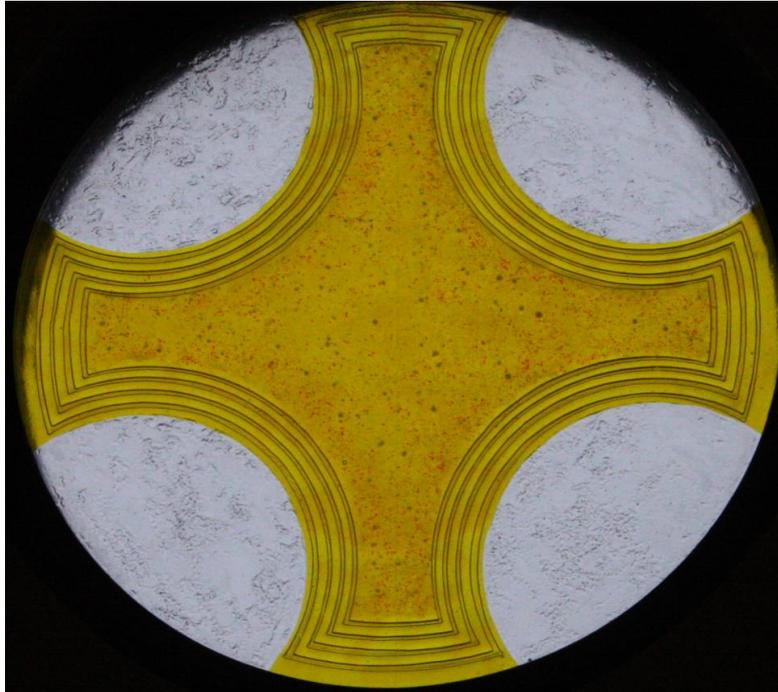


THE AUGUSTINIAN

The Parish Magazine for the R.C. Parish of Springfield



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Welcome

For the last two years 'Covid' shrunk the Christmas celebrations, a very quiet, lonely and online experience. There was no flashing dresses and smiling faces around me, no outdoor activities but isolation inflicted by the pandemic was all over the place. So, Covid means true deprivation, depriving us of every event and supplanting with a catchy phrase called online and Zoom, online Carols, on line Mass, Zoom meetings, Zoom classes. No movement but glued to your seat you talk to people because you have to be seen through the camera in front of you. Before you ran away from each other, you ran into each other: now you are glued to each other before a camera. What sort of predicament this pandemic has brought into our lives. In half freedom we have the Christmas around.

As Christmas is coming around let us make it a worthwhile experience. For me my parish life in Springfield is full of amazing things, a multi-Christian community, the quietness and the beauty of the place is in fact splendid and I am looking forward to this year's Christmas with enthusiasm. And what is also exciting about this Christmas is the universal call to a Synodal Church, a Church called to engage with each other, listen to each other and bring about communion and healing so, to have a better future for an evangelising Church. This I hope and pray would make this Christmas more memorable.

Let's therefore, take time to reflect on the whole story of the Christmas. Let us not bury this Christmas in tearing through a pile of wrapped gifts on Christmas morning and then feel the emptiness and weariness of it sweeping into our hearts as the Christmas day pass by.

In Luke 2: 10-14; the angel said to the shepherds, **"Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a saviour has been born for you who is Christ and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."** And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: **"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."** Glory to God in the highest! The celebration of the glorious birth of Christ the Lord will begin soon... Merry Christmas in advance.

The shepherds invite us. A hard working people, poor but happy simple shepherds who spent their days and nights tending the sheep of the fields. They came together to spent the night, telling tales of the brave shepherds that came before them. But there came in their life an unusual moment, a night, gathered together for their petty talks, they were about to witness a life changing marvel. A marvel which was foretold by God the Father, an event promised for the salvation of human kind, Genesis 3: 15 **"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."** And spoken through his Holy Men, the Prophets. Isaiah 11:1 **"And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit"**. Isaiah 7:14 **"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel"**. The marvellous story of the eternal shepherd of Souls.

Now you and me are called to be shepherds, we gather in our churches and at homes each Christmas to have fun together, to tell tales but not of great warriors but of a humble child born to humanity who dispels darkness and bring light into our fallen lives. John 1:14 **"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth"**. Let this Christmas normal scenes change into something unexpected, a graceful moment. John 1; 16-17 **"For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ"**.

As they were gathered, an angel of God appeared to them announcing "good news of great joy!" They must have been stunned. But that's only the beginning. The angel announced that the Saviour of the World had been born and then, much to their surprise, they witnessed the whole host of heavenly angels singing praises: "Gloria in excelsis Deo!" "Glory to God in the highest!"

God sees the great value and dignity of each and every person and desires all of us, rich or poor, powerful or weak, to come to Him in worship and love. We fill Christmas with many exciting things, gifts and gatherings, food and merry times. But more than anything else Christmas is a time of awakening, to step back and take in the deep and rich meaning of this holy occasion. We are called to reflect on the humanity of God first, who entered into our human condition and, by doing so, is able to identify with all that we experience in life. God understands human life! He lived it. God humbled Himself in the most profound way so that we could come to know Him and His perfect love for us. "Do not be afraid," as the angel said, to come and behold the Christ who came as your Saviour. Do not be afraid to come to meet Him, love Him, adore Him and get to know Him. God is given to us, today, as an infant. Small, weak, fragile and innocent. Do not be afraid to gaze upon His humble presence and to give glory to God for His blessed coming. Pope Francis reminds "a birth is always a source of hope and this Child, Jesus, was born to us'...without any borders, privileges or exclusions." "And let us pray along with the Pope who prayed that this Child of Bethlehem might help us open our hearts, our ears and eyes to others in faith, hope and love."

The Way Has Been Prepared...Are You Ready?

Best wishes

Fr. Jijo George

Farewell Fr. Sabu



On Saturday at the beginning of October, Fr. Sabu came back to visit. We had a celebration lunch with contributions of cooked and cold food from parishioners. We had held a collection and we presented Fr. Sabu with a cheque and a specially baked cake. This was our first social for almost two years and there was a good attendance, with ample food being offered, as always. Fr. Sabu made many friends while he was here and we hope to keep in contact with him in Basildon and elsewhere.

New recruits to our music group



As we get back to normal, the Parish has some new recruits to our music group. Robin Padbury had played and sung with the choir before we had to shut down and has now been joined by two of his daughters, Madeleine and Sarah. They have accompanied us for two or three Sundays (at the time of writing) very ably with recorders. Madeleine also plays the saxophone and Sarah plays the flute and is learning the violin. The girls are home schooled and they have been taught to play their instruments by Robin.

SVP – Sudan and South Sudan



Each year the SVP run a fund-raising appeal to support the work of the SVP in Sudan and South Sudan. You may recall that this is typically run just before Christmas, but this year the Society will be running the fund raising campaign in February/Lent.

Ian Mawdsley has led the campaign for over 20 years but is finally enjoying a very well-earned retirement. I have taken over as the project lead. This article is just a very brief update on the projects that are running in both those countries. I'm only a few months into my new role but already it has been an amazing experience and such a privilege to be working with the very committed teams in both countries and to learn about the enormous challenges that they face.

Unfortunately, the situation is extremely fragile in both countries.

In Sudan a Peace Agreement was being slowly implemented but relationships were delicate. On 25th October, a few weeks before the military were due to relinquish chairmanship of the Sovereign Council and a civilian head of state installed, a military coup took place. Internet communications have been disrupted and information is patchy. There has been significant internal and international opposition. Badly needed international aid packages have been put on hold and international pressure is being applied to reinstate the previously agreed route to democracy. Even before the coup, there were very large numbers of displaced refugees. Much of Sudan's terrain is desert, infrastructure is largely primitive and agricultural production is very challenging.

South Sudan is the "youngest country" in the world, having been only formally recognized in 2011 after years of brutal civil war. It is also one of the poorest countries. South Sudan has

enjoyed relative peace since the signing of the revitalised peace agreement in 2018. However, full implementation of the agreement has been delayed and some states are still without a legislature or strong judiciary system capable of reinforcing the rule of law – violent crimes and child abduction are common place. For the third consecutive year, severe flooding has disrupted food production.



In both countries, inflation is rampant and economic and humanitarian assistance has been disrupted by the political situation and the impact of Covid on the population and on funding from supporting countries. These countries need our help more than ever.

In South Sudan, the funding raised through the SVP England and Wales (E&W) is being used, (along with donations from partner charities) to support the St Vincent Health Care Centre, a vocational training centre, a displaced persons camp and a baby/young children feeding centre. The baby/young children feeding centre in Lolugu - provides food and essential nutritional supplements for children to reduce malnutrition and to provide an alternative to young children being lured to join the militia with the promise of food.

Thousands of people (the majority being women and children) still live in displaced persons camps, waiting for the situation to be sufficiently stable for them to return to their own homes and begin rebuilding their lives. The SVP provides basic food items.



The Health Care Centre is probably the only public/free healthcare centre in South Sudan which offers healthcare to the standard of the private clinics, providing access to healthcare and medication.

The vocational training provides training in a variety of technical skills which then enables the graduates to get employment and support their families. Some of the students are enrolled from the displaced persons camp.

The focus for the use of the SVP (E&W) funding in Sudan for the last few years has been the baby/young children feeding centres, the medical centre and the clean water project.

There was some disruption at the height of Covid and we're not clear what impact the coup is having, but SVP Sudan have been running 11 centres providing food and essential nutritional supplements. Each centre feeds around 150 young children per day. Conditions are extremely basic and regrettably, the matting and utensils in many of the centres now needs replacement.



The medical centre provides healthcare and medication both to the local population and the nearby large prisons. Again, facilities are primitive. Unfortunately, the authorities have

recently determined that the building cannot operate until essential repairs and maintenance has been completed.

The water project provides clean water supplies to deprived populations in and around Khartoum. During 2021 SVP Sudan were able to replace their very old and failing water tanker with a new tanker which has secured the reliability of the supply and offers an opportunity for some income generation. The funding came from SVP E&W fund raising.



The SVP also has a history of "Twinning", whereby Conferences (i.e. local groups, such as our group here in Springfield) "twin" and both pray for and send funding to a Conference in the overseas country. In Sudan there are 152 conferences which require sponsors, and a further 31 in South Sudan. The sponsors send £12.50 per month to the overseas twin to enable them to be able to address urgent need for individuals and families. The intention is that the sponsoring and recipient twins are able to communicate and get to know each other but the language, geography, lack of infrastructure and political barriers make this difficult in parts of both countries. Unfortunately, we don't have sponsors for all of the Conferences so we're looking for other organisations (e.g. schools, youth groups, work teams) or even individuals to sponsor the "orphan" Conferences. A relatively small amount of British sterling currently goes a very long way in both countries. If you know of a group or individual who would like to find out more, please do get in touch.

Dee Davey

Knights of St. Columba Council 302



Knights of St. Columba

Like many organisations, the Knights of St. Columba have not been able to hold meetings in person for much of the last two years. After a short period of hoping that we would be able to soon, we moved to holding meetings by Zoom and began doing so in June (2020). The first few meetings were held on a home version so they were limited to 45 minutes, but our Head Office set up a facility for Provinces (essentially Diocesan branches) to host meetings for individual Councils. In practice, our meetings don't usually take much more than that but it did allow us to have a short amount of social time afterwards. One valuable lesson learned is that if a group of people is reciting a prayer together on Zoom, it is advisable for most of them to mute themselves!

The work of the Council has continued while we have not been able to meet. The Action Committee has been meeting by Zoom, though there has been limited activity for the moment. Our Welfare work continued as far as possible: Brothers have kept in touch with our widows by phone, and sometimes by e-mail and the sick and deceased have been kept in our prayers. The Annual Mass for deceased Brothers could not be made open to the public in 2020, but was live streamed and the Provincial Grand Knight did the readings. It was streamed from a church in East London on the eve of Diwali and took place to the accompaniment of fireworks. Happily, this year's could be attended by Brothers (and others) and was held at the Cathedral on 6 November.

The work of the Social Committee was (of course) suspended but we have started to return to our programme of events. We are just restarting the monthly Knights at Leisure lunches for Brothers, wives and widows, and

friends, which were a regular feature of our Social programme until the beginning of Covid. Our October lunch was held in honour of Muriel Turner, who was 100 during the following week. Some of you will remember Peter and Muriel as parishioners of St. Augustine's for many years. Muriel is the widow of Peter Turner, a former Grand Knight of Council 302, and she is also the mother of Richard Turner, inaugural Grand Knight of Maldon Council. We had 22 guests to celebrate with her, including the Grand Knight, two former Grand Knights and the widows of five former Grand Knights, over a good lunch at Boreham's Six Bells. One of the widows is also the daughter in law of Council 302's founding Grand Knight. Knights at Leisure has been suspended for over two years, so we were pleased that we were able to resume in time to celebrate Muriel's birthday. We are hoping that this will become a regular monthly event again, and those who joined for the first time for this event will be able to become regular attenders.



Each year, we make an award in memory of a former Chelmsford Parish Priest, Canon Bernard Manning. Canon Manning was a strong promoter of the efforts of young people and asked the Knights to promote an award to recognise what they did to help their school, parish or civil communities. This year we have awarded it to three students at New Hall. The School supports New Hall Voluntary Service, which is a vehicle for students to help those in need of support or friendship. The work of NHVS was greatly hampered by the pandemic

and the three students came up with imaginative ways to continue the work. This included on line support for NHVS beneficiaries, telephone calls to the elderly and letter writing. At Christmas, they sent over 200 Christmas cards. This was all done on their own initiative. The Grand Knight, Chris Thompson, presented the Canon Manning Trophy to them at a recent assembly.



The Council is now back to holding most meetings in person and we are looking forward to resuming our work. As well as supporting one another in Faith, we also exist to be an organised group of men who can be called upon to assist parishes with their work. After two years when recruitment has been difficult, we are looking for new members again so if you would like to help us to carry out this work, you can contact Chris Thompson on thompsoncjt01@blueyonder.co.uk or speak to any of the Knights.

Sir David Amess RIP



Rt Rev Alan Williams sm, Bishop of Brentwood, writes:

“On behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brentwood, we offer our sympathy and prayers to the family of Sir David Amess, Member of Parliament for Southend West, who was so tragically killed. Sir David had a deep Catholic Christian faith, which expressed itself in great generosity and kindness to those he served in the wider community of Essex and East London.

I experienced first-hand his friendliness, goodness and concern for others; he was a very fine man who gave himself wholeheartedly to public life. The manner of his dying is utterly shocking and I ask all members of the diocese to pray for Sir David and all those who will be affected by his sudden and painful absence in our lives.”

Eternal Rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen.

Prayer (“At this time”)

Dear Lord,

At this time of pandemic, let us foster respect and solidarity with others, especially those who are weak or poor.

Let us remain calm and ignore unsubstantiated rumours. Let us take advantage of living together as a family. Let us attend to moments of prayer. Let us cultivate responsibility, patience and hope.

Amen.



Fr. Michael Barwick



For the parish, the big event of the year was the Ordination of Fr. Michael Barwick. He is the first vocation to the priesthood from this parish. Many of our parishioners have known him since he was born, through Mums and Toddlers, Children's Liturgy and Youth Group, and he was a Youth Group leader for some time. He attended Bishops' School and St. John Payne, where he was Head Boy, before spending 7 years at Walsingham House. While there, he was discerning his vocation and went on to St Mary's College, Oscott in 2015.

Fr. Michael has been preparing for Ordination for many years now. Before beginning his formation at Oscott College, there was a long period of prayer, meditation and discussions to be sure that he was called to the priesthood. Over that time, the parish has been praying for him. In June, he joined us for a visit to Aylesford, where about a dozen parishioners prayed along the Rosary Way before Mass, at which Fr. Michael read the Gospel and we gathered afterwards for a picnic. It was rather colder than was comfortable for sitting out, but we were able to enjoy the tranquillity of the grounds, and some of us took advantage of the shops and cafe.

For the nine days, leading up to the Ordination Fr. Michael made available a novena for us to pray to Our Lady of Lourdes. This place of

pilgrimage is close to Fr. Michael's heart and has been an important part of his discernment and prayer. Parishioners downloaded the novena for daily prayer. We used it while we were travelling round in June and July, so we can confirm that Fr. Michael was supported by prayers from across England and Scotland.

The Ordination took place on Saturday, July 10, in Brentwood Cathedral. Sadly, for the parish, we still had to take care to control Covid infections, so numbers were restricted. However, the Cathedral was as full as possible with Diocesan clergy, friends, and family present to witness the culmination of Fr. Michael's six year of prayer and study. In his homily, Bishop Alan spoke of the importance of Fr. Michael modelling his priestly life on Christ and listening to God through prayer. Bishop Alan noted how he often thinks of Lourdes when he sees Fr. Michael due to the many years of service through the annual diocesan pilgrimage.

Those who could not be present at the Ordination were privileged to be able to attend Fr. Michael's first Mass. It was hosted by New Hall, out of doors to comply with Covid conditions but under cover of their state of the art canopies. Fr. Michael concelebrated with eight priests who have been a particular support to Fr. Michael throughout his life including Fr. Dominic Howarth, whose homily was widely appreciated. A combined group from New Hall and St. Augustine's provided the music.

After Mass, Fr. Michael gave us each a personal blessing as we proceeded to the reception, also provided by New Hall. With even the weather cooperating, it was a perfect end to a weekend that was a milestone for Fr. Michael but also for our parish.



Chelmsford Community Sponsorship update

When we produced the last Augustinian, covid restriction meant that the Community Sponsorship programme was suspended. Chelmsford's scheme had been accepted by the Home Office and a house had been made available, but no refugee flights were taking place. There was also work required at the house, mainly maintenance and decoration, which was also delayed by covid though was continuing with care. However, we were continuing with our preparations, and did manage a trip to Hampshire to collect a large amount of furniture very kindly donated by a Knight of St. Columba.

That all changed early in December. The Home Office announced that resettlement flights would be resuming in the New Year (2021), and that a family would be arriving in Chelmsford. While we were coming up to Christmas and New Year, the work at the house continued but in January, it was ready for us to start moving things in, after completing formalities with the landlord. February was a busy month: the furniture was moved in and we made sure that everything was working.

The family arrived in England on 25 February. The father and mother (Zahreddin and Asmaa respectively) have two children, Ahmad (a son aged 5) and Istabraq (a daughter, 4). A group met them at Heathrow and they were introduced to some of our helpers. They had almost no English at that point and we were very grateful that Essex Integration, based in Colchester, could help us with an interpreter for the day.

That set off another burst of activity, getting the family registered with a range of services. Ahmad started school just after half term and seems to have settled in well, and Istabraq began at nursery, but is now at school as well. They have been registered with doctors and

dentists and have had initial examinations. The school registration went very smoothly, but navigating the health systems has been a learning experience, and that is even with the help of NHS staff, a retired GP and a health professional on our Steering Group.

A key area of work has been helping them to learn English. They are having formal English tuition at Chelmsford's Adult Continuing Learning College, which lasts for 4 hours each week. They also have informal English practice and we are arranging for more regular conversation practice. Their English is improving steadily, but there is still a long way to go. The children, of course, are working in English at school and seem to be managing well, and we think that this will help them as well.

We have made a lot of progress but there is still a long way to go, and we always welcome offers of help. Helping the family with their English is still a key area of our work but we would still be grateful if there are any more Arabic speakers who can help us. Our small group of Arabic speakers is still essential when we need to have a detailed conversation: they have worked very hard with us but they are also volunteers with limited availability so any further help would be very useful. If you can help, contact us on info@chelmsfordcs.co.uk.

However, we have got this far because of the hard work and generosity of our volunteers and helpers. Whether donating money, furniture or household items, helping us with contacts or working with the family, our volunteers and supporters network has been the key to getting to where we are today. Thank you from Chelmsford Community Sponsorship to everyone who has helped to get us to this point.

Chelmsford Community Sponsorship

St. John Payne – Headteacher’s comments



HEADTEACHER'S COMMENTS



It has been lovely to welcome all of the students back to school and to have the new academic year well underway free from restrictions. Early in September this allowed us to welcome parents & carers to the school for our Year 10 & 11 and Year 7 & 8 information evenings.

With the first half term always key to schools’ efforts to showcase their communities to prospective families seeking education both for Year 7 & Year 12, we were delighted to once again welcome visitors to our open evenings. These were complemented by our promotional films, in which the students - just as when showcasing the school to visitors - so powerfully demonstrate our distinctive identity. As is custom following open evening, we have been able to host tours during the working day, and are delighted that visitors have been able to experience in person the school’s spirit.

We continue our tradition of charity fundraising and giving, with our harvest collection now extending year round. Items can be left in Form rooms to be gathered centrally and delivered periodically to the foodbank. We also continue to donate to CAFOD, Aid to the Church in Need, Chess, and a range of other charities, and have enjoyed great support for our appeal on behalf of Mrs Leleu - a member of our fantastic PTA - for stationery to aid school children in Brazil. Today’s non-uniform & Wear it Pink day is in support of cancer charities.

We have also been glad to welcome priests with greater regularity. The early weeks of term have seen Fr Paul celebrate our Community Mass uniting staff in witness with Year 7 & 12 students on their first day, and Fr Matthias celebrated our Year 7 Welcome Mass. We have also seen the return of our weekly Form group Masses in the chapel each Friday. Year 10 students attended Retreats at Aylesford Priory, and the Year 13 Leadership Team attended their Retreat at Walsingham House in Abbotswick.

As the return of customary practices continues, I end by thanking the students for establishing such a purposeful and pleasant atmosphere. Visitors frequently comment on the warm welcome they receive - a testament to the values upon which the school is founded. We wish our whole community a restful half term break, and we look forward to welcoming students upon our return.

Thomas Coen
Headteacher

AVITA PRO FIDE

A trip to Cornwall

Our visit to Cornwall visited some memorable places and it was suggested that we include some pictures for your entertainment. Part of our enjoyment was in eating together, and we ate in several picturesque locations. A memorable one, however, was Rick Stein's fish and chip shop in Padstow, which, though excellent, faces on to a working dock, for which picturesque is not the word. There is no picture, but they are probably the best fish and chips anywhere (with apologies to Harry Ramsden).

Cornwall is one of the counties known for its churches, and we visited three. This is St. Enodoc, a church built on sand dunes in the middle of a links golf course. The church is decorated with flowers for a wedding on the following day. The windows are not all stained glass but this is one which is.



There is no vehicle access so it has to be reached on foot; we approached across the links.

The next is Gunwalloe Church, in Church Cove on the west side of the Lizard peninsula. Although surrounded by trees, you can leave the churchyard directly onto the beach. We were there on a blustery day so there was dramatic surf rolling into the cove. We walked up the opposite side of the cove and, looking back, you can see the church nestling in its surrounding trees.



The third church is St. Just in Roseland, another church on the waterfront. The graveyard is maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, so the gardens are very well kept. Unfortunately it was raining when we were there so we could not get very good pictures.



Of course, Cornwall is also renowned for its coastal scenery. We drove round quite a lot of the coast and called at the principal tourist spots. Some lived up to expectations, though we were all less impressed with Lands End, which is now largely a theme park, than Cape Cornwall (pictured).



On the other hand, the Lizard and Kynance Cove, also on the Lizard peninsula did impress, with the blustery weather giving dramatic seas round Lizard Point.



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3. A community where everyone is growing in the life of prayer and their relationship with God
4. A community where pastoral, spiritual and practical care is given to those in need
5. A community where more people are actively involved in the Mission of the Church.

OUR PARISH PRAYER

Loving Father,

You so loved the world that you sent us your only Son, that we might believe in Him and have eternal life.

May we encounter Jesus Christ anew this day and live the Good News with joy.

Through the power of your Holy Spirit, Help us to "go out to the whole world and proclaim" our faith with confidence.

Give us the courage to witness to the joy of the Gospel by our words and actions.

Help our parish to become more welcoming and missionary, so that you may be known and loved by all people.

We make this prayer through Our Lord Jesus Christ Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God for ever and ever,

Amen

EDITOR'S NOTE

Thank you to everyone who has helped to put this edition together. We had hoped to do more editions during the year but a number of things have prevented us producing them, particularly the lingering Covid. A number of people have helped with comments or information as well as those who have written articles. A particular thank you to Ben Hitchen, who has formatted and laid out the magazine. Thank you also to New Hall for printing the magazine.

We have a couple of ideas left over from this edition so we are starting to prepare the next edition, which we hope will be produced for Easter. If you have anything that might be of interest, particularly with pictures, please let us have them as soon as possible.

We wish our readers a Happy and Holy Christmas and a steadily improving New Year.

Chris Thompson