



St. Patrick's Church

Broad Green/Cowley Drive Woodingdean BN2 6TB

St. Patrick's Newsletter



Our Lady of Lourdes

Whiteway Lane Rottingdean

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Live streaming of Mass from Our Lady of Lourdes:

Fr Benny continues to say MASS which is streamed live : 09.30 each weekday, preceded by Adoration usually at 08.30; 18.30 Saturday evening and 10.30 Sunday.

Welcome to the eighteenth "apart but together" e-newsletter (28th Nov 2020)

"Because where two or three have come together in my name, I am there among them." Matthew 18

On Being Ready

Barbara Bond

Stay awake because you do not know when the master of the house is coming Mark 13:35

I have a very good friend who is of Muslim heritage, and she is married to an atheist. When she became a parent, she was determined to bring her child up to understand and respect the religious meaning of Christmas.

So began many conversations, and for me a reminder that your experience of the coming of the Lord directly relates to how you prepare.

Timothy Radcliffe, a Dominican Friar, says that God's word takes time to gestate within us. This is a beautiful image to hold for the coming weeks.

St Augustine reminds us that God is "closer to us than we are to ourselves" and indeed in the Qur'an it says "God is closer to us than our jugular vein".

In the midst of all the chaos of a very unusual Advent, it is possible to hear a call to simplicity, to what is vital – and we are reminded in John's gospel that vitality comes from the Word –

"In him was life, life that was the light of all people; and light shines in darkness" (John 1: 4-5).



**And yet, LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you shape us,
all of us are the work of your hands.
Isaiah 64:7**

Last issue before Christmas out on 12th December. Send your thoughts about life, parish and Coronavirus: short pieces (about 300 words) before Friday 11th December to me, Barbara Bond: bond_barbara@ymail.com

Novena to Saint Francis, for a world under threat

Nine brief reflections asking St Francis of Assisi to pray for us and our world, based on his beautiful *Canticle of the Sun*. This novena is a song of penitence and praise, guiding us to care for the earth and for our most vulnerable sisters and brothers, especially the Amazon peoples. They are under grave risk from coronavirus, given their fragile situation, often in remote locations far from government services.

Communities with whom we work are reporting a sharp increase in predatory attacks on land. People smugglers are also active and those being trafficked are in more danger than ever, having no access to healthcare.

The pandemic shows us that “we have not heard the cry of the poor and our seriously ill planet” warns Pope Francis, describing this as “a time to choose what matters and what passes away”. (*Urbi et Orbi*, 2020).



Eighth Prayer: Peace

“Blessed are those who endure in peace: by you Most High, they will be crowned.” (St Francis of Assisi)

“We want to support a culture of peace and respect – not violence and violation.” (*Final document, Amazon Synod, 2019*)

Creator God, we give you thanks for those who work for peace and dignity for all your children.

Brother Francis, you came to heal, not harm the world. You showed us how to live as one.

St Francis, pray for us.

Our Lady of Lourdes Church

Grab ‘ N ‘ Go Table

Raising much needed funds!

Fresh Homemade Soup & rolls to enjoy at home or at a friend’s

Available on 12th after 6.30 pm or 13th December

Pre-order – Pre-pay – Collect on 12th or 13th December

No Mobility – No Problem – Delivery arranged



Select from flavours of soup: Carrot and coriander; Curried parsnip; Red lentil and fresh ginger; Spicy roasted butternut squash; Tomato and basil; Winter vegetable; Gluten free option...

Two generous portions of the soup of your choice, plus two homemade ciabatta rolls for £4.00

Option 1 : Order now, pre pay, collect from table at church on the day of choice.

Option 2 – Order now, pre pay, ask for delivery.

Please send money with contact details, soup choice, and option choice to Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Eastfield letterbox, by 6th December latest. Cheques made payable to ‘Our Lady of Lourdes Church’.

Any queries please email : jonathanandjosesharp@virginmedia.com

See the website (scroll down on front page): <https://www.ololandstp.org>

“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his name!” Isaiah 12

Hen Saga: First Egg

November 21st. One of the girls laid the first egg... probably taken by surprise as it was in a doorway instead of one of the five comfortable nesting boxes.

I suspect it to be one of the brown hens who looks a bit older than the rest.

Since then we have had six more, all looking the same so I'm thinking they are from the same hen and she has chosen to lay in the same nest box each time.

Coincidence, or has she chosen her patch?



A Hedge for Wildlife



Did you watch last Sunday's *Countryfile*? Lots about hedge and tree planting for the benefit of our wildlife and helping to replace hedges torn up in the fifties.

For several years I've been on the Ovingdean Residents and Preservation Society (ORPS) committee and Ted was on it for twenty years before me. My hat is an ecological one. We've been planning, with farmer Ben, to plant a hedge along Greenways.

Sounds easy but there are lots of hoops to jump through like getting estate office permission, utility searches and relying on Ben to get around to removing the broken barbed wire fence.

Hedging and trees are no problem as there is a wonderful charity in the Midlands supplying bundles of plants, canes and rabbit guards all free. You order, an arrival date is given and you should plant in a week, so you have to be organised.

My order arrived last Friday. Monday morning and each morning this week, volunteers have worked to clear the 'grass' verge of nettle, dock, mallow and bramble, rocks and rubbish in the part of Greenways opposite Ainsworth Ave.

The plan is to eventually plant all along to Beacon Hill to connect woodland with the nature reserve as a wildlife corridor. It's been a green gym and we have been socially distancing and now we are ready to plant.

The Ovingdean Nursery school started us off as eleven tots came along this morning in warm clothes and welly boots and did a good job. They even sang a 'grow little tree' song.

Farmer Ben now wants to plant a little copse with the help of villagers and anyone else who fancies a green gym. Interested?

Comic Cuts, Courtesy of Ted...

The older I get, the better I used to be!

Midwives no longer 'deliver' babies, they 'catch' them.

Ian Fleming once stated, 'Horses are dangerous at both ends, and uncomfortable in the middle'.

English today...

In my gap year, I had a job drilling holes for water – it was well boring.

"You brought a vine out of Egypt; to plant it you drove out the nations. Before it you cleared the ground; it took root and spread through the land." Ps 80: 9-10

Community News

Fund raising at St Patrick's OUTDOORS!

Irene Green

Weekends of 5th-6th and 12-13th December, Saturdays 10am until 12noon, Sundays after Mass from 9.45.

Our zoom group decided on pre-Christmas selling on the first and second weekends in December. We hope to have many small Christmas gifts, preserves, a few plants and cooked/baked items, BOTH weekends.

Will have a list during the week to send out by email and to advertise on Facebook, so if you wish to donate please let us know details in advance.

We will try and have a succession of helpers because it is going to be cold weather with a chance of drizzle, but the forecast can change. We need helpers to limit their time selling and to take breaks and basically all hands on deck so we can spread out our sale tables.

VERY grateful to everyone who has contributed and volunteered so far, it will be amazing. Contact people: Bernadette berskin@hotmail.com, Irene icgreen@ntlworld.com

Gazebos

We would like to use a couple of gazebos in addition to the church porch selling area to cope with rain.

Need volunteers to loan and set up gazebos.

Position of gazebos to be determined, but they should be as far apart as possible to enable us to keep to the government rules about outdoor mixing and to keep everyone safe.

Advent Prayer Group on Zoom

St Patrick's advent prayer group meets on Zoom at 4.30 on Thursdays 3rd 10th and 17th December. The presenter on 3rd December (and 17th) will be Frances Low.

Wanted glass jars with metal lids, all sizes please
Wanted very small plant pots 3", and plant pots which are a few sizes bigger: 6-8" approx. across the top... Bring to St Patrick's on Sundays in December or to our fund raising events.

One Miffed Sinner!

Mary Barriff

I once worked in an office for mental health services in the London Road, Brighton. It was great for shopping during my lunchtime or for just wandering around. However, there were days too when I felt the need to clear my head, so I would walk along to St. Bartholomew's Church, where I would sit and admire the very ornate altar and say the odd prayer.

One day, feeling the need to pay another visit and maybe sit in the quiet of the church away from the bustle of the area, I headed off. However, when I arrived at the church the main door was open but the glass doors inside the hall were firmly shut. A notice said it was open again at two o'clock – too late for me! I headed back to the office feeling a bit miffed. With time to spend I decided to let Our Lord know, in a humorous way, that I'd called by. I typed this note:-

*I called today at one o'clock
To have a little chat.
To tell You how I'm getting on
And talk of this and that.
I visualised that kindly smile
You have for every sinner.
But a notice said, 'Come back at two'
You'd upped and gone to dinner!*

I went back and stuck it on the inner glass door. I hope they saw the funny side of it!

"Awake, O Lord, why do you sleep? Arise, do not reject us for ever! Why do you hide your face from us and forget our oppression and misery?" Ps 44: 24-25

Healing and Hope

Connections

Barbara Bond

You may have seen Irene's email last weekend which included an invitation to a gentle movement class, being held via Zoom, in aid of a food project in Cornwall. I can report that so far more than £400 has been raised which will provide at least ten Christmas dinners in a box for the poorest families.

I regard it as a great gift of the lockdown that none of us now think twice about joining folk from all over the country – in this case to do an hour of relaxation on a Saturday morning. Technology can be misused, of course, but it can also be a tool to help us keep connected and reach out.

During the week at work, I visited someone who has really struggled with the isolation of lockdown. We had provided him with a recording of some "guided visualisations". He really couldn't get on with this – and to make it more challenging for him, the only place he could listen was in his car! As we chatted, his close affinity to nature became really evident: his daily moments of peace and connection were found in pausing by his local pond to watch the birds, and in listening to the evening chorus in his garden. Just telling me about it was a kind of miracle – an everyday miracle – for both of us.

It may be that if we are willing to watch for them, connections are there in many and varied ways.

A Walking Meditation

Frances Low

"When you walk, arrive with every step. This is walking meditation. There's nothing else to it"

Thich Nhat Hanh

Most of us enjoy walking as it relaxes body and mind. This is already a walking meditation! You can make it more mindful by becoming more aware during your walk. Invite God to walk with you, recite a mantra or say a prayer. Perhaps focus on a person, a problem, a song, a poem, or yourself.

Start walking – tune in to how you feel. Become aware of your posture. Bring your attention to your gait. Tune into sounds around you, the weather, any movements. Acknowledge what you see and hear. Focus.

Be aware of your feet – heel down, sole down, toes down. Make your step length appropriate to how you feel. Contemplate the sensation of movement in your body. Observe your stride, pace, rhythm. Breathe in as your heels go up to move the foot and take maybe 2 strides before breathing out for maybe 2/3 strides. Try different patterns, different paces. If your mind wanders, bring your attention back to the sensations in the soles of your feet, and your breath – in and out.

Slow down! Walking meditations are practised by Buddhists, Christians and those of other religions. Plus of course it is a mindfulness aid. Monks and nuns walk around cloisters or outside in gardens – praying, contemplating, thinking of intentions that they can place before God in trust.

Labyrinth walking is an ancient practice used for spiritual centring, contemplation and prayer. Enter the serpentine path of a labyrinth, walk slowly while quietening your mind. The advantage is that the path is set, and there is an end or centre. Of course the meditative walking can be done at home, in your garden, lounge, hallway, or in the park. Anywhere safe.

Reflect after your walk, even if it is a short one. Thank God for the walk, the breath and the sensations you have experienced... the journey.

"To find new things, take the path you took yesterday"

The nearest labyrinth I have found is in Hove Park! Maybe a gathering there sometime when we are out of 'lockdown' and can meet as a group to experience the joy and peace of walking.



Labyrinth at a Chateau in France

"O God, I will offer you praise for you have rescued my soul from death; you kept my feet from stumbling, that I may walk in the presence of God, in the light of the living." Ps 56: 13-14

Community News (2)

CORONAVIRUS CORNER: An Overview

Irene Green

Get data on coronavirus in your POSTCODE on this link: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/> The sobering value to look at is hospital admissions.

The news of three vaccines as early as this in the pandemic is unbelievably good.

- 1) Vaccination drastically reduces the chance of you catching COVID-19 from a spreader, but in order to stop spread, most people need to have been vaccinated.
- 2) Because there is no existing immunity to COVID-19, the benefit of a vaccine is exceptionally high. If COVID-19 continued to spread, eventually most people would be infected and far too many would die.
- 3) Deaths in England where patients have had a Covid-positive test within 28 days are 50,000 and with Covid on the death certificate are 57,000. In the UK as a whole, these numbers are 56,000 and 67,000.
- 4) As well as killing people directly, COVID-19 has several indirect effects: (a) There have been up to 30,000 excess deaths at home from non-COVID-19 causes (mental health, strokes, heart attacks etc.) (b) In the future there will be excess deaths from failure to treat serious long-term illnesses promptly. (c) "Long COVID" appears to be a real risk for all age groups. "Recovered" patients with organ damage must be likely to have reduced life expectancy and quality of life.
- 5) There will be a short release from TIER restrictions over Christmas. Experts point out that this will require tighter measures before and after. Most people know that release will mean more deaths. The real question is, how many extra deaths are acceptable so that we can better enjoy the Festive Season?
- 6) We won't visit family in Warwickshire, Belfast or Edinburgh over Christmas and dissipate months of shielding. We were lucky enough to fly to Edinburgh in August when virus levels were at their lowest.
- 7) Crystal ball: (a) There will be a Christmas hangover, with a spike of new cases in January and of deaths in February. (b) Vaccinating vulnerable groups will start to reduce deaths, but not halt the spread of the virus. (c) Universal vaccination will begin to bring the virus under control, though it will take a few weeks for this to become apparent. (d) The speed at which we return to normal will depend on how well the vaccine rollout is organised. It never seems to be virologists, epidemiologists, doctors, public health workers or scientists who are in charge of these critical measures.

More Conversations with Mum

Mary Barriff

Talking about a local village: "There's a right gateau of drug takers in that village."

Seeing Clive washed and changed and ready to go out: "Well there's a great transfiguration!"

We're talking about a TV programme on road accidents where a driver had stopped suddenly, causing an accident.

Mum... "Wouldn't you think he'd have pulled into a layabout?"

Mum: "Sometimes lumps on the breast turn out to be only noodles."

Me: "I was singing a song today and when I turned on the radio the same song was on."

Mum: "You must be one of those people with double vision."

Discussing her recent appointment with the eye consultant:

Mum: "She said the eye is degenerate and it's not going to get any better".

Trivia Interlude – Various: Who said, or wrote: – (see p.9 for answers)

1. "From the moment I picked up your book until I laid it down, I was convulsed with laughter. Some day I intend reading it."
2. 'What is the use of a book', thought Alice, 'without pictures or conversations?'
3. Never try to keep up with the Joneses. Drag them down to your level. It's cheaper that way.
4. Oh, isn't life a terrible thing, thank God?
5. Laugh it off, laugh it off; it's all part of life's rich pageant.
6. It's as large as life, and twice as natural!

"Have mercy on me, God, have mercy, for in you my soul has taken refuge. In the shadow of your wings I take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by." Psalm 57: 2

Healing and Hope (2)

Midwifery Training Part 2: "Midder"

Maureen James

After a short break I began Part Two at another Kentish hospital to learn how to conduct antenatal classes and the more natural methods of delivering babies at home. I then moved on to live with a qualified midwife in her own home and there my essential accessories were a bike and a midwifery bag.

I was allowed to make antenatal visits alone but the midwife always came with me to share the deliveries. She would grant me the luxury of a lift in her car now and then, but I often had to cycle along an arterial road in fear of the heavy lorries overtaking me with inches to spare.

One afternoon a call came in from a frantic husband whose wife had started labour – and my midwife had taken the day off, not expecting any births.

Equally frantic I phoned the Superintendent Midwife who said she would send someone to help but to 'keep calm and carry on.'

In short, help never arrived, but everything went well and I delivered the baby, with no complications, unqualified and probably illegally. When I'd finished I

flopped down for the customary cup of tea, brought in by father, and my heartbeat returned to normal. It was late that night when I cycled home, feeling tired but secretly pleased with myself, but not to bed. Down to earth again, I had to empty the midwifery bag, clean and replace everything in it, ready for the next call...

Some years ago I met an old lady living in Woodingdean who had practised as a midwife after the war. She had covered Rottingdean and Woodingdean, travelling everywhere on an old bike with her midwifery bag strapped on behind as I had done.

She had to go up and down all the hilly roads, in all weathers, working very long hours, – and still had to sort her bag out afterwards. I said I thought she was one of a tough breed, even heroic, but she laughed it off. I think that like most midwives she just loved her job.



Nurse Catriona MacAskill weighs a baby in North Uist, Scotland, in 1959



1950 Baby Show, England

Blessing for the Pilgrim

God be with thee in every pass,
Jesus be with thee on every hill,
Spirit be with thee on every stream,
Headland and ridge and lawn;

Each sea and land, each moor and meadow,
Each lying down, each rising up,
In the trough of the waves,
On the crest of the billows,
Each step of the journey thou goest.

Carmina Gadelica, The Lion Book of Christian Poetry p.

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"The spirit yields a harvest of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, forbearance, gentleness, faith, courtesy, temperateness, purity. Since we live by the spirit, let the spirit be our rule of life."

Gal 5: 22-25

Healing and Hope (3)

Woodingdean Honey Bees are launching a wildflower planting campaign to help support bees and other pollinators in our gardens.

We have partnered with ethically sourced and ethically made wild flower *Beebomb* supplier to provide the most amazing mix of wild flower seeds mixed in clay. If you can spare some space in your garden to go wild (a pack covers 2 square metres), we will supply one pack for £6, 2 packs for £10. If you have purchased our honey this year, you will receive a 50% discount on this price. If you are up for the challenge, we will organize free local delivery of the *Beebombs*. <https://www.beebombs.com/>

Once all participants have taken part and shared their photos we will be looking for the three best displays in Woodingdean and reward as follows: 3 honey jars for 1st place, 2 honey jars for 2nd place, 1 honey jar for 3rd place.

Please contact Ahmed Abbas via Facebook or Messenger or on 07803 004 984 if you wish to take part. He will do all deliveries on Saturday 19th Dec. Facebook page: <https://bit.ly/2KCZOYs>

I have sampled the exquisite honey. At St Patrick's we have tried to keep some grass uncut years ago to encourage wild flowers but for various reasons stopped that. Maybe we could have a square or rectangle for wild flowers where the sandbox is. It must be in good sunny position. Irene icgreen@ntlworld.com



Good News Snippets from the Newspaper – Just to keep up my (Patrick's) spirits, I decided to look for good news items over two weeks of reading *The Grauniad*. Here are some of them...

15/11 Chicago public libraries abolished all fines for overdue books in October 2019. Result? Thousands of books returned, number of users has shot up, number of books borrowed has increased by 7%... and the greatest beneficiaries are the young and the poor.

18/11 Marcus Rashford is launching a book club and his own range of literature with the aim of giving children from lower socio-economic backgrounds the opportunity to embrace reading from an early age. "380,000 children across the UK have never owned a book".

19/11 Philippine student wins Dyson prize for a novel material made from rotting fruit and veg (crop waste) that, made into panels, absorbs stray UV light from the sun and converts it into renewable energy.

19/11 Blue Whale sightings may signal recovery from near extinction 50 years ago. For twenty years from 1998 to 2018, surveys only reported one single sighting; but an expedition this year produced 58 sightings and numerous acoustic detections for this, the largest and (at low frequencies) loudest animal in the world.

20/11 A rare lichen, the Tree Lungwort, a survivor of the ancient wildwood, has been transferred from a fallen "veteran" oak in Borrowdale and saved by painstakingly planting it on nearby trees. The lichen is frilly and greenish-gold. This is the single largest community of the species in England.

21/11 Artificial Intelligence experts and musicologists have worked for years gathering thousands of musical scores and converting them into digital editions that will be available via an app. Musicians will be able instantly to transpose, switch between movements, change the size of the score, print etc.

22/11 Send thoughtful, bespoke crackers to family and friends you can't see this Christmas: "There is quite a demand for individual crackers," says Tony Davison, owner of House of Crackers. Age UK is concerned about the millions of elderly who will not be able to see their children or grandchildren this year.

24/11 AstraZeneca/University of Oxford vaccine to be distributed to some of the world's poorest countries at cost price. Through Covax, a global initiative, it is hoped to distribute 1.3 billion doses at no more than \$3 per dose. Total global need will be for 17 billion doses.

27/11 NHS is to trial a simple blood test that may be able to detect more than 50 forms of cancer, years before they are normally diagnosed – including those which are notoriously hard to spot. It could be a game-changer, if successful, because early treatment can make the difference between life and death.

"May grain be abundant in the land, waving to the peaks of the mountains. May its fruit rustle like Lebanon; may the people flourish in the cities like grass on the earth." Psalm 72: 16

Afterthoughts

Glooms and Gleams

Patrick Bond

As I write, it is the last day of the Church's calendar, and Advent beckons. The gospel reading for today has Jesus say (Luke 21:36): "Stay awake, praying at all times that you may have the strength to escape all these things that are going to happen, and to take your stand before the Son of man." The coming year will surely need all the spiritual resources we can muster. The second reading for tomorrow, the First Sunday of Advent, is more directly encouraging: "God by calling you has joined you to his Son, Jesus Christ; and God is faithful." (1 Cor 1:9) Yesterday I crossed the metal Bridge, as I do every morning to fetch my paper from the corner shop, and found to my great joy that the Winterbourne is flowing. The Environment Agency have been cutting and cleaning out vegetation



and rubbish, so they were preparing it for a flow. As its name reveals, this is a winter flowing stream whose waters come through chalk: it is always crystal clear. And just under the bridge is a small weir, which means that the Winterbourne here sings a song, today a tinkling rush, perhaps later in the year a full-bore roar. In May I stood on the bridge in the early dawn light, recording the noise on my sound recorder before the stream faded for the summer. That was the first lockdown, this is the second, and now it has returned with its spiritual gift, a mysterious flow, a miracle of nature in miniature. I am listening again, right at the beginning of Advent.

My mother, about whom I wrote in the summer, has been in East Surrey Hospital for a week, after I discovered her suffering a severe "hypo" (low blood sugar), unable to speak or stand up. I know she is receiving excellent care, and will return having been thoroughly checked, stabilised, fed and watered. However, her memory problems mean she will not be able to live independently much longer. We have decisions to make. The future cannot be the same for her or for any of us. So Advent comes as a blessing: a time to find space, reassess "normal life", and wait for guidance.



In my garden, the birds are operating in flocks as they forage and prepare for winter. Goldfinches and Great Tits sweep through, appearing in



numbers and then vanishing. Blue tits are constant but in ones and twos; coal tits and chaffinches make cameo appearances. Dunnocks and wrens keep up a lively but mostly hidden dance in the deep recesses and shadows. Robins thrust out their chests, territorial even in winter; and blackbirds are never far away. In the evenings a thrush has been singing at dusk, which has been like an illumination in sound.

Now the sun comes out of nowhere, after days of gloom, and God gently reminds me that my glooms are entirely unnecessary after all. God is faithful!

Trivia answers

1. **Groucho Marx** (1890-1977) blurb written for a book by S.J.Perelman, 1928. 2. **Lewis Carroll** (1832-1898) *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* 1865. 3. **Quentin Crisp** (1908-1999) in *Times* 22nd November 1999. 4. **Dylan Thomas** (1914-1953) *Under Milk Wood* 1954. 5. **Arthur Marshall** (1910-89) *The Games Mistress* (recorded monologue, 1937). 6. **Lewis Carroll** (1832-1898) *Through the Looking Glass* 1872.

"His splendour covers the sky and his glory fills the earth. His brilliance is like the light, rays flash from his hands; there his power is hidden." Hab 3: 3-4