's music within his soul. It was concerto music in which the sound of his individual self was in harmony with the voices of all those he loved and who loved him in their turn. He devoted his life to encouraging all his friends - and especially children - to be confident in exploring our own unique journeys into human mystery. Whether visiting classrooms, standing at school gates, being with families, sharing with those who are grieving, or rejoicing at

*Listen for the sound of
God's deep music in your
own humanity.*

weddings, sitting at a hospital bedside or walking to the graveside with those who mourn Charles message would always be the same: listen for the sound of God's deep music in your own humanity. He encourages us all: let the child in all of you run free to search for and come near to Jesus. Rid ourselves, our Church and our world from artificial barriers that restrict what it means to be human then we will know we are coming closer to the gate leading into God's Kingdom.

Thank you Charles for being you. Thank you for sharing your love with us. Our prayer for you now is that you are singing, not Mahler in the Albert Hall, but with the choir of angels in their triumphant hymn: Praise to the Holiest in the Heights. May he rest in peace.



Fr Patrick CP's Homily 20.4.17

When Jesus appears to his disciples on the first Easter Sunday evening, he identifies himself clearly - he is not a ghost, he is real. He is the same Jesus who was crucified on Calvary. 'Look at my hands and feet. Touch me and see for yourselves.' Their joy was so great that they still could not believe it, and they stood there dumbfounded.'

Then he shares a meal of grilled fish with them. Yes, he is real. He is the Jesus who was crucified. He bears the marks of the wounds even in his glorified body; a vivid reminder that his way to glory was through suffering and death on the cross. And the cross is the way to glory for all who would be disciples of Jesus. Our own Passionist Constitutions tell us: 'Joy in the Resurrection of Christ inescapably involves accepting the crucial place in His life of the Mystery of the Passion. Anyone wishing to share in the risen life of Christ, therefore, must also share in His death by dying to sin and selfishness: "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps." As you know, our dear brother, Fr Charles, died on the eve of Palm Sunday, the day when we celebrate the triumphal entry of Jesus

into Jerusalem. We hope and pray that the eve of Palm Sunday and Holy Week this year marked the entry of Fr Charles into the heavenly Jerusalem and that he is now sharing in the glory of the Risen Jesus. Fr Charles prepared well to enter into and share in the glory of the Risen Jesus. Like every follower of Christ, he would have had his own cross to carry on a daily basis throughout his life.

But all through Lent this year and even prior to Lent, that is in the weeks leading up to his death, the cross laid on his shoulders was indeed a heavy one. He knew in a very real way what it was to share in the Passion of Christ. He knew in a very real way what it was to bear the wounds of suffering in his body. But his bodily wounds, leading to inevitable death were not his only wounds. These bodily wounds were accompanied by even deeper wounds. We may call them wounds of the heart. Just to mention three:

First among them was his concern for his beloved sister, Barbara. He was always very devoted to her. Her husband died in 2015; since then, she was living alone. Charles would worry about her. He would visit her whenever he could. Now, he could

do no more for her; he had to leave her. He had to learn to let go of this concern and to trust in the Lord; this he did!

He was chaplain to St Mary's Primary School in Whitstable. He found real fulfilment in this work. He could relate to children; he could get across to them. That was his gift. And he was doing a vitally important work. He was endeavouring to evangelise them; handing on the faith to them. Understandably, a question arose in his mind. Why was the Lord taking him away from this vital work? Again, he had to let go and trust in the Lord. The Lord knows best. His time had come. He had been a faithful servant, making good use of the



talents God gave him. It was time for him to enter into the joy of the Lord.

And then the last sacrifice he was asked to make! It was his dearest wish to return to the Retreat and his Community. Fr Mark did everything humanly possible to ensure that Fr Charles could be adequately cared for at home. Several people from the parish had expressed their readiness to help. However, it soon became clear that Fr Charles' condition made it impossible to leave the Hospice. He let go of this last wish and left all in the hands of God. It was certainly most inspiring for all of us to see how resigned he was throughout his illness and how he accepted it all. He was a true Passionist right to the end.

He never let me forget that we were classmates, not that I wanted to forget. He was always and ever a good companion

and friend. If you were in some need, he would do all in his power to help you, even without being asked. I joined Charles in the Juniorate, at Blythe Hall, Ormskirk, in 1954 for the last two years prior to entering the Novitiate. We were professed as Passionists on the same day, 29 September 1957. We were ordained on the same day, 18 July 1964. In 1965 we went our separate ways to take up different assignments. And we have been together again since he came to Herne Bay in 2008. For our Golden Jubilee trip we went on pilgrimage to Fatima.

He took the Message of Fatima seriously; to pray the Rosary daily for peace in the world. He was passionate about peace

and he was passionate about the Rosary. He taught the children in St Mary's how to pray the Rosary, and he prayed it every day without fail. He died as his good friends, Helen and Michael Casey were praying the Rosary at his bedside. I'm told it was his wish to die on a Saturday. I can only think he wanted to die on a Saturday because that is Our Lady's day. He got his wish!

He had a genuine devotion to Mary, Mother of Sorrows, and Mother of Holy Hope. Like the beloved disciple, Fr Charles took Mary into the home of his heart. I am sure that Mary has taken him into the home of her Immaculate Heart and that he is now enjoying the company of our Passionist saints, to whom he was so devoted, St Paul of the Cross, St Gabriel, his patron, St Charles of Mt Argus and Blessed Dominic. May he rest in peace.



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Image: The famous 9pm torchlight procession

Lourdes on a May morning

LOURDES HAS BEEN A PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE for over 100 years. The six million pilgrims who travel there each year are often joined by a small but faithful group from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Herne Bay. **Gabrielle Davis** shares her reflections on the most recent parish trip to this most famous of Marian Shrines.





LOURDES on a May morning. After a 5.25am call, we arrive at the sanctuary for 6.45am. Mass. People already queuing to fill bottles with holy water and find room on the benches in front of the Grotto. There, at the altar, beneath the very spot where Our Lady appeared to St Bernadette, is our very own Fr Patrick CP, celebrant at this morning's Mass. How

proud we are as he introduces himself, and us, fifteen pilgrims from Herne Bay, as well as a group from India; gathered together in this holy place, with a huge crowd from around the world.

Throughout our stay, Fr Patrick said our daily Mass in a different chapel – at the Poor Clares Convent, St Patrick's Chapel, the Chapel of St Jean Vianney and, never to be forgotten, Sunday's International Mass in the vast, steel and concrete underground Basilica in the shape of an upturned boat, dedicated to Saint Pius X. Here, on the central altar, were bishops and priests from around the world, a massed choir, and screens let down from the ceiling to help the congregation of thousands follow the service, occasionally in English, but mainly Latin, French and Spanish.

Exploring Lourdes' narrow streets it was easy to follow in St Bernadette's footsteps, from the mill where she was born and the home for much of her childhood, to the humble cachot, once a prison, where her family lived after their

eviction from the mill. But the nearby village of Bartres was also important, where, as an infant, she was cared for by a wet nurse and later returned to mind the sheep. It was disappointing to find the house no longer open to the public, but in the church there was holy hour led by Fr Patrick, and veneration of a relic of Bernadette, and we were shown an example of her beautiful joined-up handwriting.

It was not far from Bartres that we reached a high-spot of our journey – 1000 metres up – the Pic du Jer funicular railway, which has been clunking its way up the mountain since 1900. We had been lured by a glimpse of snow-capped Pyrenees peaks since our arrival – now we had a magnificent view of Lourdes and the surrounding countryside in almond blossom time.

Back in Lourdes, in the vicinity of the sanctuary, there's activity, from early morning until late evening. People queuing patiently for the baths or following the modern Stations of the Cross near the fast-flowing river Gave which runs through the town and down to the sanctuary. We noted that the bridges which had been damaged following severe flooding before our last visit have not only been rebuilt but made wider for the increasing num-





ber of visitors.

On the last evening there was time to visit again the three churches of the sanctuary. We went first to what is now known as the crypt to the Upper Basilica, but it is, in fact, the very chapel Our Lady asked for in her apparitions, and it stands exactly above the spot where she appeared. Bernadette's father helped in the construction and Bernadette herself was present when it was blessed on Pentecost Sunday 1866. Above this crypt stands the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, consecrated only ten years later in 1876, and beneath, at ground-level, is the domed, Byzantine-style Rosary Basilica, topped by a golden crown. Consecrated in 1901, it was designed to hold around 1,500 people. All around are fifteen exquisite mosaics illustrating the mysteries of the rosary, and there's also a side-chapel containing Ukrainian icons.

No matter how tired we were at the end of each long day, there was one place we had to be – down at the sanctuary for the torchlight procession at 9pm to join the many thousands of pilgrims, young and old, many in wheelchairs, to sing and pray the rosary, everyone in their own language. Some evenings we walked for an hour, sometimes two, depending on the number of people

following Our Lady's statue from the sanctuary to the new Door of Mercy and back to the Rosary Basilica. On our last evening, as we ended our walk close to the basilica, we heard the most astonishing soprano rendering of Ave Maria. Her voice could be heard at hotels and pavement cafés across the road and up the hill. The word in the crowd was that she was a professional singer on a short visit from California.

Numbers varied each evening depending on the ebb and flow of people arriving and leaving the hotels; a never ending stream of coaches filling the narrow roads; people always happy, smiling, excited to be in Lourdes. We watched groups of pilgrims carrying banners, wearing national dress, matching robes, costumes and sashes; parties of schoolchildren, scouts and guides, students and elderly. And the uniformed nurses, caring for the sick, pushing their wheelchairs on their way to the sanctuary.

Finally, on our last morning, after Mass in the Sacred Heart Chapel on the first floor of St Frai Hospital in the centre of town, there was just one last visit to the sanctuary. It was with Fr Patrick, following the Lourdes pilgrimage tradition, to take our own special candle, light it and place it in position near the grotto, with our prayers of thanksgiving, and for a safe return. Deo Gratias!



FATIMA

a pilgrim's reflection

ALTHEA WALKER writes on her recent trip to Portugal, to join in the centenary celebrations of Our Lady of Fatima [1917-2017].

DAY ONE: Thursday 11 May 2017

Seventy UK pilgrims flew to Lisbon and transferred to Fatima by coach. Later that evening, the International Rosary was prayed in 5 different languages (for the 5 decades), followed by a Torchlight procession, where the statue of Our Lady of Fatima on a beautiful bed of white roses was carried around the Sanctuary.

DAY TWO: Friday 12 May 2017

A private Mass was said at our hotel's chapel. We took the opportunity to visit the Chapel of Apparitions and handed over the written petitions from our parishioners; before praying in front of Our Lady of Fatima's statue, lighting candles for various people all over the world. I also visited a priest friend at the Consolata Missionary Home.

The Eucharistic Procession started at 3pm and finished prior to Pope Francis' eagerly awaited arrival. Big screens allowed everyone to have a good view. The Pope watched the huge crowds, from a



helicopter as they cheered, waved their hands and flags from different countries. What a beautiful sight! The crowds fell silent, however, as Pope Francis stood and prayed at the Chapel of Apparitions. During the evening prayers, he urged everyone to “tear down all walls and go to the peripheries to make God’s justice and peace known.”

Thousands of candles brightened the dark square while the huge luminous Rosary hung above the Basilica of the Most



Holy Trinity. I felt like we were one big happy family!

DAY THREE: Saturday 13 May 2017

Excited about the Centenary and Canonisation. Lots of people had camped overnight at the Sanctuary. As a seasoned pilgrim, I had a folding stool; otherwise it was standing room only.

When Francisco and Jacinta Marto were canonised as Saints, cheers and applause rang out in the Sanctuary Esplanade. They were the youngest non-martyrs to be declared Saints by the Catholic Church. After Mass, the Statue of Our Lady of Fatima near the altar was processed back to the Chapel of Apparitions. A sea of white handkerchiefs waving 'Adeus' (farewell) to Our Lady was spectacular. Pilgrims were smiling, crying and comforting each other whilst waving and singing "Ave, Ave, Ave Maria."

An estimated half a million pilgrims were present. Later, I had the joy to meet up with my elder sister, Marie from Edmonton (Canada), in the Adoration Chapel.

DAY FOUR: Sunday 14 May 2017

The morning's International Rosary was followed by Mass at the Sanctuary Esplanade and 'Adeus' to Our Lady of Fatima. In the afternoon we prayed the Stations of the Cross followed by a visit to Valinhos and Aljustrel; homes of the 3 shepherd children. At St Lucia's home, we met her 97 yr old niece, also named Lucia. She did not mind pilgrims taking photographs of her. An International

Rosary and Torchlight Procession completed the day.

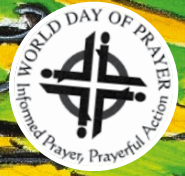
DAY FIVE: Sunday 15 May 2017

We had a private mass at Aujo da Paz chapel (Angel of Peace). It used to be the old 24 hr Adoration Chapel, which is now in the Most Holy Trinity Basilica. I sat in the same pew, when I first came to Fatima in November 1992. My second Pilgrimage was in October 2010 with Fr Mark, Sr Corinne and parishioners. After Mass, I visited and prayed at the tombs of the new saints Francisco and Jacinta and that of Sr Lucia who died on 13 February 2005.

It was a truly inspirational, refreshing and uplifting Pilgrimage for me. 'Pray the Rosary Every Day.' May Our Lady of Fatima bless and guide all of you to the way that leads to her Son, Jesus Christ. God bless always.



Images: (left) Pope Francis at the Shrine; (top right) the shrine and statue; (bottom right) Lucia, St. Francisco and St. Jacinta Marto



Women's World Day of Prayer

Am I Being Unfair to You? - Friday 3 March 2017

The Women's World Day of Prayer has its origins in nineteenth century America, where women in non-conformist Christian churches met to pray for those engaged in missionary work. By the end of the nineteenth century these women from different denominations were joining together to organise united days of prayer and in 1922 a common date was agreed across Canada and the United States.

News of this spread by word of mouth around the world and there are now 170

countries and islands taking part. The focus of prayer has widened and is now, above all, an encouragement to women in different countries to know that they are remembered in prayer. Catholic participation grew after the Second Vatican Council and the first Catholic chairperson was elected in 1984. The movement is truly international and interdenominational; the original date of for the service was changed to the first Friday in March to accommodate the Orthodox churches.

Each year the service is prepared by the women of one country and we are invited to pray for the particular needs of the people of that country. The same service, translated into more than 60 languages and 1000 dialects is used around the world. The first service of the day is held at dawn in Tonga and a wave of prayer travels around the earth until the last service is held back in the Pacific, in Samoa. The 2017 service was prepared by the women of the Philippines.



So it was that on Friday 3 March at 2pm over 70 women (together with 7 men and one very helpful small girl) from different Christian churches in Herne Bay were welcomed into our church for the 2017 Women's World Day of Prayer. Volunteers ensured that the church looked beautiful, the food was laid out and the urn was on for tea. It is the practice in Herne Bay that the readers for the service come



from the host parish and eleven assorted parishioners, including one of our Filipino ladies, guided us through the service, generously supported by our organist and choir. The service provoked much thought.

The islands that make up the Republic of the Philippines are susceptible to typhoons and earthquakes and have already been significantly affected by climate change. Traditional methods of agriculture, which involved the sharing of the crop, have been threatened by development and many people live in poverty. Women have equal rights under the constitution but in

practice they are treated as subordinates. With few opportunities at home, more than 10 million Filipinos work abroad. The majority are women, often the main breadwinner of the family. They are vulnerable to exploitation, violence and discrimination. The title of the service was "Am I being fair to you" and the principle of 'sharing the crop' permeated the service. We were challenged to think about social justice in a global context.

The resourcefulness of these women, living in extremely difficult circumstances, is humbling. The strength of their faith is inspiring and uplifting. As we listened to the powerful words of the Filipino women, and sharing the refreshments afterwards, there was a real feeling of fellowship among us. Many complimentary messages of thanks have been passed back from the other churches who took part: everyone felt very welcome and thought the readings, the church decorations and food were all beautifully presented.

There were so many people responsible for the success of the afternoon and to try to name everyone would risk leaving someone out. However, our special thanks must go to Sr Angela for leading the service, to Thelma who sang for us so beautifully and to Alma who went above and beyond the call of duty and even sourcing frozen banana leaves!

Next year's service will be on the first Friday of March at St Bartholomew's (top of the hill, near the water tower and the hospital) when we will be praying with and for the women of Senegal.

CONNIE CAIRA SHARES HER MEMORIES OF HCPT PILGRIMAGES TO LOURDES OVER THE LAST 50 YEARS.

IT WAS IN 1968 nearly fifty years ago that my husband Vic Caira and later myself first went as helpers on a pilgrimage with HCPT to Lourdes.

Vic (pictured right) worked in the City of London and it was at a business meeting that he met up with John, an old school friend. During their conversation his friend told him about his involvement with HCPT and said he was looking for helpers for his group. He persuaded Vic to join him and after that first trip, the following year he had enticed me to join him as part of John's Group: 26. After a couple of years Vic was asked to form his own group and became the Leader of Group 13 a number that wasn't in use at the time! Our teenage sons Greg and Rob, and friends, James and John joined us at various times and we also acquired a wonderful guitar-playing priest, Fr Vic.



CHILDREN ON AN HCPT pilgrimage (and there are now more than a thousand) travel together but are cared for in groups, made up of Leader, Priest, Nurse or Doctor and others making 10 children and 10 helpers. They stay in



THE ARKY ARKY SONG (ABRIDGED)

The Lord said to Noah
There's going to be a floody floody
The Lord said to Noah
There's going to be a floody floody
Get those children out of the muddy muddy
Children of the Lord

Well Noah he built him
He built him an Arky Arky
Well Noah he built him
He built him an Arky Arky
Build it out of hickory barky barky
Children of the Lord

He called for the animals
They came in by twosies twosies
He called for the animals
They came in by twosies twosies
Elephants and kangaroosies roosies
Children of the Lord

So rise and shine
And give God the glory glory
Rise and shine
And give God the glory glory
Rise and shine and give God the glory glory
Children of the Lord

www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r78BLBsZQ0



Rise & shine

AND GIVE GOD THE GLORY, GLORY

the many hotels in Lourdes sometimes more than one group in the one hotel. In the years that we went some children shared a room with a helper which helped with medication, night time toilet visits, home sickness etc. and it also helped to form a close bond between helper and child. Times change and this is no longer the practice. The hoteliers were always pleased to see HCPT arrive the week following Easter. Helpers returning were greeted with hugs and kisses. The early trips were taken by train, but now all fly.

Before I tell you about some of the children we cared for I will explain how each day panned out. Morning Mass was arranged by our Priest for our group, in some of the little chapels in Lourdes, occasionally at the Grotto and sometimes in the fields. The children took part choosing hymns and saying prayers. After that sometimes a visit to a café for ice creams, cold drinks

and coffees, and maybe a sing song with Fr Vic on his guitar. The Group Leader would have arranged visits to Bernadette's family home, to the Grotto to drink the water and fill water bottles, or maybe a game or two in the fields.



AFTER LUNCH A short rest and later the Blessed Sacrament procession and of the sick. We at other times also visited the Stations of the Cross, beautiful Statues painted gold up a hilly incline around which wheelchairs were dragged and carried (above). Hard work for the helpers but great fun for the children. On another day the leader would have

HCPT, originally stood for Handicapped Children's Pilgrimage Trust. Language has changed over the years and HCPT simply stands for Hosanna House & Children's Pilgrimage Trust, taking disabled and disadvantaged children on a life-changing holiday/pilgrimage to Lourdes.

Helpers and fundraisers are always needed. Everyone pays for themselves or are paid for by sponsorship from parishes. In 2017 - 1400 children and 3200 helpers went on pilgrimage but in the early days a mere 240 children and 263 helpers comprised the pilgrimage. For more on the work and history of HCPT visit: <http://www.hcpt.org.uk>





arranged a time for the children to be taken to the Baths to be dipped in the water, something not all of them were happy about but Mum had said they must, so they did. No one was forced, but mostly they did as Mum said. In the evening there was the Torchlight procession around the Rosary Way. Oh! What fun that was, each child with a candle, singing, “Ave! Ave! Ave Maria!” dripping candle wax everywhere, eyes glowing with happiness. At the end we would take them to the Grotto to light candles, bought with money from home, making a huge avenue of light.

I must mention two other occasions. One was the Mass in the underground Basilica with many priests, sometimes bishops; with all the Groups it was never



going to be quiet. As everyone would be gathering, a leader who had formed a choir of helpers who had learnt the

hymns to be sung, kept everyone busy. Then the chattering started, but a loud “Sssshhh” at the beginning of Mass, quietened every one down. Most of the gatherings ended with everyone singing “Rise and Shine” a Scout song about Noah! with actions (lyrics on page 22).



THE OTHER TIME was when the whole pilgrimage went by coach to Gavarnie, a lovely Ski resort which was a jolly day out with donkey rides (picture above), wheelchair races, and lively sing songs when the weather was bad - it sometimes snowed. And then the shops, not only in Gavarnie but on every road leading down to the Domaine in Lourdes, selling every kind of Rosary, Holy pictures, water bottles, Crosses etc. Every child had their list of gifts to take back for Mums and Dads, Aunties and Grannies, so wheelchairs got pushed around and presents bought every year.

OF THE MANY children we cared for some stand out. Lorraine (below), for instance, a victim of the Thalidomide drug was a lively Anglo/Asian girl born with hands coming from her shoulders, but you should have seen her with a skipping rope Two boys both born blind one who played clarinet and said he wanted to be a piano tuner. Then there was Vincent (right) who had cerebral palsy, white blond hair and a wide toothy smile and was always ready to laugh, though speaking for him was difficult as it was, for us, to understand him. He kept in touch, even inviting us to go to his 40th Birthday party, which we did.



MANY PARENTS HOPED for a miracle. However, those on pilgrimage witnessed regular little miracles. There is certainly a feeling of God's love in Lourdes. After nearly ten years with group 13, we reluctantly gave up actively taking a group, but were encouraged by John to join a group he called the "Old and Bold". Former helpers joined groups as and when. We did this until both of us needed help walking, so we were pushed around. Happy memories of Happy Days. Thanks be to God.





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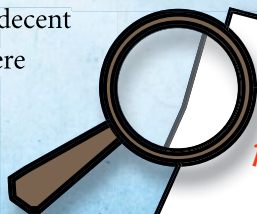
Moses (and his big brother, Aaron) were heading for a rendezvous with Egypt's Pharaoh. God had sent the pair of them to tell Egypt's powerful ruler to let his Israelite slaves go free. First off, God wanted them to be allowed to down tools and take a three-day trip out into the desert to make sacrifices to Him. I suppose a mini-break would have been nice for them. It can't have been much fun making bricks out of straw for your Egyptian slave masters day in, day out – just so that they can build bigger and bigger cities. (For your information, straw was used to strengthen the clay bricks that they built with.)

But things didn't quite go as Moses and Aaron planned. Pharaoh thought it was just a cunning ruse to get his whopping great Israelite labour force out of doing their work. Besides, he had no idea who their God was anyway so why on earth should he take a blind bit of notice of their barmy request? In fact it made him so mad he told his slave drivers to make the Israelites find their own straw from now on, but with no slacking. They still had to deliver the same number of bricks but now it was heaps more difficult. While the Israelites worked their fingers to the bone, desperately trying to fulfil their quotas, their slave drivers just accused them of being lazy.



As things got to breaking point the Israelite overseers were at their wits' end. No way could they make the same number of bricks as they'd had to previously at the same time as having to scavenge for their own supply of straw and they told Pharaoh so. He was having none of it. As far as he was concerned it was just a bunch of excuses. On their way out of their meet-up with Pharaoh the overseers bumped into Moses and Aaron and gave them a piece of their mind. If they hadn't interfered then none of this would ever have happened.

That's not how God saw it. He was just giving Pharaoh the chance to do the decent thing. Now things were going to hot up.



To find out how, read Bible book Exodus, chapter 7 and verses 19 to 21.

A man came calling

By Peter Green

A man came calling the other day
They say he works in sand and clay.
He also works in wood and steel
And understands the way we feel.
I wonder why he walked alone,
On paths all twisted with rocks and stone.

He smiled at me with a knowing look
I felt he could read me like a book.
So I decided to walk along by his side
And he adjusted his walk to match my stride.
He told me stories about his quest
To visit all people both east and west.

He spoke to me of a glorious life
Where people are free from all their strife,
And love is the gift he's been sent to teach
To guide all so it's not out of reach.
I ask him then if this be true
Would he show me what to do.

He asked me if I felt a match to the task.
Of course I am or I wouldn't have asked!
He said I must first learn to trust
In things that can not be seen or touched.
It's called faith, he said, and is very hard,
A gift that's given from above
But best of all it's a gift of love.

If, like Peter, you would like your poetry or art featured in a future edition of **PLATEA**
please email: plateamag@gmail.com or post your submission to:
Platea, The Retreat, 3 Sea Street, Herne Bay, CT6 8SP.

Sunday Morning

by John Bennett

This morning the kookaburras were raucous, your totem,
 your special animal with the hysterical laughter.
 I'm watching two Little Wattlebirds dance through
 the Honey Grevillias and some roos, three lying down,
 two young males boxing. Thunder has left the air humid.
 You are lying in a hospital bed. It's night and cold outside.
 I hear Dreamland is struggling, the ghost train quiet
 though I've wanted to visit since learning that Turner
 claimed the town has the finest skies in all of Europe.



You're being moved to a hospice, yet two weeks ago
 walked 'John's walk' as you call it, past the Domesday forest
 where poachers once prowled and an oak pins the corner,
 a huge girthed beast (rooted before Captain Cook sailed past
 our window), along the playing fields and through a wall of irises
 nesting litter, dragonflies and Great Crested Newts, back
 on muddy tracks through the wood breeding Magpies to mum's.

You pushed a return to the gospels and a simple goodness
 That can spring from clay. The children will miss your ministry
 Your irreverence and humour as will all those you helped
 With funeral grief or the agitated optimism of weddings
 And baptisms. And we will, from the far side of the planet.

Coda

I wish I could parachute down and take you somewhere sunny,
 Some historic town with hymns escaping the old stone chapels
 So that the sacred spreads through the street and over the walls
 Into the fields and woods below the musical mountains you loved,
 Bruckner and Mahler – a final pilgrimage. Remember Trier, 2007

*We fill water bottles from a spring and take a path red roses mark,
 Skirting the road and Roman amphitheatre. Black parasols on slender stems
 Cluster tangible delicacy beneath swaying pines, tips almost touching.
 A youthful fox, flushed red, steps out and strolls down the track
 Ahead of us, picks up our scent and bounds away into shadow.
 (from Ausserordentlich: Trier diary, for Uncle Charles, September 2007)*





THE FLOWER GUILD A YEAR IN FLOWERS

St Mary's Flower Guild have been making beautiful flower arrangements for the church since Easter 2016. We mix experience and skills enhancing our fantastic church. Arrangements are the result of teamwork taking into consideration the Church's liturgical calendar, feast days and parish events. As you can see from the photos, it works well! We would like to encourage parishioners to use the Flower Guild to make arrangements for those special occasions, profits go to the Church Flower funds. Donations are also very welcome!



If you like to join or find out more, please contact the Parish Office, or Team Member: Stella Shepherd, Anna Ardolino, Dee Franklyn, Rita McVey, Mary Smith, Kate McGettrick





- 1: Sea Sunday (July 16)
- 2, 7 & 14: Musical Christmas 2016
- 3: Happy Birthday Ma'am celebrating The Queens Birthday (April 16)
- 4, 5 & 8: Contemporary Easter arrangements 2017
- 6: Paschal Candle (November 16)
- 9: LSU Service (October 16)
- 10 & 11: Contemporary Armistice Arrangement (November 16)
- 12: St Georges Day (April 16)
- 13: Harvest Festival (September 16)





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RAHEL MHABUKA



ABEIRO ALFONSO FONGHO CANTILLO



TERESA KURCAT





TRAIDCRAFT
Fighting poverty through trade

FIGHTING POVERTY THROUGH TRADE: A PARISH CONTRIBUTION

Moyra Feathers, our traidcraft co-ordinator, shares her reflections on the parish's contribution to the fairtrade movement and why we should care.

In 2000, when Father Anthony was Parish Priest, Traidcraft was introduced in this Parish. Traidcraft is the first Fairtrade company, supported by many British institutions and with a Christian message. So, virtually every month since, fairly traded goods have been on sale in the Retreat Hall after Mass. I have been the co-ordinator helped by different parishioners over the years. Why do I do this? I am passionately concerned with Justice and Peace and this is one way that we in the North of the world can help poor workers in the South of the world. Best of all this isn't giving to charity, it's helping people help themselves. It means that farmers or craft workers are valued: they receive help to do their best. Traidcraft provides technical help, such as advice on seeds and fertilisers, fashion advice for those making clothes, bags and jewellery, ideas for cards and toys. We can be sure that those involved with Traidcraft are paid a fair wage, have decent working conditions, are never children and receive a premium which they can spend on their community. This means that Fairtrade workers can afford to feed and clothe their children, to get them medical help and buy them medicines and to send them to school. Remember that there is very little free medical care or schooling available in poor countries.

There's quite a lot involved in running the stall. Firstly, there is the catalogue to obtain. These come out twice yearly. Ordering goods is now done on the internet. It's straightforward if sometimes frustrating. Delivery is by courier. Over the years I have been lucky to have others ready to receive the delivery. Now I depend on my wonderful neighbours, Michael and Dorothy Carden who tussle with the delivery man and hopefully get him to put the heavy parcels in my house. Muscle seems to be a requirement for Traidcraft parcels! I try to avoid the large boxes but finally have to get down to pricing. It's time consuming. Finally, the goods are put in bags in my car to come to the Hall. On Saturday evening the trusty team unpack the boxes ready for the sale. After Mass we wait expectantly for customers. Although those few who come spend generously, we are always hoping to see some new faces. It seems the Retreat Hall is just so far from the Church that most people can't make the trek. Or are they frightened the Fair Trade goods are very expensive? It's true that what we sell may cost a bit more but £1 for a card or packet of biscuits doesn't seem bad and everything bought does such good. Rubber gloves and soap are just £1.50 and very good quality.

We receive a discount and over the years have supported various charities. We bought a fish farm, school equipment, chickens and goats. Now we mainly send the money to the Democratic Republic of Congo, either to support our school in Masi ma Nimba or primary school children in Kinshasa who wouldn't otherwise be able to go to school. We also supported a disabled woman to get a sewing machine and set up as a dressmaker on her own account. Other women have been helped to come off the streets and set up a dressmaking business.

I am sometimes asked why we should buy Traidcraft goods from our stall rather than just buy Fairtrade in the supermarkets. I would point you to the help Traidcraft gives those who produce their goods. They are able to do this from the profit they make from goods sold on Traidcraft stalls in Churches and elsewhere. Goods sold through supermarkets are sold at a larger discount so Traidcraft receives less. Obviously it's good to buy Fairtrade wherever you can but I really hope this article may help you realise why your help is needed every month at our stall and I look forward to seeing you, cash in hand! We always advertise the next sale in the weekly bulletin.

https://youtu.be/cle_zr_cDrY // visit these links for more on Fairtrade
<https://youtu.be/6Zl6PtyeVB8> // <https://youtu.be/l69IAWzFXec>



FAIRTRADE

WHAT DOES FAIRTRADE DO?

Fairtrade **sets social, economic and environmental standards** for both companies and the farmers and workers who grow the food we love. For farmers and workers the standards include protection of workers' rights and the environment, for companies they include the payment of the Fairtrade Minimum Price and an additional Fairtrade Premium to invest in business or community projects of the community's choice.

Fairtrade independently **certifies products and ingredients**, licensing the use of the FAIRTRADE Mark on products and packaging to signal this.

Fairtrade **works with companies' own schemes** to ensure that producers are paid a fair price, supporting strong, flourishing producer organisations and enabling democratic decision-making by farmers and workers on their business and community development.

Fairtrade **lobbies government** to demand fairer treatment in trade deals towards farmers in developing countries who supply us with so much of our food.

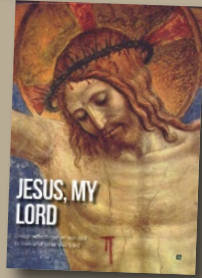
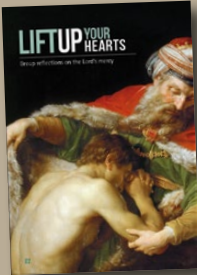
Fairtrade **works directly with producers**, from Bolivian coffee farmers tackling the plant diseases linked to climate change, to cocoa-growing communities creating a women's leadership school in Côte d'Ivoire.

WHERE DOES FAIRTRADE WORK?

There are over 1.65 million farmers and workers in 1,226 producer organisations across the Fairtrade system in 74 countries across 4 continents.

Fairtrade as a certification is much more than merely an environmental certification, it is the only and best ethical and social certification that really ensures social and environmental, ethical and economic impact, and therefore human impact.'

Enrique Calderon, Coffee farmer, Coopeagri.



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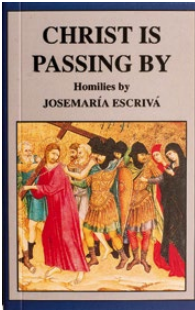
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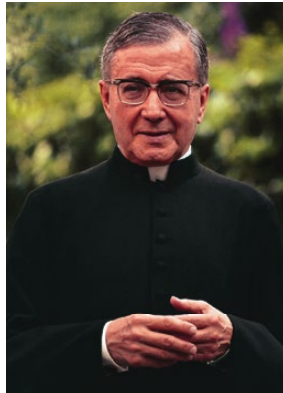




Christ Is Passing By
Scepter/CTS [£8.50]

Saint Josemaría, founder of Opus Dei, prepared this book in 1973 drawing on his abundant preaching between 1951 and 1971. It follows the feasts of the liturgical year, from Advent to the Solemnity of Christ the King. He consistently emphasises the great truth that your most ordinary human activities can and should reflect the presence and transcendence of God and that you should strive always to sanctify your everyday life.

Scripture inspires every



page, making it ideal for spiritual reading; Divine Filiation is the thread that holds it together - that marvellous reality that can guide the life of the Christian passing through the middle of the world: namely that 'I am a child of God'.

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struggle, the Eucharist, the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Mother... the gentle voice of this Saint encourages as he preaches: "Make me to know your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths' (Ps 24:4). We ask the Lord to guide us, to show us his footprints, so we can set out to attain the fullness of his commandments, which is charity." **MG**

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PLATEA RECALLS JAN 2017-MAY 2017

BAPTISMS

By 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).

Mia Grace Richards	23 April
Isabella Bonnici	30 April
Jacob Sebastian McMahan	14 May

DEATHS

We 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).

Michael Penfold	2 January
Sonja Duncan	5 January
Jacqueline Nichols	5 January
Philomena Reilly	14 January
Derek Thompson	24 January
Nora Gerrie	5 March
Michael Connolly	15 March
Fr Charles Owen CP	8 April
Bernard Cullen	17 April
Eva Giles	10 May
Joan Stilwell	15 May



Welcome Little Brother

On Sunday 14 May, Jacob McMahan was welcomed into the Church by Fr Mark. Jacob became the 40th member of his family to be baptised at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Herne Bay; the first being his great, great grandmother Florence Watts in 1905.

If you like to share here your memories of sacraments and celebrations at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, please email plateamag@gmail.com.

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Friday	Adoration (4.30-5.30pm) at 25 Western Esplanade
Saturday	Adoration (10-11am); Rosary, said for the parish (10.45am); Mass (11.05am); Vigil Mass (6pm)
Sunday	Masses (9.30am and 11.15am)



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PLATEA

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