

PLATEA

Herne Bay's Catholic Parish Magazine

Christmas 2017 (issue 4)

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And **she gave birth to her first-born son** and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

The Way to Santiago ♦ Annette Ballard
Deacon James Foley 1925-2017 ♦ Barry Walker
It's All Greek to Me ♦ Michael E Norman
Faith and Religion ♦ Julian Jennings





Annunciation by John Collier
[2000]

This contemporary rendering of the Annunciation was produced in the summer of 2000 by American artist John Collier as part of a series of paintings commissioned by St Gabriel's Catholic Church in McKinney, Texas.

Collier's Annunciation shows Mary as a Catholic school girl in the 21st century, dressed in a simple, flowing, blue dress and wearing untied trainers coming quickly to the door to greet an unexpected visitor. The scene is set on the porch of a modern American house but the picture is laden with traditional iconography (as you can see from the 15th Century image, top right). The lilies are present, symbolising Mary's purity, as is a little, red book in her hand, a sign of her piety and devotion to God. The dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit is perched on the nearby roof top.

Mary is depicted with an unflinching yet quizzical look ('how can this be since I am a virgin?') as she prepared to say 'Yes' to God's magnificent offer (Luke 1:26-38).



Annunciation by Filippo Lippi
[1443-1450]

This version of the 'Annunciation' by Italian Renaissance artist Filippo Lippi, is known as the **Murate Annunciation**, and is housed in the Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Germany.

It depicts the Virgin humbly accepting her role as mother of Jesus, with a hand on her breast, stood in front of a throne (Queen of Heaven, Seat of Wisdom) while the dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit, is given to her - a line of gold symbolising the procession of the Spirit from the Father is visible from top left to Mary's body.

While the angel in Collier's work is dressed as an acolyte, standing in her prayer, here Gabriel is kneeling in profound adoration before the Real Presence of God in the child Jesus, conceived of the Spirit.

Write in with your thoughts by email:
plateamag@gmail.com or to Platea, 3
Sea Street, Herne Bay.

In this Issue of **PLATEA**

Highlights



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www.ourladyhernebay.co.uk/magazine



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PLATEA

Herne Bay's Catholic Parish Magazine

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 Caira, Richard Carr, Gabrielle Davis, Marian Green, Mark Nash, Rachel Nash, 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: The Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-7 - New Revised Standard Version)

Welcome to **PLATEA**

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the fourth edition of **PLATEA**, the parish magazine of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Herne Bay.

There is a tremendous variety to the articles in this edition. We are delighted to welcome articles from new contributors as well as those who have written for **PLATEA** before. The topics range from Science's relationship with Faith and Religion, a topic of a recent Let's Talk session, to the Camino de Santiago recently walked by one of our parishioners.

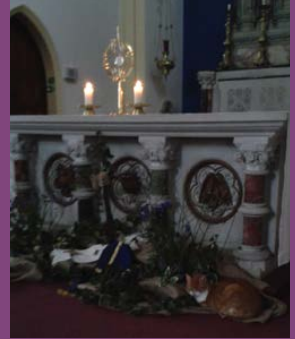
Barry Walker pays tribute to his fellow Deacon, James Foley who died earlier this year. James was a prolific writer himself and we aim to include some of the pieces he has written in future editions of **PLATEA**.

The La Sainte Union School is fondly remembered by Gerry McWilliams as he writes of the recent gathering of sisters and former pupils at the unveiling of the LSU mosaic which sits outside the church.

Enjoy these and all the articles in this Christmas 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. You will also note, on the back cover, the times and dates of our Christmas celebrations.

With an assurance of my prayers and best wishes,

Fr Mark White CP
Parish Priest



OSCAR'S PAWS FOR THOUGHT

**I LOVE
ADORATION IN
CHURCH. I GO
OFTEN. COME AND
JOIN ME WEEKDAY
MORNINGS 8.30
TO 9.30 AND
SATURDAYS 10.00
TO 11.00**



Pray always and don't lose heart: A response

Reflecting on the letter in issue 3 of **PLATEA** entitled 'Who do I pray to?' got me thinking about prayer, what it means to us, what it is and how we 'do' it.

Part Four of the Catechism is devoted to prayer, finishing with a long and beautiful section on the Our Father. It begins:

"Great is the mystery of the faith!" The Church professes this mystery in the Creed and celebrates it in the sacramental liturgy, so that the life of the faithful may be conformed to Christ in the Holy Spirit to the Glory of God the Father. This mystery, then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer.'

I don't know about you, but any relationship I have with anyone takes effort, time, energy. Each is very different depending on the closeness of the bond: spouse, children, family members or friends. And, generally the more I'm willing to put in the more I get back.

Then, we are called, to love 'the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind'. God has loved us first and our response should be one of love. For me, prayer is a precious relationship between me and God and more intimately, for me, Jesus. There are many ways to pray – vocal, si-

lent, meditative, contemplative, to name just a few. Instead I just want to leave you with some ideas that are a help to nourish a life of prayer.

Firstly, the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation, where God's grace works actively in our souls.

Secondly, the Scriptures, where the Word Himself speaks to our hearts through the Holy Spirit, giving us food and guidance.

Thirdly, other spiritual writings as well as biographies of your favourite saints, who inspire us and teach us. E.g.:

'I have not the courage to force myself to seek beautiful prayers in books; not knowing which to choose I act as children do who cannot read; I say quite simply to the good God what I want to tell Him, and He always understands me.' (St Therese of Lisieux)

'Keep yourself in the Presence of God and in that way there will be a continuous prayer in the midst of all your business.' (St Paul of the Cross)

'You write, "To pray is to talk with God. But about what?" About Him, about yourself - joys, sorrows, successes and failures, noble ambitions, daily worries, weaknesses! And acts of thanksgiving and petitions—and Love and reparation. In a word, to get to know him and to get to know yourself—to get acquainted!' (St Josemaría).

There is so much to ponder on the subject of prayer. These are just a few of my own personal thoughts. It would be great to hear yours. Please write in.

Marian Green

Parish in Review

Joint Confirmation Mass - Herne Bay and Whitstable 12.10.17



© Jack Pellow

Christmas Fayre 2.12.17



© Angela McManhan

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.

THE WAY

CAMINO TO SANTIAGO

The Way of St James, known as the Camino, is actually a web of pilgrimage routes across Spain to Santiago de Compostela. Annette Ballard made this challenging but rewarding trek and here shares her tale.

I AM BLESSED.

In the late eighties I read *The Pilgrimage* by Paulo Coelho, it spoke to me profoundly and I had a longing to make that pilgrimage myself. I had four young children and held onto that thought for many years, often talking about my desire to do this. 2017 was my year, out of bad came good. I was being made redundant and with encouragement and support from my husband I planned to walk the Camino. I began training and doing research and getting very excited.

A few weekends before I was to leave was my parents' 60th wedding anniversary and Bishop Conti gave a homily

about a pilgrimage undertaken by Bishop Geddes to Sanday, Orkney. This is where my parents live. His motto for his pilgrimage was 'Ambula Corum Deo', I decided to make it my motto. Walk in the presence of God.

INDEED I WAS BLESSED.

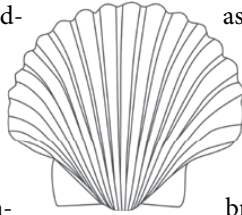
Father Mark gave me my first stamp in my pilgrims' passport (see the stamps on pp.10-11) as this is where my pilgrimage would begin and end. I flew out of Stansted to Biarritz on April 20th. As my friend left me and I had to go on my own fear suddenly gripped me and I thought what am I doing? I am almost



60, afraid of the dark, not great at carrying heavy loads or walking up hills and a limited sense of direction!! However I had decided to read daily the Southwark Diocese Easter readings and today's was Luke 24:38 "Why are you so agitated, and why are these doubts rising in your hearts?" During the flight I reflected on these words and used my borrowed motto as a mantra to calm my inner fears.

Once I arrived at Biarritz a minibus took a group of us to St Jean Pied-de-Port. Everyone seemed so friendly. We were dropped off and I went to find my first hostel for the night. There was one young man in there who only said hello, then another man came in and he was silent also. In my head I was thinking this is going to be so hard if I have to be silent all the time. Then along came a young girl called Lexi, who was bubbly and full of life. I named her Tiger. Others came in and soon we were all chatting, even with limited English and went exploring and had our first meal together. It was beautiful but there is a curfew in the hostels of lights out at 10:00pm Sharing a room full of strangers, sleep-

ing in a bunk bed and using a sleeping bag, sharing bathroom facilities with many others, again I kept thinking what am I doing? I assured myself as best I could; that I am attempting to achieve a long held desire, also the night after next I had booked myself a hotel room so that I would have my own space and this would be my own reward for making it over the Pyrenees! Finally with mixtures of fear and excitement I fell



asleep. I was awoken early in the morning with movement and people packing their rucksacks. Advice been given and received from experienced walkers and novices, a shared breakfast and people departing at different times. I felt scared. I hadn't practised with the walking poles and was even struggling opening them. The one my friend gave me broke and I had to ask a young boy to help me with the one my colleagues at work had given me. I was on my own...Tiger and some of the others I met had set off earlier as they wanted to go over the pyrenees in one day, I knew I could not do this and had opted for a stop not quite half way. It was hot and arduous climbing,



where would the next toilet be? Can I do this? Fear/excitement/awe at the beauty around. So many walkers, all ages and sizes, alone and in groups, greeting each other with “buen camino.” It was exhilarating and draining, I really was on this adventure, on the camino.

This is just the beginning, I have so many tales of my five weeks on the Camino. The wonderful camaraderie that is formed, the good friends you make, the outstanding beauty you are surrounded with, the simple churches and the really elaborate churches, the variety of hostels to stay in, the amazing foods tasted, the amazing art work around from graffiti to formal sculptures. Mostly though it

and couldn't get my water bottle, again someone appeared and reached my water bottle for me and walked with me until we reached the next town. There are numerous incidences like this that occur all the time.

INDEED I AM BLESSED.

I firmly believe that I was held in a prayer bubble during my camino and I learnt many life lessons. Life is a long road with many twists and turns, ups and downs. Sometimes you are on your own, at other times you are surrounded by people. You don't always know where you are going to sleep or where you may get your next meal. It is a journey



is the outstanding kindness of strangers. My first experience was on the first day, my lace had come undone but I couldn't bear to bend down to tie it as it was hard enough walking uphill with my backpack and not to fall over. The thought of bending to tie my shoelace was incomprehensible. However out of nowhere a man appeared who offered to tie my lace for me. I was filled with such gratitude for his kindness. I was in a forest on my own and it seemed like an endless steep descent and I thought I would never reach the end and I was so thirsty

of trust and discovery. Strength for me came from my faith. I felt God's presence and blessing many times along my path. I am eternally grateful to all my family and friends around the world who held me in prayer during my Camino, without that prayer support the journey would not have been so blessed.

Having finally arrived at Santiago de Compostela I have to say I was disappointed to see the cathedral covered in scaffolding, but then it was another lesson for me to learn. We hold expectations in our head and sometimes life



just not like that but there is still beauty to be found. The cathedral was amazing and I was fortunate to attend mass twice where they swung the amazing botafumeiro and a mass in English where a Venezuelan priest told us that the yellow arrows that marked our way were like the bible there to guide us but God was the sat nav of our hearts that we needed to listen too.

I have many stories and photos to share if anyone would like to ask. Please feel free, as I feel totally blessed and honoured to have done this.



LSU REMEMBERED IN HERNE BAY

On 24 February 2017, ten La Sainte Union Sisters, which included sisters who had lived and worked there, were privileged to be present at a very meaningful celebration of LSU presence of one hundred years in Herne Bay prepared by the Past Pupils Association. It was a 'Service of Dedication' of the mosaic donated by the past pupils of the Convent school in thanksgiving for the 100 years the Sisters had given to Catholic education in Herne Bay.

Such an expression of love and fidelity to LSU after all these years was deeply touching.

We were impressed and inspired by the Mass prepared by Clotilde (Chloe) and her friends. Their first bidding prayer expressed the affection they still hold for the Sisters:-

'Heavenly Father, we give you thanks and praise for the 100 years the Sisters of La Sainte Union worked in Herne Bay and the wonderful legacy they left both in the school itself and in the lives of so many pupils who were given such a valuable start in life: '

It was an added bonus that Fr Mark White CP, who has known LSU for many years, (since his time in Highgate), should be the presiding celebrant. After Mass Fr Mark blessed the brass plaque which was presented to the Sisters by the parishioners in 1988 honouring their years of service to Education in Herne Bay.

The plaque had hung in the convent chapel until the convent closed and has now been transferred to the nave of the Church.

At the end of the liturgy Clotilde, the President of the Past Pupils Association, took us down 'memory lane' with a rich, well researched and entertaining history of the school, laced with humorous and affectionate anecdotes of the Sisters who had taught in the



Article by Gerry McWilliams



school over the years. The detail revealed the love and respect they had for the Sisters – and reminded us that not much went unnoticed by our students!!!

Outside the church Fr Mark blessed the beautiful mosaic plaque which had been specially commissioned by the Past Pupils Association and created and realised by Rob Turner and Jo Dyer.

The mosaic has been implanted in the paving at the entrance to the Church. Alongside is a similar mosaic that was placed there on the occasion of the closing of St Philip Howard primary school which functioned from 1977 to 2013.

After the liturgy we gathered in the parish social centre for refreshments. Here we were in no doubt that the spirit of LSU was very much present, alive and well amongst the women. Together they reconnected, told their stories, and reminisced about 'the good old days', with photo's and albums in abundance, as well as school ties and various other mementos of those happy days. We were so pleased to be part of such a significant event in the life of LSU in Herne Bay.

We left Herne Bay confident that our charism of union was definitely at work in the world through our past pupils. Equally we were proud to remember and honour the many sisters who had so faithfully served in Herne Bay. The legacy they had left in the hearts of the women we met that day was obvious and tangible. It was a tribute to the Sister's faithfulness and understanding of the Constitutions they lived out each day:-


Art 59 We are called to an active presence in and collaboration with the local Church. Sharing with other ministers in the mission of evangelization, we keep ourselves informed of pastoral directives, participate in apostolic works, and promote lay leadership.

55.1 We encourage in those we educate an awareness of the good in our world, a critical judgment, a sense of responsibility and service, and a commitment to peace and justice.

THIS WAS A DAY TO BE TREASURED, REMEMBERED, AND SHARED WITH OTHERS! THANK YOU

A TRIBUTE FROM LSU SISTERS





THE UNIVERSE and all in it came about by accident and coincidence! A claim many agnostics and atheists cling to in justifying their beliefs.

Many of the world's eminent scientists believe that God not only exists, they acknowledge he created the universe and its inhabitants. Dr Robert Jastrow, founder and director of the Goddard Institute at NASA wrote the book 'God and the Astronomers'. It claims today's astrological evidence supports the biblical view of the origin of the earth. As does the astronomer Pierre-Simon Laplace who said, the evidence for God as opposed to the evidence against him as creator of the universe is infinity to one.

The book, *Cosmos, Bios, Theos* (Universe, Life, God) written by sixty eminent scientists, including 24 Nobel Prize winners concludes there is only one convincing answer for all the intricate laws that exist in nature, Evolution, Coincidence, Happen-stance?, no, creation is by an omnipotent, omniscient God, says one contributing author, Yale physicist professor Henry Margenau. So it's all just coincidence then?

Did you know that if the earth was 10% larger or 10% smaller, life as we know it would not be possible?

The earth is just the right distance from the sun so that we receive the right amount of light and heat?

No other planet in our solar system tilts at 23 degrees allowing the sun's rays to touch every part of the earth surface over a year, as the earth circles the sun. If the earth had no tilt to its axis, the poles would accumulate enormous masses of ice and the equator would be too hot to live near.

Image: Observations from the Hubble Space Telescope, the Spitzer Space Telescope, and the Chandra X-ray Observatory are combined to produce an unprecedented image of the central region of our Milky Way galaxy (NASA/AP)

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Julian Jennings shares his understanding of various scientific explanations for the miracle of life's fragile existence.

Without the moon it would be impossible for us to live on this planet. The moon controls the oceans tides, aerating waters, providing oxygen for plankton the very foundation of our food chain; with no plankton there would be no oxygen and all life would end.

Lightning! A hundred thousand lightning bolts strike the planet daily creating a hundred million tons of usable nitrogen plant food in the soil every year.

Forty miles up there is a thin layer of ozone, without it, life would be unsustainable as eight killer rays would burn, blind or boil us. Ultraviolet rays come in two forms: long rays, which are deadly and are screened out and shorter rays which are necessary for life on earth are allowed through.

Without water life could not exist. This amazing liquid exists as ice, breaking up rocks and produces soil. As snow it stores water, as rain it waters and cleanses the

earth. As vapour, it provides moisture for much of the arable land. It exists as cloud cover in just the right amount as 50% of the earth's surface is covered by cloud at any one time allowing just the right amount of sunlight through. Other than bismuth (a heavy metal), water is the only liquid heavier at 4 degrees Celsius than it is at freezing. If this was not so, when water froze it would freeze from the bottom up and kill all the fish and algae, therefore, oxygen production would cease and mankind would die.

If this is not enough factual wonderment to convince the doubters of the existence of God have a look beyond our planet, at God's creation, the universe; it is amazing.

Astronomers have recently discovered, through deep-field images from the Hubble Space Telescope, that there are about 2 trillion {2,000,000,000,000} galaxies in the universe, according to a

study published in October 2016 in the journal *Science* by Christopher Conzelmann, a professor of astrophysics at the University of Nottingham in the U.K. Cosmologists estimate there are about 300 billion stars (suns) in our own galaxy, the Milky Way. Some galaxies are much smaller and some much bigger so perhaps 100 billion is a fair estimate of the stars that inhabit the average galaxy.

Multiplying the number of galaxies – 2 trillion (2,000,000,000,000) by a 100 billion (100,000,000,000) stars, results in a lot of zero's.

The number is so colossal it probably comes close to the largest number known to mathematicians, the Graham number. If interested in finding out what the Graham number is go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuigptwIVHo

The biggest star so far discovered is so big it would take 1100 years to circumnavigate flying a passenger jet round it at maximum speed.

The numbers are mind blowing and this note only scratches the surface of the wonders of God's creation, his universe. The more we discover the more we marvel at the power and majesty of God. Read Hebrews 1 verse 10 to 12.

For an interesting video 'Scientific Proof that God Exists' go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=5b9Pss0JfLg



9,192,631,770

Do you have any idea what this number might indicate? Just in case you're tempted, they're not the lottery numbers for next week. No, this number, this 'impossibly' precise number, is the count, in a single second of time, of whole cycles of the radiation emitted during the transition between two hyperfine levels of the ground state of the caesium-133 atom at 0K. This is one second in time.

For many in the world today, the most true, the most precise and the most valued kind of knowledge consists in counting differences. Even in disciplines such as psychology, the scientific study of the human mind and its functions, new ways of measuring are abounding. It is clearly a matter for debate as to whether these measured insights into principles of thought and action compare to those of writers such as Austen, Dante, or Shakespeare.

What we profess of God is his immeasurability, his immutability (unchangingness). Most of the time, modern science deals with matters that are not directly connected with faith at all, often involving measurements, laws and quantities. There are no grounds for supposing a naïve hostility to exist between faith and science, quite often they are talking of different things. **MN**

LET'S TALK: SCIENCE & FAITH

Imagine you're with a friend or work colleague. The radio's on and the news come on. Today, the lead story is medical: a new life-saving treatment is just around the corner. The presenter acknowledges that some people have raised ethical concerns about how this new therapy has been developed (he mentions a prominent clergyman, someone you've never heard of), but then we hear a quick clip from the lead scientist on the project, who's hopeful, excited, enthusiastic. This new approach will change the lives of millions, he says.

As the news moves on to the next story, your friend says, 'This is the twenty-first century. I wish these religious types would stick to their own business, and let scientists carry on with theirs.' It's not a comment that invites discussion, or expects disagreement. How do you respond? Do you respond at all?

This is the kind of real-life scenario that prompted the parish Let's Talk discussion series. In a world where religion is increasingly expected to keep to its own place, and where that place seems to grow smaller by the day, how do we discuss, defend or explain our faith to others? In many situations, maybe we're not entirely sure what our beliefs really are.

The Let's Talk sessions are a chance for people to meet in an informal, relaxed manner, discuss contemporary topics, and learn from each other. At the most recent meeting, the focus was on 'science and religion': Since modern science offers so many explanations, is there any place left for religion? As scientific discoveries expand, is the role of religion retreating? Has science in fact made religion obsolete? Or should science and religion really be addressing different questions?

Other recent topics

- The church and divorce. Divorce isn't the Christian ideal, but it's so common today that it's touched almost all of us. How can we as a church, as a parish, support people who are divorced, or who have been affected by divorce?
- The Afterlife. How do we get to heaven? Should we actually worry about this or is it more important to build a just society on earth? What does that phrase from the creed, 'the resurrection of the body', actually mean? Is there a hell, and if so would a loving God send anyone there?
- Islam. Is it possible for Christianity and Islam to co-exist peacefully, or is conflict inevitable? Should we try to convert our Muslim neighbours to our faith?
- Atheism. Can we actually know that God exists? Does religion make people better or might it actually make them worse? Can someone be 'good without God'? Where does morality actually come from?

Typically, 15 to 25 people attend a Let's Talk - small enough for everyone to join the discussion, big enough that you can just listen. Held every 4 to 8 weeks, everybody's welcome. Feel free to bring a friend. Come along—let's talk!

Phil Eichorn



ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY – HERNE BAY

THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL Society (SVP) is an International Voluntary organisation founded in 1833 by Frédéric Ozanam, providing practical assistance to anyone in need.

The SVP in Herne Bay was established 5 years ago, and currently has twelve full members supported by six auxiliary members. Our Conference strives to fulfil the worldwide SVP aims for those in need in Herne Bay and surrounding districts. Some of the things we do are :

- befriending people of all ages who are lonely and/or isolated, including those ill or house bound as well as those recently bereaved
- provision of essentials, including food, clothing and basic household equipment
- provide support in dealing with other agencies such council departments, social security, landlords and creditors

Over the last year your Herne Bay SVP has helped over 40 persons with a variety of needs, and a strict confidentiality code is observed in respect of all Clients.



In this edition of Platea Frank Gormley offers his experiences of the SVP and suggests how you might be able to help.

RESOURCES: PEOPLE

SVP Herne Bay's most essential resource is people, and until recently we had reasonable capacity to provide support to Clients. We are

being called upon more and more to fill the vacuum created by the ever decreasing capacity of overstretched social and other services, and this has resulted in a real need for additional full members.

WHAT DOES FULL MEMBERSHIP INVOLVE ?

TIME: availability to spend part of your week during the day, visiting and supporting Clients. This may involve a few hours or so per week, but does not normally involve weekends. Attendance, when possible, at weekly meetings held in the Parish Meeting Room

SKILLS/REQUIREMENTS: Christian values including a willingness and commitment to help those less fortunate. Members aim to be empathetic & non judgemental, emphasising listening.

EVENTS: involvement in and support for fund raising activities including fun events such as this year's Parish Fayre.



IS THIS FOR ME ?

For many it is only natural to be reluctant to explore and/or commit to organisations like the SVP, and perhaps question abilities or maybe there is not enough time. All that is required is a desire to help in some way our “neigh-

bours” in need, alongside the skills and abilities previously mentioned. Specialist skills and/or experience are not necessary although they can be useful

WILL I BE THROWN IN THE DEEP END ?

The answer is NO. Should you be interested we will invite you to an informal “tea/coffee” chat to give an opportunity to ask questions, and decide whether this could be right for you. If, you wish to proceed further you will be invited to attend Tuesday evening meetings, gaining further knowledge. The next step is to accompany experienced members on visits. Training on the job is essential, but there are periodic district SVP friendly short courses open to all.

FIRST STEP

If you are interested please ring our dedicated telephone 07869 509804 and/ or visit our website www.svp.org or speak to one of our members after Mass e.g. Jan, Julian, Frank & Janet and Deacon Barry

A RECENT SVP MEMBER EXPERIENCE

When I took that first step in Autumn 2016, I had no preconceived ideas about the SVP. I was warmly welcomed without any pressure or expectations to commit. I learned much at initial Tuesday evening meetings, by listening to members’ activities and Clients’ needs. It became clear to me that the team of members from various backgrounds and life experiences had the natural abilities and skills necessary alongside a strong commitment to help those in



need. Members support one and other, and also share a sense of humour.

EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT PROVIDED OVER LAST 12 MTHS

- arranging garden waste to be removed so that young person with health problems could enjoy more pleasant surroundings
- sourcing donated basic needed household items including, chairs, wardrobes, washing machine, freezer etc
- befriending single parent family facing eviction, potential homeless, with ever rising debts, and unemployment issues. Connecting Client with other agencies & charities hopefully many of these issues will be resolved
- delivering food from our food bank
- befriending and visiting in care homes



OTHER SUPPORT

Your SVP Herne Bay Team would like to thank those, that have been able, Parishioners ,and non Parishioners for the very generous support, whether it be by food bank (food items are listed on board at the back of Church) or cash donations including standing orders, or with encouragement and a kind word. Don't forget :

"BRING A TIN A WEEK AND HELP SOMEONE TO EAT"

www.svp.org
07869 509804

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OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM SING HAM

ROGER FAGG SHARES HIS REFLECTIONS ON THE PARISH WALSINGHAM PILGRIMAGE

I open my eyes, as the alarm goes off. Note to self; must change the alarm tune...it woke me up! Slowly the mist lifts, what time is it? 5.30 am. I look out of the window, still dark....Ahhh! Yes! Today is the pilgrimage to Walsingham...must get up. Quickly shaving, showering then cooking my morning eggs, bacon and mushrooms; I am on course to getting to the church on time....by 7.00am. Lunch packed, Gail my wife and I jump into the car for the short drive to the church. We chat about what the day may hold. Dogs sorted, as Julia my daughter will let them out and my son-in-law Joe will give them a walk.

Parking the car, it is still twilight as the dawn breaks, and we hurriedly walk to the church. Yes! The coach is there, no long wait, good oh! Soon the coach is filled as we pick up our final pilgrim from Whitstable and set out on our four hour journey to Walsingham. It is early so we should make good progress.

Althea Walker announces how the day's event will progress and asks if anyone wants to lead the Joyful Mysteries. It's a bit early so we are all pleased when Althea offers to lead. We pause for a moment to remember Fr Charles who led the Rosary en-route on our 2nd Walsingham Pilgrimage in 2016. We progress



with the Joyful Mysteries, calm and unifying. The headlights, though few, streak past on the opposite carriageway as do the red tail lights of cars passing us. The night gives up to day and the rain clouds gather as slowly the rain spatters the coach. After a while the rain slows and someone says "Oh! Look a rainbow!" To our left the sun is beaming through the tiny raindrops to create a colourful vista. The rainbow stretches down to the earth. Note to self, must remember where that pot of gold is!

We stop for a coffee break at Birchanger services before reciting the Luminous Mysteries as we gain momentum toward Walsingham. The close proximity of each other in the coach combined with a united purpose enables an easy camaraderie as people get to know each other a little better.

We arrive! We have the time table - lots to do, lots to see. Mass at 12 noon in the Chapel of Reconciliation. Time for a coffee. We walk down to the tea room, first impression - lots of people, long queue. A diversity of people from sever-

al ethnic backgrounds, young families, older folk, disabled people, wheelchairs. Some priests, some folk walking around in a voluminous high collared garments with a Maltese cross on the side. Knights of Malta, a group who look after disabled people. It is strange when you observe, what you pick up. Two knights of Malta with a disabled lady in a wheel chair in front talking to each other as though they had just got off a coach from Eton, the lady in the wheel chair, ignored. The young Knight takes the lady's purse pays for the drink, returns it and proceeds outside still in deep conversation, the lady in the wheelchair still, ignored.

Mass commences, not a seat to be found, bar one, which Gail spots and slips past to engage. I stand at the back with a number of ever joining pilgrims. "Come far?" Says the man standing next to me. "Kent", I say, "you?" "North Yorkshire" he says." Nice to meet you" say I. The mass commences we all are privileged to attend.

Outside we have our packed lunch, it rains a slight shower. Best ignore it... it



will go away and as we eat it certainly does. A lot of people sitting in the same pews five minutes ago were at Mass. Stations of the Cross at 2.15pm. Whilst not hurried there is a sense of urgency, we must visit the slipper chapel, light a candle for our daughter Sarah. We join the crowd gathered for the Stations of the Cross. And move a few paces with the congregation to each station. The Stations of the Cross outline the external part of the Chapel of Reconciliation. There is a comforting intimacy with the pilgrims united in praising God.

It is now 2.45pm time for the Eucharistic Adoration in the Chapel of Reconciliation. We sit down -silence, peace, calm. As the service progresses, I no longer hear the busy beat of time, all is quiet.

After Benediction the first 3 Sorrowful Mysteries are recited and then I look up to see a simple wooden cross and the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham carried by the Franciscan Renewal Priests and Brothers who now lead the Holy Mile Walk in total silence. We stand and join the sea of pilgrims following the cross. In total silence we all walk in a line two to four across as the path per-

mits. Approximately 600 people moving together slowly, some bare footed, others carrying children. My mind drifts in the silence to what the people of Rohingya must feel as they flee from their homes, and the people in the Bahamas, homeless, the Syrian refugees. I look up and see in the distance the wooden cross we all follow, always there midst the bobbing heads, momentarily lost then back again.

We reach our destination - the Priory Shrine of Walsingham, where we say the remaining 2 Sorrowful Mysteries, the Prayer for England and sing the Salve Regina. As we proceed back to our coach to commence our journey home and for the Glorious Mysteries on the coach, my thoughts travel to tomorrow, the things that need to be done. Our pilgrimage is over for today. What of tomorrow? Is that not a continuation of our journey, our pilgrimage of life?

Thank you Althea Walker for organising Walsingham - a moment in time.

The re-dedication of England as the Dowry of Mary will be on the Solemnity of the Annunciation in 2020. Our Lady of Walsingham. Pray for us!



All at **PLATEA** wish you a very happy and blessed Christmas.

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DISCO DAVID

It's completely barmy that some people have no problem enjoying a good old knees-up to celebrate a birthday or something like that but they get a wee bit uncomfortable when it comes to getting excited about God. Even more so, because it was God who first set an example. When God created the world it was He who made a point of saying that it was good, over and over again. God just loves us bigging things up and that's what this Bible story is about.

Israel's new king (David) had just got himself his very own royal city to live in (Jerusalem) and now he wanted to bring Israel's ark box there to stay. Just in case you didn't know, the ark was a golden box in which were kept two stone slabs. On them were engraved God's Ten Commandments to the Israelites. The ark was carried using long poles which were held by priests. The ark represented God being with them. This special box had travelled with the Israelites through much of their history and was very important to them.

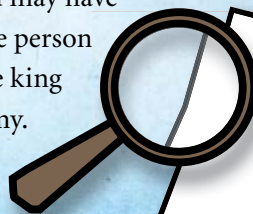
Now that David was king, bringing the ark to Jerusalem was top of his list. He and his men set out to fetch it from a place called Baalah of Judah where it had been kept. It was loaded onto an ox cart and off they went. Everyone was having a high old time leaping and dancing and singing as the



procession wended its way back to Jerusalem. Then disaster struck. One of the oxen lost its footing and a guy called Uzzah reached out to stop the ark from falling. Zap! God struck Uzzah down dead for not treating the ark with respect.

David decided to leave the ark at the house of Obed-Edom while he figured out what to do next. For the three months it was there Obed-Edom revelled in God's blessings. So, when King David got wind of this, he decided to fetch the ark again. But, this time he made sure the ark was carried properly by the priests and not on any old cart. The king had learned his lesson.

Once again David and his entourage partied all the way back to Jerusalem. The king even took off his royal robes to celebrate. While God may have loved it there was one person who thought that the king looked big-time barmy.



Find out who that was in Bible book 2 Samuel, chapter 6 and verses 16 to 23.

Cat in the Manger

By U A Fanthorpe



In the story, I'm not there.
Ox and ass, arranged at prayer:
But me? Nowhere.

Anti-cat evangelists
How on earth could you have missed
Such an obvious and able
Occupant of any stable?

Who excluded mouse and rat?
The harmless necessary cat.
Who snuggled in with the holy pair?
Me. And my purr.

Matthew, Mark and Luke and John
(Who got it wrong,
Who left out the cat)
Remember that,
Wherever He went in this great affair,
I was there.

If, 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.

Remember

by Christine Rossetti

Christine Rossetti was an English poet who wrote a variety of romantic, devotional and children's poems, including the words of the Christmas Carol 'In the bleak midwinter' and 'Remember'.

Christina was the youngest of four children of Gabriele Rossetti, an Italian poet and scholar who emigrated to England from Italy (a Roman Catholic) and Frances Polidori, daughter of another Italian exile.

With her mother and sister, she became deeply interested in the Anglo-Catholic movement that developed in the Church of England. Religious devotion came to play a major role in her life. She broke off her engagement to painter James Collinson in her late teens when he reverted to Catholicism.

Her most famous collection *Goblin Market* and other poems, appeared in 1862. It received widespread critical praise establishing her as the foremost female poet of her time. She never married and died of breast cancer in 1894. She is buried in Highgate cemetery.

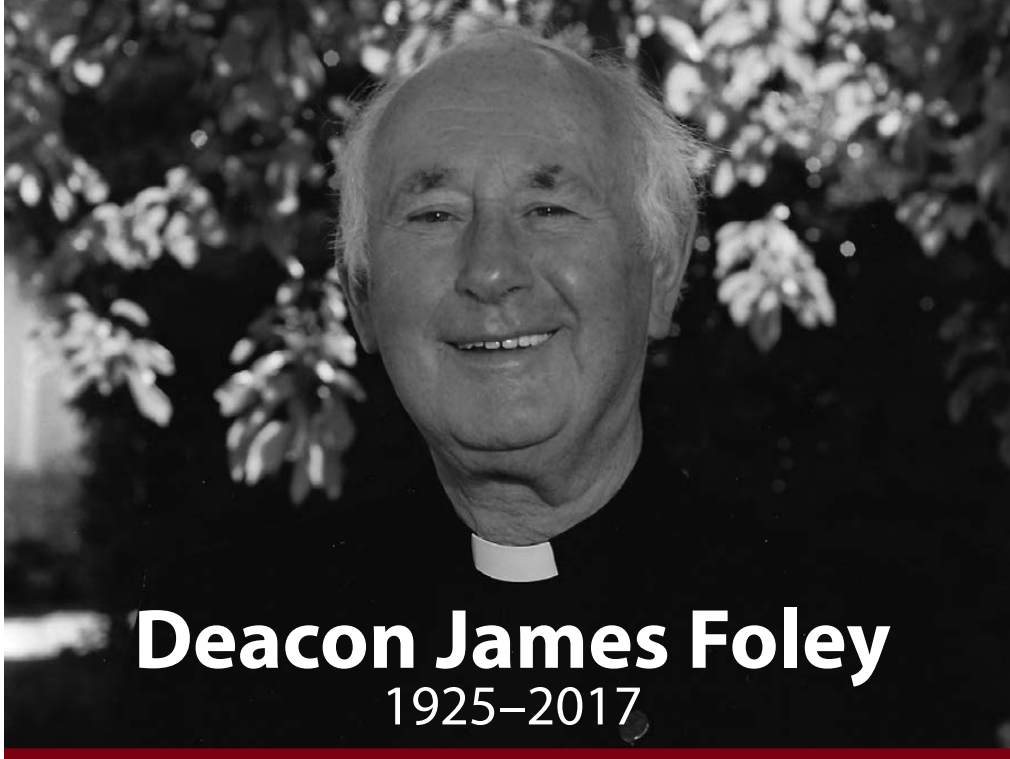
Remember me when I am gone away,
 Gone far away into the silent land;
 When you can no more hold me by the hand,
 Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
 Remember me when no more day by day
 You tell me of our future that you planned:
 Only remember me; you understand
 It will be late to counsel then or pray.
 Yet if you should forget me for a while
 And afterwards Remember, do not grieve:
 For if the darkness and corruption leave
 A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
 Better by far you should forget and smile
 Than that you should remember and be sad.

For a reading of this poem visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B5AAzi7eWXw>

Thanks to Terri Hancock for suggesting this poem





Deacon James Foley

1925–2017

History was made in our parish when on 19th March 1980, the feast of St. Joseph, Bishop John Jukes, assistant bishop in Kent to Archbishop Michael Bowen, ordained James Patrick Foley as a Permanent Deacon. Our parish was one of the first in the diocese of Southwark, and it was the first in Kent, to be able to count amongst its clergy a permanent married deacon. The permanent diaconate had been restored as an Order for mature men, single and married, in the Roman Church in 1964 during the Second Vatican Council and James was at last able to serve the Lord and the Church he loved as a permanent deacon.

James Patrick Foley was born in Castlemartyr, Co. Cork in 1925 and educated at the National School in Carrigtwohill.

He left school at fourteen, worked on a farm for seven years and then became hall porter at the Railway Hotel in Sligo. There he met Mary Mcmanus, a waitress in the hotel. They were engaged in 1948 and married in Sligo Cathedral in 1949. They moved to England where James acquired a position with the Duke of Bedford as a footman, steadily rising to the position of butler and during which time James and Mary were blessed with two sons, James and Edmund; Ed sadly died in 2005 after a long illness. After the Duke died, James joined the shoe retailers, Russell & Bromley, at their Bedford branch. In 1959, He was promoted to manager which meant moving to Herne Bay; business flourished and James was promoted once more, this time to Canterbury and from there to

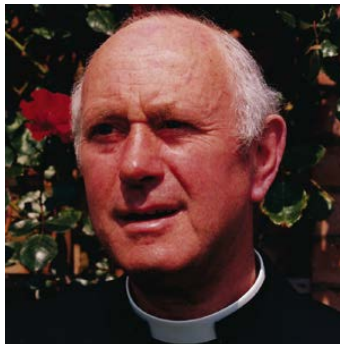
Bromley and finally back to Canterbury.

James loved Herne Bay, its people and the Passionists who serve us. He worked hard for the Church, for many years building up the team of Altar Servers. He organised instruction on the Mass, he trained the older servers so that they could help with the training of the younger ones. And let's not forget the football matches with the French students! In short, he prepared those young men to be men. When it came to practising for major ceremonies, Easter, Christmas etc. I can hear him saying, "If we practise 100% we'll only get 50% on the day, but if we practise 200% we'll get 100% on the day". He would arrange weekend retreats for the altar servers at Aylesford Priory which led, in 1963, to the first group going to Minsteracres.

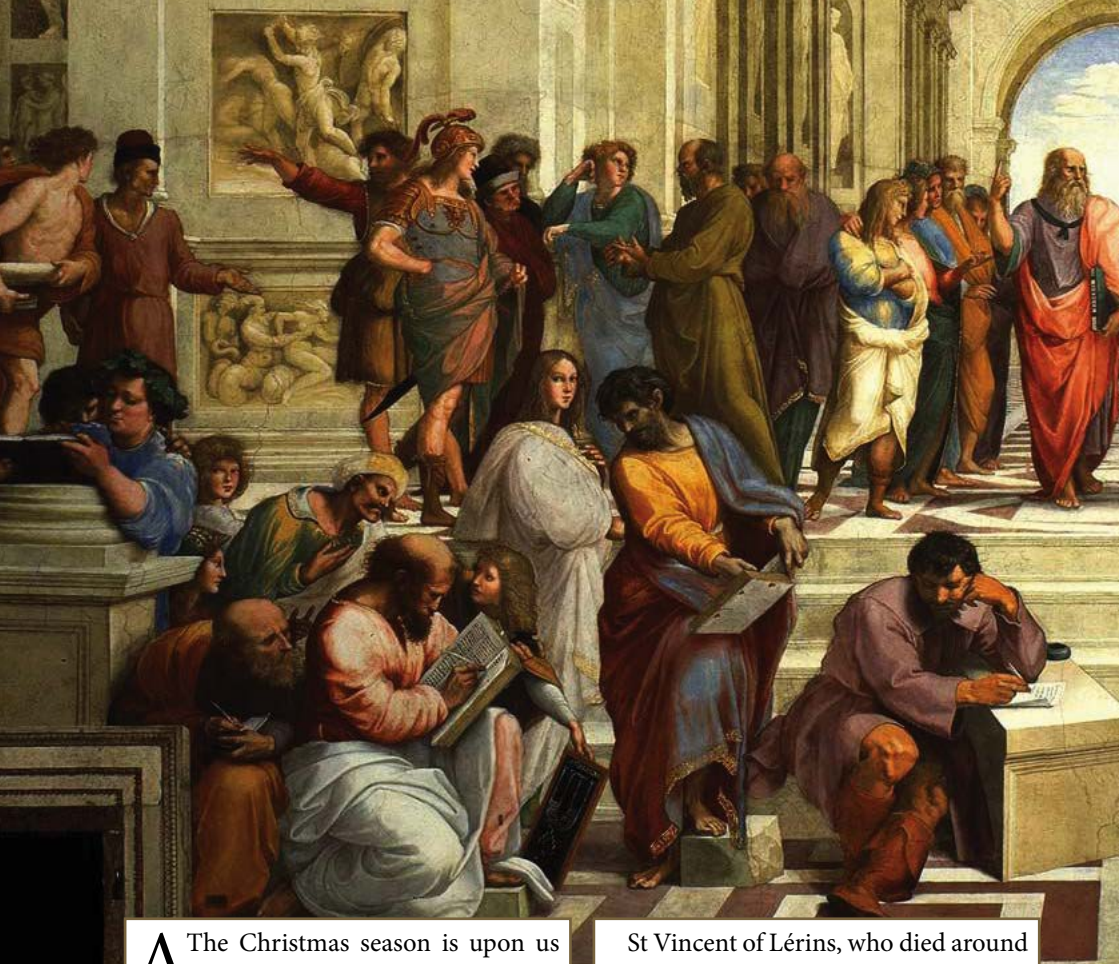
Many received the fruits of his experience of watching, listening, learning from others as he shared his knowledge

as a trainer of people so that they, in their turn, might undertake their duties in the best possible way; that could be managing a Russell & Bromley store, selling shoes on the shop-floor or serving Mass. James was generous with his knowledge and always encouraged others to become the best they could be. Eventually, and not without set-backs, James was ordained a permanent deacon, and many residents in care homes, many housebound and sick, were blessed with a visit from Deacon James. Many returned to the Church as a result of his ministry and many recall with fondness and great appreciation the baptisms, weddings and funerals he carried out. None of this would have been possible, and I know Deacon James would be the first to say so, without the grace of God together with the prayers, the quiet support and gentle presence of his wife, Mary. May they both, with their son Edmund, rest in peace.

Deacon Barry Walker



Deacon James was a prolific writer and chronicler of Church events. His recollections of the Papal Visit in 1982 has pride of place in the Bishop's House in West Malling and, over the coming editions, we hope to include extracts from his 'Blue Book' of our parish's history written for the Centenary celebrations in 1989.



L The Christmas season is upon us once more, and as it is now customary it is accompanied with much lamentation about commercialisation and secularisation – sentiments which are amply justified. Yet the phenomenon is in fact a familiar one in the history of Christianity: the relationship between religion and the various cultures which have contributed to its definition down the centuries. Almost immediately after the birth of the Church, indeed, the Hebrew pedigree of the Faith was re-interpreted in the context of the universal Greek spiritual culture in which the first conversions occurred.

St Vincent of Lérins, who died around 450 AD, was probably not the first to recognise the significance of what later theologians called 'Development' in Christian understanding, but his was certainly the earliest written account of it. All life is change, as Cardinal Newman was much later to observe, and to be perfect is to change often.

The early Church was set in societies which, throughout the Mediterranean world, had become steeped in Greek culture – and which the Roman conquests helped to distribute, since Roman educated opinion was addicted to Greek learning. Even the Jewish religion, de-

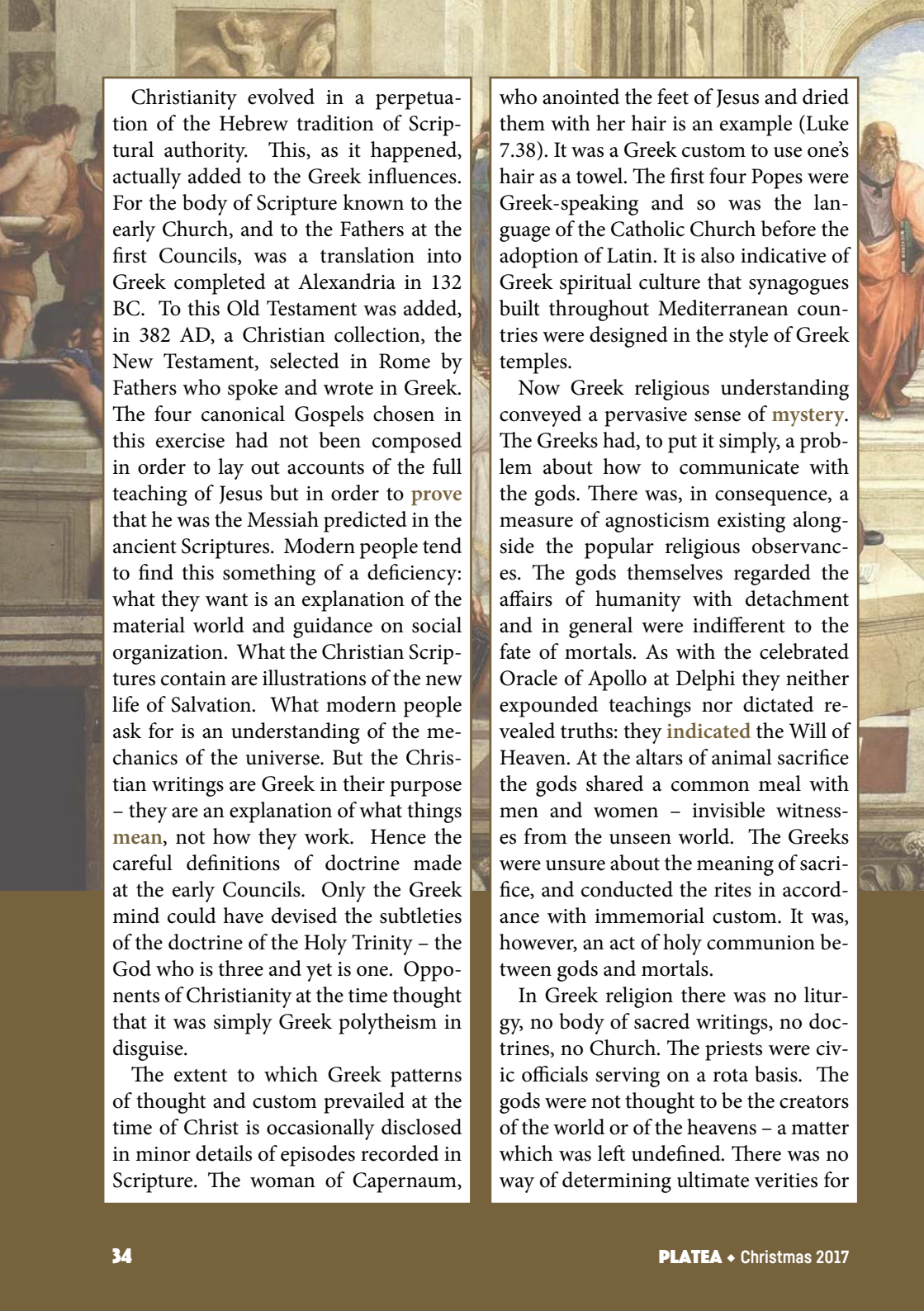


The School of Athens by Raphael (1509-1511)

IT'S ALL GREEK TO ME

spite its exclusivity, had absorbed Greek ideas and conventions some two hundred years before the life of Christ. The Maccabean revolt of the second century BC had been fired in some measure by popular opposition to the penetration of Greek influences. Modern scholars of the early Church have dwelt at length on the Hebrew foundations of Christianity, and they have correctly drawn attention to the Jewish traditions of belief in which Christ delivered his message of Salvation. The Jewish converts who engineered the enormous expansion of the new Faith in the cities of the Mediterranean world, however, were im-

mersed in the Greek religious concepts in which they received and interpreted the message. The religious landscape in the earliest years of the Church, as St Paul complained (2 Cor.11.4; Eph. 4.14), was characterised by numerous diversities – rather like modern western ‘spirituality’ in fact. Another screen of difficulty was the emphatic rejection of the ‘pagan’ gods (so numerous, too) recognised within Greek spiritual practice. For Greek religion did not depend upon a theology: it was grounded in observances. The gods, during visitations of human society, had exhibited rather less than savoury behaviour.



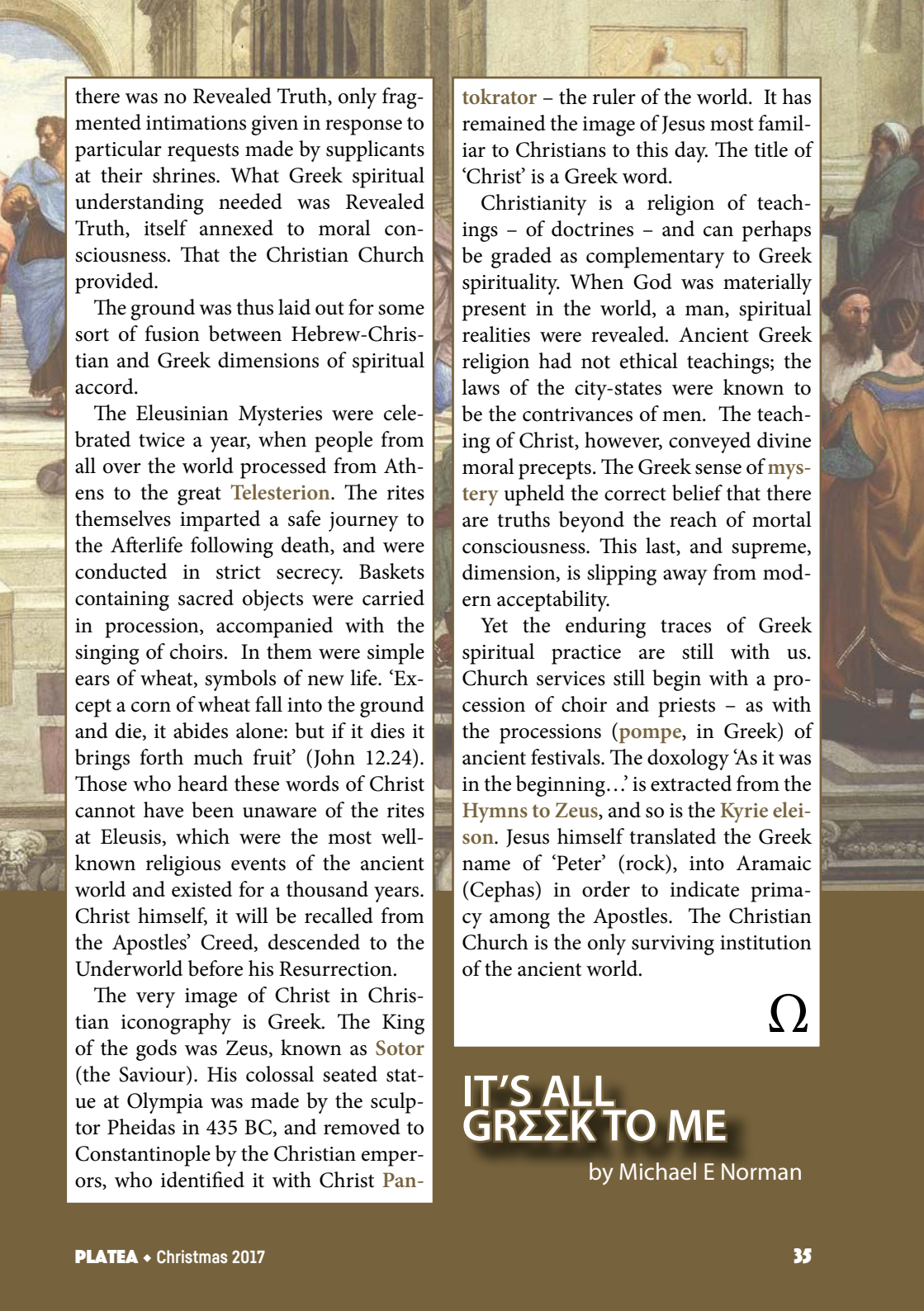
Christianity evolved in a perpetuation of the Hebrew tradition of Scriptural authority. This, as it happened, actually added to the Greek influences. For the body of Scripture known to the early Church, and to the Fathers at the first Councils, was a translation into Greek completed at Alexandria in 132 BC. To this Old Testament was added, in 382 AD, a Christian collection, the New Testament, selected in Rome by Fathers who spoke and wrote in Greek. The four canonical Gospels chosen in this exercise had not been composed in order to lay out accounts of the full teaching of Jesus but in order to **prove** that he was the Messiah predicted in the ancient Scriptures. Modern people tend to find this something of a deficiency: what they want is an explanation of the material world and guidance on social organization. What the Christian Scriptures contain are illustrations of the new life of Salvation. What modern people ask for is an understanding of the mechanics of the universe. But the Christian writings are Greek in their purpose – they are an explanation of what things **mean**, not how they work. Hence the careful definitions of doctrine made at the early Councils. Only the Greek mind could have devised the subtleties of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity – the God who is three and yet is one. Opponents of Christianity at the time thought that it was simply Greek polytheism in disguise.

The extent to which Greek patterns of thought and custom prevailed at the time of Christ is occasionally disclosed in minor details of episodes recorded in Scripture. The woman of Capernaum,

who anointed the feet of Jesus and dried them with her hair is an example (Luke 7.38). It was a Greek custom to use one's hair as a towel. The first four Popes were Greek-speaking and so was the language of the Catholic Church before the adoption of Latin. It is also indicative of Greek spiritual culture that synagogues built throughout Mediterranean countries were designed in the style of Greek temples.

Now Greek religious understanding conveyed a pervasive sense of **mystery**. The Greeks had, to put it simply, a problem about how to communicate with the gods. There was, in consequence, a measure of agnosticism existing alongside the popular religious observances. The gods themselves regarded the affairs of humanity with detachment and in general were indifferent to the fate of mortals. As with the celebrated Oracle of Apollo at Delphi they neither expounded teachings nor dictated revealed truths: they **indicated** the Will of Heaven. At the altars of animal sacrifice the gods shared a common meal with men and women – invisible witnesses from the unseen world. The Greeks were unsure about the meaning of sacrifice, and conducted the rites in accordance with immemorial custom. It was, however, an act of holy communion between gods and mortals.

In Greek religion there was no liturgy, no body of sacred writings, no doctrines, no Church. The priests were civic officials serving on a rota basis. The gods were not thought to be the creators of the world or of the heavens – a matter which was left undefined. There was no way of determining ultimate verities for



there was no Revealed Truth, only fragmented intimations given in response to particular requests made by supplicants at their shrines. What Greek spiritual understanding needed was Revealed Truth, itself annexed to moral consciousness. That the Christian Church provided.

The ground was thus laid out for some sort of fusion between Hebrew-Christian and Greek dimensions of spiritual accord.

The Eleusinian Mysteries were celebrated twice a year, when people from all over the world processed from Athens to the great **Telesterion**. The rites themselves imparted a safe journey to the Afterlife following death, and were conducted in strict secrecy. Baskets containing sacred objects were carried in procession, accompanied with the singing of choirs. In them were simple ears of wheat, symbols of new life. 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it dies it brings forth much fruit' (John 12.24). Those who heard these words of Christ cannot have been unaware of the rites at Eleusis, which were the most well-known religious events of the ancient world and existed for a thousand years. Christ himself, it will be recalled from the Apostles' Creed, descended to the Underworld before his Resurrection.

The very image of Christ in Christian iconography is Greek. The King of the gods was Zeus, known as **Sotor** (the Saviour). His colossal seated statue at Olympia was made by the sculptor Pheidias in 435 BC, and removed to Constantinople by the Christian emperors, who identified it with Christ **Pan-**

tokrator – the ruler of the world. It has remained the image of Jesus most familiar to Christians to this day. The title of 'Christ' is a Greek word.

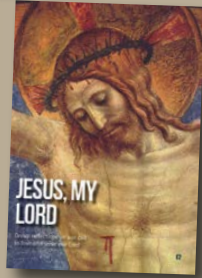
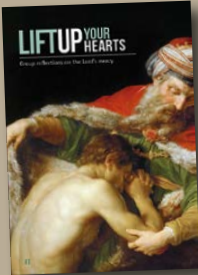
Christianity is a religion of teachings – of doctrines – and can perhaps be graded as complementary to Greek spirituality. When God was materially present in the world, a man, spiritual realities were revealed. Ancient Greek religion had not ethical teachings; the laws of the city-states were known to be the contrivances of men. The teaching of Christ, however, conveyed divine moral precepts. The Greek sense of **mystery** upheld the correct belief that there are truths beyond the reach of mortal consciousness. This last, and supreme, dimension, is slipping away from modern acceptability.

Yet the enduring traces of Greek spiritual practice are still with us. Church services still begin with a procession of choir and priests – as with the processions (**pompe**, in Greek) of ancient festivals. The doxology 'As it was in the beginning...' is extracted from the **Hymns to Zeus**, and so is the **Kyrie eleison**. Jesus himself translated the Greek name of 'Peter' (rock), into Aramaic (Cephas) in order to indicate primacy among the Apostles. The Christian Church is the only surviving institution of the ancient world.



IT'S ALL GREEK TO ME

by Michael E Norman



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PLATEA RECALLS MAY 2017-OCT 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).

Jackson Michael Vowles	4 June
Levi Meehan-Taylor	2 July
Annabella Francesca Miller	16 July
Bridey Lucey Threadgill	20 August
Aurora Catherine Gonzalez	30 August
Jessica Bowman	03 September
Ruby Wendy Matthews	24 September
Alice Ellen Manser	22 October

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS

Jesus said: I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he or she will live forever (John 6:51).

Isabella-Maria Castelino, Joseph Fifield,
Thomas Haveron, Theo Harvey Bayer,
William Peter Healy, Connor McMahan, Orla Mullaney

10 June

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).

Steven Lucas	28 May
Jordan Lupton	29 May
George McGowan	30 May
George Muriel	4 July
Kevan Street	29 July
Deacon James Foley	1 August
Angela Giust	25 August
Sheila Monk	22 September
Pat Walters	28 September
Naomi Marsh	13 October
Anna Maria Chedd	19 October
Doris O'Donnell	20 October
Angela Lorenza McMahan	21 October

WEDDINGS

And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy [Hosea 2:19].

Christopher Harlow & Shelley Waldock	8 July
Gavin Mulheron & Amy Philpott	15 July
Thomas Stanley & Holly Pateman	5 August
Jonjo Forsyth & Shanelle Cornell	5 August

CONFIRMATIONS

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the Holy Spirit. [Ephesians 1:13]

FROM HERNE BAY	12 October
Matthew Eichorn, Christopher Gradwell, Harry Hayes, Aidan Healy, Elizabeth Hornsby, Alfred Manville, Isabella Savin, Katie Webb.	
FROM WHITSTABLE	12 October
Ivan Barber, Francesco Bede-Cox, Alexander Bryant, Charlize Cadera, Macdara Drake, Aidan Foley, Elouise Frost, Matthew Gilham, Niamh Kelly, Nathaniel Kirkup, Finlay McGrath, Sophie Minnie, Toby Moorcroft, Peter Webber.	

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Service Times

Carol Service	17 Dec (4pm) followed by refreshments
Christmas Eve	24 Dec (9.30am and 11.15am Masses as usual) Family Mass at 6pm with Carols (5.40pm); Mass at Midnight with Carols (11.40pm);
Christmas Day	25 Dec (10am Mass)
Boxing Day	26 Dec (11am Mass)



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