



St. Patrick's Church

Broad Green/Cowley Drive Woodingdean BN2 6TB



Our Lady of Lourdes

Whiteway Lane Rottingdean

St. Patrick's Newsletter

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Our Lady of Lourdes - Limited resumption of Mass attendance, weekdays: see website:

<https://www.ololandstp.org/>

Fr Benny continues to say MASS which is streamed live from Our Lady of Lourdes : 09.30 Tues, Wed, Fri this week; Monday 19.30; Thurs Funeral Mass (Jim Dean RIP) 11.00; 18.30 Saturday evening and 10.30 Sunday.

Welcome to the twenty-fourth "apart but together" e-newsletter (27th February 2021)

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

On Being Tested

Barbara Bond

"This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him."

Matthew 17: 5

You may not be surprised to learn that I have been a church Reader for an exceedingly long time. I have a vivid memory of reading at my Confirmation service as a teenager in the early 70's.

My abiding recollection of that day was nothing religious – I had announced that I was going to wear a trouser suit! My scandalised relatives responded by buying me the most frilly, floral confection the fashion of the time could produce, probably at huge expense and well beyond what they could afford. I meekly wore it!

Over the years I have read the story of Abraham on many occasions. I mention my youthful self because in those days it was Isaac that I was drawn to – what must it be like to be him? Later, as a parent, I wondered how Abraham could be ready to offer God his only son. What depth of faith that was! And how on earth would I measure up if I were tested?



**God in heaven,
your glory shines through Jesus, your Son.
Give me a heart which shines with Jesus' love,
so that people can see you at work through me
and so be drawn closer to you.
This I ask in Jesus' name,
Amen.**

Canon Robert Townsend www.churchinwales.org

And just maybe, the Transfiguration is an answer to the "how on earth" question. Up there on the high mountain Peter, James and John were inspired to see the transfiguring power of God, and to recognise that Jesus was indeed the Son, the Beloved of God.

In Sunday's Gospel reading, in the reference to the resurrection from the dead, we find a powerful link to the Cross, and the kind of faithfulness which Jesus displayed. So, I find myself doing my best to *Listen to Him*. In that way, I commit myself, as the Responsorial Psalm says, to *walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living*.

The newsletter appears fortnightly. For the next issue, please send contributions by 12th March to Barbara Bond: bond_barbara@ymail.com

Lent Appeal/Family Fast Day

26th February 2021 was the second CAFOD Family Fast day to take place whilst we have not been meeting as a normal community. All charities are really struggling, including CAFOD.

The pandemic is a global emergency and it is the poor who suffer the most; the rollout of the vaccine across the world really highlights



To help people like Abdella
Text LENT to
70460
 to donate £10 to
 CAFOD's Lent Appeal
Or visit
cafod.org.uk/give



Loving God,

*we hear your call to all who thirst
 for a brighter future:*

*Come to the water, all you who are
 thirsty!*

*Pour out your Spirit upon us and lead us
 to walk alongside one another.*

*Let a desire for change well up within us,
 may we overflow with compassion and
 love.*

*And as a stream wears away stone,
 may we reshape our world together
 to reflect your kingdom of hope for all.*

Amen

how vulnerable life is, if you live in a low income country; inequality is a very stark reality.

Watch and read Abdella's story on

<https://projects.cafod.org.uk/walkforwater/index.html>

- **Give today** to reach vulnerable communities around the world with water, and to provide other vital support. Donate online at <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-CAFOD/Lent-Appeal>
- or by using a CAFOD envelope
- or you can use text: text LENT to 70460 to donate £10.

Five Things you can do this Lent: see <https://cafod.org.uk/News/UK-news/Lent-during-lockdown>

We have a range of resources to help you reflect, pray and stay connected with our global family this Lent - even during lockdown.

1. Watch our Children's Liturgy Live sessions every Sunday: Join us at 10am every Sunday for our virtual children's liturgy. If you can't join us live, a recording will be available to watch afterwards!
2. Celebrate Mass online: Although many churches remain open for prayer and public worship, many parishes continue to stream Mass live for those who are not able to attend in person.
3. Sign up to Walk for Water: Go the distance this Lent and help to end water poverty! 10,000 steps a day - done your way. Every day. For 40 days.
4. Use CAFOD's Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross resource will take you on a prayerful journey of transformation in solidarity with people living in poverty around the world.
5. Check out our fantastic Lent education resources: Our Lent 2021 education resources will help children and young people to pray, learn and fundraise this Lent.

“O you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come buy and eat! Come buy wine and milk without money, free! Why spend money on what cannot nourish, and your earnings on what fails to satisfy?” Isaiah 55: 1-2

There are so many interesting things to do online this Lent but I do like to link my prayers with walking/being outside. I came across this Prayer Walk recently and thought it might inspire some of you to get outside!

Although titled as a 'Prayer Walk' it can be used in any situation that suits you best – on a walk in the park, or just sitting in your garden, or on your balcony, or sitting indoors looking out at the world – the possibilities are endless...



If you can, stand outside and look around. Look at the ground on which you are standing; look at trees and plants; look at the stones that have been used for buildings; look up at the sky where you can see stars if it is dark, or if it is daytime, know that the stars are there but the light of the sun is too great for them to be seen. Remember that the whole universe is created from the same atoms and molecules and dust: stars, plants, mountains, plants – and each one of us.

Psalm 121

1. *I lift up my eyes to the hills; from where is my help to come?*
2. *My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth*

Psalm 139

12. *For you yourself created my inmost parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.*
13. *I thank you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are your works, my soul knows well.*

Take your eyes from the skies and look at the tiny details of the world around you. If you are outside look at the veins on a leaf, the texture of tree bark, the difference between each brick or stone of a building...and anything else that helps you to wonder at the variety of creation, all created by God and loved and blessed as good. Then look at your hands; stand with your feet on the ground or sit firmly in a chair and give thanks that God created you as you are.

Find some soil, a pot of compost for a plant. If it is in a garden, a park or a wood, etc. look at all the dead leaves, plants, twigs which are part of the soil, and gradually breaking down to make it good to grow new plants.

Our world depends on everything that has lived becoming dust and a fertile place for new life to grow. If this is your garden, you may want to clear some weeds, or even plant something, or sow some seeds.

If you have a pot of compost you may want to put a plant in it and watch it grow during Lent, a reminder of the new life that grows from the rich soil that is needed for it to grow good roots.

- What do you want or need to grow good roots?
- How might you help those roots to grow this Lent?



If you are outside, or going for a walk, look for paths that others have trodden. See the footprints of different people. There might be two tracks –

- How will you choose which to follow?
- Which footprints will be your guide?

After planting seeds or touching the dust or compost or earth, you will need to wash your hands... This washing (which we have been doing all year as a commitment to preserve life) is also a sign of our sorrow for sins and mistakes, and God's promise to wash away and forgive our sins.

Lent is time when we are allowed a moment, a time and space to see ourselves differently, and to allow words from God to become part of our lives.

"My heart is ready, O God; I will sing, sing your praise. Awake, my soul; awake, lyre and harp. I will awake the dawn... O God, arise above the heavens; may your glory shine on earth!" Ps 108: 1-3, 6

Rented House

We now have a plan to improve surface drainage and rebuild soakaway – just have to submit the big quote.

Are you growing from seed?

Anyone want guttering to plant seeds or seedlings in? This has been fashionable for a long time. You can plant carrots etc in soil or compost in the guttering in a greenhouse or warm place. When they are ready to go outside into the garden, slide the row of ready made seedlings into the (warmed) ground.

Spare computer

We have a MacBook Air laptop we could donate e.g. to a school pupil or anyone in clear need of it. We would first have to purge it to remove our data. Irene icgreen@ntlworld.com

Parish Mission, Diocese-wide — *four parish voices...*

1) I know the mission had some technical issues on the first evening but we all managed to have a good chat about God's unconditional love for us which was the main goal of the evening. It is so good to have such a professionally produced mission, tailored just to our Diocese. It is so good to have Lizzie, Deacon Jon and Margaret and all the behind the scenes people producing this for us. It is so good to have such a large number of people in the Diocese wanting to sign up and be part of the Diocesan mission. We would normally do these things at a Parish level and it is so good that with the technology, we can meet together as a Diocese, with people from other Parishes virtually. For those not able to be part of the Zoom, I hope they can feel part of the mission by reading the material and knowing that they are reading and watching the videos with such a large group of people in the Diocese.



2) *The first presentation was really good. The speaker was David Wells, he gets his points across very well and is so easy to listen to. There was a testimony by another lady and all her struggles and how her life has been turned around, very touching and moving. The Zoom meeting last night was a bit difficult as technology played up. In the end I did manage to join a discussion group for a short while. I haven't been involved in a Zoom discussion group before, so I found it all a bit strange.*

3) We were advised to join early and look at the screen. I think 80% of those registered for Invite, also did Zoom. Over 1000 are registered. After our second shuffle into groups I was with 7 others in room 6, we had no leader but one participant (formerly from Belfast) began with the questions posed in the Monday film. We talked about God's love, some giving witness of how they found it. It seems easier for converts or people whose faith has lapsed and returned in dramatic circumstances to give an account, we had one of each. God's love is freely given and you don't have to work for it or try to please God – new to some of us cradle Catholics! We talked about family love and family rifts. We didn't discuss stumbling blocks to returning to God. Two of the 8 were street pastors. I can't tell you how much I admire this – people from different churches out on a Saturday evening, amid pub crawlers, helping people who are having obvious difficulties. One of these men spoke about their monthly meeting with Churches Together in his town - does the diocese stretch to Bexhill? His observations were identical to mine that people from other churches worship God and pray more effectively and directly than Catholics do. Consider a less formal chat with God, tell him your woes. My zoom video stayed off all the time because the hosts had turned it off and no amount of clicking on it could reverse this – however I could speak and contribute. I enjoyed our quick fire discussion, many good points, no one hogging the limelight – excellent.

4) *Chaotic!*

"It is the Lord who forgives all your guilt, who heals every one of your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with love and compassion, who fills your life with good things, renewing your youth like an eagle's." Ps 103: 3-5

Food for Thought

Love beyond boundaries and borders

On 4 October 2020, the Vatican released Pope Francis' newest encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*. CAFOD's Head of Theology, Linda Jones, shares her reflections on this much anticipated work.

At the heart of Pope Francis' new encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, is a call to love. The Pope invites us to recognise Christ himself "in each of our abandoned or excluded brothers and sisters." This love is not soft and fluffy, but gut-wrenching. It pulls not so much at our heartstrings as at our intestines! We are invited to get close to those who are suffering and **allow them to change the way we think and act.**

Pope Francis invites us to meditate on the story of the Good Samaritan. What does it teach us about love? – That love goes beyond boundaries and borders. Expressions of love, such as caring for others, are not just for those already close to us, like our family and friends.

St Francis, the Pope says, "calls for a love that transcends the barriers of geography and distance and declares blessed all those who love their brother 'as much when he is far away from him as when he is with him.'"

Fratelli Tutti: A prayer to the Creator Lord, Father of our human family, you created all human beings equal in dignity:

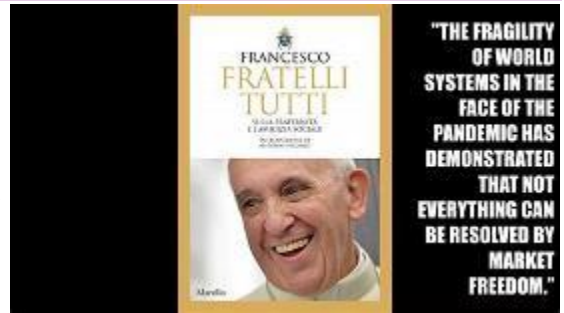
pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit, and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter, dialogue, justice and peace.

Move us to create healthier societies and a more dignified world, a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.

May our hearts be open to all the peoples and nations of the earth.

May we recognize the goodness and beauty that you have sown in each of us, and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects, and shared dreams. Amen.

"Will we bend down to touch and heal the wounds of others? Will we bend down and help another to get up? This is today's challenge, and we should not be afraid to face it," Pope Francis writes. "Our love for others, for who they are, moves us to seek the best for their lives."



The universal values of solidarity and fraternity

Pope Francis wrote this letter during the coronavirus pandemic. He says that the

pandemic showed us that we can come together as local, national and global communities. However, that immediate response soon fragmented. Instead of trying to go back to the old 'normal,' he asks us to make sure this is not just another "tragedy from which we learned nothing."

We get the sense that he feels the world is on the brink, and we need to move away from what was already wrong, stepping forward in a different direction. He says that dark clouds were already on the horizon.

The Pope has seen a rise in "resentful and aggressive nationalism" and a scandalous inequality. He mentions the temptation to build a "culture of walls." Instead, he proposes a "culture of encounter" that sees other people as gift, not threat.

Instead of short-term political and economic advantage

"If only we might rediscover once and for all that we need one another, and that in this way our human family can experience a rebirth, with all its faces, all its hands and all its voices, beyond the walls that we have erected."

for a few people, we all have a part to play in working together for the common good.

Short-term fixes are not enough. The earth, and the poorest and most vulnerable people, need us to respond urgently. "Each day," he says, "we have to decide whether to be Good Samaritans or indifferent bystanders."

"How long, O Lord, shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? They bluster with arrogant speech; the evil-doers boast to each other. They crush your people, Lord, they afflict the ones you have chosen. They kill the widow and the stranger and murder the fatherless child." Ps 94: 3-6

Food for Thought (p.2)

The President's Faith

Irene Green

Prof Massimo Faggioli of Villanova University (Pennsylvania) spoke to Christopher Lamb on a webinar organised by The Tablet on 19th Feb (these webinars cost money).

Joe Biden is the second Catholic President of the US. When John F Kennedy was elected even the nuns in my convent school were excited. We, as convent school girls, thought, "Hey, young and good looking" – and maybe the latter helped Kennedy to be accepted in the US. There was considerable anti-Catholic feeling in the USA in the fifties and sixties. The fight in the USA is now BETWEEN Catholics.

Joe Biden is a more consistent Catholic than JFK. He is the opposite of "born again", pragmatic not ideological, does not possess the zeal of a convert, he doesn't proselytize. But the far right American Catholics hate him not only because he wants to help the poor (i.e. they see him as a socialist!!!) but because he does not impose his views on the majority who do not share his faith. He respects US legislation and constitutional rights.

Helder Camara

"In the Father's house we shall meet Buddhists and Jews, Muslims and Protestants – even a few Catholics too, I dare say... We should be more humble about people who, even if they have never heard of the name of Jesus Christ, may well be more Christian than we are."

immigrants, who are too poor to send their children to Catholic schools. Catholic schools are closing in America and may disappear over the next 20 years.

A set of American bishops, their priests and followers react against anything Pope Francis says and in 2018 several demanded that the Pope resign. Opposition to Rome goes way back - their bashing of Vatican 2 is a badge of honour. Though I didn't come across this when I lived in America in the late 60s – maybe because it was liberal California.

Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli tutti* released in October is based upon the parable of the good Samaritan and is anathema to the right wing. "Human fraternity and care of creation form the sole way towards development and peace ." There has to be some stabilisation of the Catholic church in America, which will be difficult considering how sure some people are that they are right and that God is on their side, while others are wrong and Godless.

Joe Biden and Catholicism in the United States eBook: Faggioli, Massimo: Amazon.co.uk: Kindle Store



The far right American Catholic church is also very uncomfortable with the fact that churches are exiting the Anglo-sphere – churches are no longer composed of white Europeans. The far right anti-Pope Catholics are more likely to be racist, and Trump supporters. American churches now have a high proportion of

A graphic with a purple background. At the top, it says "DO YOU WANT TO FAST THIS LENT?" in large white letters. Below that, it says "In the words of Pope Francis". There is a list of ten fasts, each on a purple bar with white text. On the right side of the graphic is a photograph of Pope Francis in purple vestments, looking thoughtful. In the top right corner of the graphic, there are two small logos: "Hope and isolation" and "LIFE AT BORDERS".

DO YOU WANT TO FAST THIS LENT?
In the words of Pope Francis

- Fast from hurting words and say kind words.
- Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
- Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
- Fast from worries and have trust in God.
- Fast from complaints; contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
- Fast from bitterness; fill your hearts with joy.
- Fast from selfishness and be compassionate.
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
- Fast from words; be silent and listen.

"Rahab and Babylon I will count among those who know me; of Tyre, Philistia, Ethiopia, it is told, 'There was this one born.' But of Zion it shall be said, 'Every one was born in her' ... The singers cry out in chorus, 'In you, all find their home.'" Ps 87: 4, 5, 7

Seeds

Pedalling Around Paradise (the final showdown) — Ep. 3 — Barbara Bond



“On Yer Bike!”

– Norman Tebbit’s nickname for many years, after his famously misquoted advice for people in the North of England who were jobless – was ringing in my ears as I contemplated the enormity of the challenge I had just signed up to.

February in the UK is not a good time to try and cycle 177km, especially when one is supposed to be staying local and therefore not able to access traffic-free routes, such as the Cuckoo Trail. But the cause was good: raising funds for St

Peter and St James Hospice, in memory of Patrick’s mother, Liseby.

My bike had been in the garage all winter, and before that it was mainly used to pootle into Lewes – a couple of miles carefully avoiding all the hills!! So with days to spare, I went off on a training ride along the lanes to Plumpton Green. Wet winter has not been kind to the surfaces – mud and potholes are standard!

Add to this mix the fact that I was still thinking like a hiker, and the result was that in my first “proper” ride of the challenge (with Patrick accompanying me as my mechanic), I put myself – and him – in more danger than Indiana Jones... Flooded farm tracks, broken concrete under puddles, raised narrow pavements unsuitable as cycle paths... You name it!

After that I calmed down a bit and developed several routes that were quiet – and incredibly beautiful. As it was easiest to go north from Lewes – past the very splendid Offham Farm Shop – I was very soon in the countryside where I grew up. A journey to celebrate the life of an elder also became a trip revisiting my own childhood haunts. Along the way I saw buzzards, a baby sparrowhawk, blackcaps and bullfinches, and all framed by the Downs. It was a great experience, and it brought back walks, views, friends and conversations from the past.

I am sure that when this fundraiser was conceived, the idea was to have the participants “in Mauritius” by using virtual reality whilst in the gym – not possible, under lockdown! The hardest part for me was when snow and sub-zero temperatures made it totally unsafe to be out on public roads. Luckily, we were storing a bike “trainer stand” for my son, so my lovely personal assistant had me set up on the drive, pedalling hard but going nowhere!



Even though I did 50km of the route like this – about 3.5 hours of hard pedalling over 2 sessions – my toes have never felt so chilly!!! Tropical dreams? ... Not at that moment!

I have now completed the Pedal around Paradise. I have a great sense of achievement, but I do have to report that there is one hill I have yet to conquer. Maybe I shall have to keep practising!

Thank you to all supporters, by cash or by prayers: the fund stands at £430. Thank you so much!



“Praise the Lord for he is good; sing to our God for he is loving: to him our praise is due. The Lord builds up Jerusalem, and brings back Israel’s exiles, he heals the broken-hearted, he binds up all their wounds. He fixes the number of the stars; he calls each one by its name.” Ps 147: 1-4

Afterthought

Reading the Signs

Patrick Bond



The quality of light is changing. It is so subtle that I keep noticing a difference, then forgetting it again. Slowly but surely, light itself seems to get thicker, less flimsy, less shadowy. And the tufted grass in our back garden is a deeper green, not by much, but by a shade – a tint with a hint (of summer).



The brown and grey shades of the garden have been interrupted by bursts of colour – not everywhere, but here and there. A clump of dwarf narcissi has burst out of an abandoned hanging basket, left askew on our untidy patio. A ragged polyanthus sits next to an empty snail shell – thank you to our resident thrushes who comb through the rough corners of the “lawn” regularly, and keep slugs and snails to a minimum! An even more ragged daisy has shown its face today – the name comes from “day’s eye”, an old name for the sun.

And our tiny corner of mysterious crocuses has come into flower yet again, defying all my predictions year after year.



We move into Lent, and the birds are feeding with gusto. It’s not that they didn’t feed like this through the winter, but now they are in pairs, eating with a certain exhilaration, putting on weight and nest-building. The smaller birds can have ten eggs in one brood, and several broods in a year.



They need all the food and reserves they can lay down.

I hope I have not sabotaged the blue tit: I took down the nest box (which has been untouched for two years) in order to clean it out. All I found was a spotlessly clean box, already kitted out with fresh dry moss to a depth of four inches. Obviously he read the signs long before I did.

At this season, incomers are treated with hostility by the residents. The thrush was chased off several times by two blackbirds. The long-tailed tits were harried by a volcanically bad-tempered blue tit. Robins hurtle through our airspace in duels akin to aerial combat. I am glad to say that the incomers have all come back after a decent interval, apparently quite unbowed. Everyone has now settled down: there is, after all, enough food for everyone at Café Bond. I have come to recognise the fluttering approach of the thrush as it lands, quite unlike the wedge-like dive of the blackbird. The dipping flight of the long-tailed tits is also distinctive, and their confidential, constant twittering is as charming as their delicate colouring.

The subtle signs are read clearly by the birds. It is good to know that this new season in the Church’s year has come round again, with all its invitation to shine up our tools, renew our spiritual vision, and shed some of the baggage which normally takes up our time. Or at least, that’s how it seems to me. The garden is transfigured by these signs of spring, and I am glad to be here, reading the signs and making ready for the beauty of Easter.

“O sing to the Lord giving thanks; sing psalms to our God with the harp. He covers the heavens with clouds; he prepares the rain for the earth, making mountains sprout with grass, and with plants to serve human needs. He provides the cattle with their food, and young ravens that call upon him.” Ps 147: 7-9