

**CORPUS CHRISTI
PARISH MAGAZINE
JUNE 2020**



THE BEAUTIFUL PEACE ROSE

PARISH VISION STATEMENT

- The Gospel calls Corpus Christi to be a living sign of Christ.
- An open and vibrant community growing in Spirituality.
- An active community where all are encouraged to participate.
- To work with other Churches, to spread the Good News to all and seek a greater understanding of other faiths.

June is the month of The Sacred Heart, a devotion which dates back to the seventeenth century. St John Eudes and Blessed Claude La Colombiere helped St Margaret Mary Alacoque in her quest to celebrate the great love of God for us all in a liturgical and spiritual way. Jesus' Sacred Heart is a symbol of his love. St Margaret Mary had a revelation of Jesus's Sacred Heart in the years 1673 to 1675 in the Visitation convent of Paray-le-Monial in Burgundy, France. Jesus asked her to have a feast celebrated on the second Friday after Pentecost. This year that falls on 19th June.

Blessed Claude was a Jesuit and was later sent to England where he was arrested and thrown into a damp dungeon. King Louis XIV saved him from execution by pleading that he be released. He had been charged for "traiterous speech". The late Benedictine Fr Ian Petit once said: "If it were a crime to be a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict me?" May we show we are Christians by our love for all people as we imitate the great love that God the Father has shown us in His Son and in his gift of His Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Canon Tom

CAFOD and COVID-19

CAFOD is an overseas aid organisation but coronavirus (Covid-19) is a whole world problem so CAFOD and its worldwide collaborator, Caritas, have major roles to play.

CAFOD is involved with countries which do not have good health care facilities. A particular concern is the many refugee camps and slums like Kibera in Kenya (over a million people with no running water or sanitation). At this time of great need.

CAFOD's normal source of income, (contributions from parishioners) has stopped. Hence their appeal for on-line giving to enable them to meet the direst needs.

CAFOD has worked in the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone and Liberia and more recently in the Democratic Republic of Congo. They have experience in gaining the confidence and trust of local people which is so vital in establishing basic hygiene standards.

CAFOD will use its established contacts with local church and faith leaders to deliver clear and accurate information via trusted leaders, and promote good hygiene practices, which are both key to keeping people safe

In many of the 165 countries it reaches it works through Caritas Internationalis. Together, they make up one of the largest aid networks in the world, with substantial knowledge and expertise in WASH – water, sanitation and hygiene– and disease control. CAFOD holds significant technical expertise in WASH and helps to coordinate Church responses.

But even as part of this global network of local experts, coronavirus risks disrupting CAFOD's ongoing humanitarian and longer-term development work. Every country team is adapting to the challenges this crisis will demand, but they will make sure that local staff and aid teams on the ground put their safety first in order to continue delivering help where it is needed most.

Please help in whatever way you can; by your prayers (don't overlook thanks giving for our wonderful local community, who risk their lives in the NHS and care homes!); on line donation (only £6 can buy a hygiene pack for a family); campaigning (don't let foreign aid be cut to pay for our own anti-Covid-19 measures). Quite apart from our Christian duty to love our neighbours, even if we have eradicated the virus at home, it could re-emerge from overseas if we don't help.

HOW TO SURVIVE YOUR FIRST YEAR IN SEMINARY

Joseph C. Meigh, *soon-to-be-5th Year Seminarian*, gives you the lowdown on what to expect, should you ever find yourself accepted for Seminary!

So, you've been accepted? Thanks be to God! I don't think you'll regret it. If you're anything like me, you feel very uncertain. You never had any great revelation from God – just a haunting sense of 'maybe...' which you couldn't shake, until you just had to go and get it out of your system, preferably without too many people ever noticing you were gone. That's OK. I know one priest who insists that every young man should spend a year in Seminary, like some kind of Catholic national service! But he's right. At its best, Seminary has no other purpose than to discover who God made you to be, and help you to become that person. Who gets that chance?!

You'll be coming to St John's Seminary, Wonersh, near Guildford – where there are six of us for Clifton already, with a 7th joining in September. Your daily routine will be something like this: Lauds or Mass at 7.30am, though quite a few people would be up by 6am, to pray in the early quiet. Classes start at 9am, and run until lunch. In first year, that's Philosophy, Doctrine, Liturgy, Spirituality, Scripture, and Ethics. But don't worry about the academics – one of the first things you'll learn here is that Theology is not knowing facts about religion, it is *knowing* God, personally and intimately, in a relationship. Theology is prayer, or it is a waste of time. So, it doesn't matter whether you have five O-levels, or five PhDs – 'intellectual formation' is about forming your mind to be like Christ's, not about marks or grades.

The afternoons are quite open, though you'll never have as much time as you think! You'll have a house job (Sacristy, kitchen-cleaning, library – that sort of thing), classwork, essays to write, pastoral placements... then you need time for prayer, *lectio*, Divine Office, spiritual reading... spending time with your brothers in the community, and keeping up with friends back home... and don't spend all day in the house, either – get out for a walk, or play some football! Mass or Vespers is at 6pm, before supper at 7pm. The food? Hit and miss, but can be excellent. You won't starve! In fact, everyone assures you that you'll put on weight. Finally, in the evening there might be adoration, or twice a week the bar's open! You'll never be at a loose end.

For all that, though, the *real* formation happens in the spaces between all these activities, when it's just you and God – and that's why it's important to seek out silence in your day. Your room is your cell. From my window, I see no other buildings, just the freshly ploughed field, and the woodland which spreads across the rise: our cloister is three sides brick, and one side Surrey Hills. At night, I hear only the owls calling (at least, in the few minutes' quiet after my neighbour has stopped treading across his creaky floorboards, and before he has begun to snore). Ten minutes' walk away is the village, and fifteen minutes' drive is the town. Our '*life is hidden with Christ in God*' (Col 3.3).



It's very obvious, then, that this is not at all like Parish life! Critics of the seminary system may well ask why parish priests are trained in a quasi-monastic community, chanting the Office, when they'll probably end up living alone, and celebrating a very un-monastic liturgy. Why do we learn all about Plato and Aristotle, and nothing about bank accounts, plumbing, or boiling an egg?

Doubtless much could be said on either side. But for us, where we are, it is a *hortus conclusus* (an 'enclosed garden', from Song of Songs 4.12). It is not a place to escape from the world, because you soon realise that everyone brings the world in with them. But, in the words of our Spiritual Director, it is a place where we can discover just how much the world has got into us. And by coming to this self-knowledge, which is necessary for all spiritual growth, we can have our minds renewed by Grace, and our whole nature thus transformed (Rom 12.2). That's what seminary formation

is about: allowing the Holy Spirit to mould you into the image of Jesus Christ. Hence nowadays we speak about 'formation' rather than 'training', because the priesthood is not primarily about what you *do*, but about *who you are*.

Of course, the outside world is never left behind. Over six years, you'll spend one whole year in a parish, as well as three month-long placements (I did my first one in St Nick's, in inner-city Bristol), and every Thursday afternoon in a school, hospital, or prison. Also, most of our teachers are priests who take time out of their parish ministries, and talk to us over lunch. So, St John's may be an island apart, but we are well connected to the mainland! That's one advantage we have over our brothers in Rome – we're formed in England, for England. That is, all except the chap two rooms down, who's in formation for a diocese in Alaska! Another inescapable difference between Wonersh and other seminaries is money.



It's certainly not 'wine with every meal' for us! (You might get a bottle on the table for special occasions). The chapel is in desperate need of redecoration, the last coat of paint being now greyed-over by 40 years' worth of incense-smoke! We are the poor relation: our walls and windows are thin, our beds are old, and not even the staff get an *en-suite*! But, as so often, material poverty leaves room for spiritual wealth – and St John's has a spirit like nowhere else. There is no great division between staff and seminarians: it is formation by friendship; we are a family. I think this is why Bishop Declan has always sent students to Wonersh rather than Rome, or anywhere else

They say the first year is the hardest. That's especially true if you're giving up a job and a house of your own, as quite a few have. About a third of us are over 40: a couple were widowed, but many others have come from teaching, or working in business, the NHS, even the Met. It's hard for them now to shrink from their own house into a small room on a noisy corridor, and from their working salary to a monthly expenses grant. No, it isn't easy, at all. You'll be tired all the time – not necessarily from the classes or house jobs, but from the psychological drain of living with other people, with so much going on unseen under the surface. Living in community can be exhausting, irritating, institutionalising... you can't come and go as you please, you can't decide what you'll eat or when, and sometimes people really can talk an awful lot of nonsense over the breakfast table. But give it time... after a while, you get to love this rag-bag collection of oddballs with whom you've been thrown together, foibles included – the guitar playing of the 'troubadour of the 2nd floor', or the servers who rush out for a fag after Mass, without stopping to remove cassock and cotta. We don't take ourselves too seriously, and the laughter is always flowing – with or without the wine!

If you let it, this place will find out what brings you most fully alive, and encourage you to pursue it relentlessly. The charism of celibacy is all about discovering that God-given creative energy within you, and finding other ways in which to bring life into the world. I've spent the year getting lost in art, music, poetry, nature, and silence. That's what living in a *hortus conclusus* allows; hearing Jesus say, '*Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place*' (Mark 6.31); learning first of all to be alive in Christ, then to bring His life to others. *Nemo dat quod non habet* – no one can give what they don't have.

So – it's wonderful to hear that you are listening to what God's asking you to do with the life He has invested in you. 'Seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened...' (Matt 7.7). And in the meantime, please pray for us at St John's – the 30 odd seminarians (read that how you will!), especially those of us for Clifton. We are reliant on your prayers, and on the support of all everybody back home, whom we love, and wish to serve with our lives.

GARDEN WATCH

Jobs for June

- Plant out tender bedding and sow biennials and perennial seeds
 - Prune spring flowering shrubs and trim hedges
 - Tie climbers to their supports, increase them by layering.
- Tie in border plants and apply a liquid feed, dead head as appropriate.
 - Feed and water plants in containers.
- Spray roses against pests and diseases if needed. Remove suckers
 - Sow late crops such as radishes, summer spinach and lettuces.
 - Continue planting out runner and French beans.
 - Plant out tomatoes and peppers

The floral bounty of the garden starts to unfold, while there is still plenty to do, try to enjoy the garden and if you have planted bee and butterfly friendly plants there is nowhere better to sit and relax with a well-earned cup of tea, making the most of this lovely weather. A garden can be a good resource for meditation and serenity.

If you think your garden is looking good do send in a photo and share it with us.

The Peace Rose

The Peace rose – formally named Madam A. Meilland – is a well- known and successful garden rose. It was developed by French horticulturist Francis Meilland in the years 1935-1939.

When he foresaw the German invasion of France, he asked the American consul to take cuttings to America. It is said that they were on the last plane to leave France to the United States, where it was safely propagated during the war.

In early 1945 rose grower Francis Meilland wrote to Field Marshall Alan Brooke to thank him for his part in the liberation of France and ask if Field Marshall Brooke would give his name to the rose, he declined saying that though he was honoured to be asked, his name would soon be forgotten and a much better and more enduring name would be Peace.

The adoption of this name was made official on 29th April 1945, the day Berlin fell, a day considered to be a turning point in the Second World War in Europe.

This rose is considered to be a symbol of Peace after the war, and as we have just had the 75th anniversary of VE day and are on the way to VJ day it seems appropriate to celebrate it.

In the 50's my father planted a Peace climbing rose on the fence in the garden of our family home. As he served in the war it meant a great deal to him. I remember it as a truly beautiful rose with blooms the size of saucers.

Angela



During May, the month of Our Lady, my thoughts always drift to Our Lady's shrine in Lourdes, France.

It is about this time that my family and I book up our annual trip to the Shrine. My favourite destination! A time of Retreat for me personally! A time of peaceful contemplation and prayer. A week in which I step back from the hustle, bustle and business of my life in Weston.

I feel a great deal of sadness as I, now, look longingly through photographs of past years spent in the Domaine, knowing that this year, at least, I won't be visiting the Grotto as I have in previous years.

Lourdes is a renowned Christian Pilgrimage site with between four and six million visitors a year.

On my first ever visit many years ago I was so very surprised at the beauty of Lourdes and the surrounding district of South-West France. I heard numerous reports of the many souvenir and trinket shops selling “tacky” religious items but no one had prepared me for the stunning surroundings! In fact, the shops circling the Domaine give me a great deal of pleasure! I feel uplifted by the numerous outlets selling a wide range of religious objects, all choices catered for. From small market stalls to expensive Jewellers. All selling religious artefacts , mainly Rosary beads to gold and silver Chalices and Monstrances, Statues large and small waiting to be purchased to be positioned in a place of honour and to be revered in a holy Place, church or chapel somewhere in the world.

Lourdes nestles in the foothills of the French Pyrenees, South West France. The wide River Gave zigzags through the town on its way to the coast. Sometimes swiftly rushing and gushing, while on other occasions, meandering, gently and calmly passing through, always majestically, making an indelible mark on its mountainous surroundings. Elegant mature trees line either side of the river providing much needed shade from the heat of the French summer sun.

In 1844, the year Bernadette Soubirous was born, Lourdes was only a small rural village. Perched on the side of the French Pyrenees. The community relied mainly on farming and also some marble and slate quarrying for their livelihood.

Bernadette's family were very poor. She had eight brothers & sisters, five of whom died before they reached the age of ten. At some point, the whole family lived in one room in the local “Cachot” (gaol) due to poverty. Pilgrims can visit the gaol and

experience the grim and cramped living quarters for themselves.

Bernadette was a sickly child. She fell ill in a Cholera epidemic and later contracted Tuberculosis which remained with her all her life. On several occasions she stayed with a foster family in Bartes, a small village in the hills, to help her recuperate. It was in Bartes that she became a Shepherdess. Due to ill health the young girl missed all forms of education and therefore was illiterate.

In 1858, at the age of 14 years Bernadette returned to Lourdes and to her family in order to prepare for her 1st Holy Communion.

It was to this young insignificant girl that Our Lady chose to appear at a rubbish dump outside the town, known locally as Massabielle Cave. Bernadette received eighteen apparitions between February and June 1858. Our Lady gave Bernadette instructions on how to pray the Rosary reverently and also helped her to prepare for her 1st Holy Communion. It was to Bernadette that Our Lady announced to the world. "I am the Immaculate Conception.!"

At the very spot where Our Lady appeared a spring of water gushed from the ground and continues to flow today. The miraculous healing waters of Lourdes! Our Lady said to Bernadette "Wash and drink of the waters from the spring" It is from this water that over seventy miraculous cures have been confirmed by the Catholic Church and thousands of unreported healings have taken place over the past 160 years. It is said that everyone who visits Lourdes receives a Spiritual blessing from the Holy Spirit especially the gift of Peace in sickness. Understandably Lourdes caters mainly for the infirm and those with disabilities of every kind. There is a hospital on the site of the Domaine and all the hotels cater for the disabled. Nurses, carers and helpers are in abundance too!

The Sanctuary or Domaine is separate from the town itself. It encircles the Sacred Site which contains the Grotto, the Basilicas and many Chapels, the Hospital, Offices and Library, the healing Baths and a "Way of the Cross." walk.

Every day Mass is celebrated in the Sanctuary in all the main European languages. There is continuous daily Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the Chapel and the Blessed Sacrament is taken through the grounds in procession to the underground Basilica of St Pius X where Adoration and Blessing of the Sick takes place at 5pm.

Many Pilgrims believe that the climax of the day is the Candlelight Rosary Procession in honour of Our Lady at 8pm each evening. The renowned Baths are open at certain times of the day.

As I thumb through the photographs and old diaries, vivid memories are triggered and come flooding back! I remember how much I love to sit in the Grotto at the Apparition Site under the large statue of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception which seemingly gazes and smiles down on all who pass by. The huge circular candle holder filled with candles flickering and swaying in the still and holy air. My mind is transported back and I imagine myself sitting and thinking of those who have asked for my prayers, my family and friends, As a general rule, I always feel very emotional as I absorb the Peace and tranquillity and am reminded of the Hymn "Be still and know that I am God". I never cease to be overwhelmed by the sheer number of Pilgrims from every Continent, the wheelchair bound, the disfigured , the blind, young and old, families, helpers, the fit and the strong, all filing past with Rosary beads in their hands, often around the necks of little children. Slowly in and around the Grotto they glide, arms raised, feeling, touching the craggy contours of the rock. Pausing, praying at the glass covered Spring that pours out its healing waters. Some genuflect, some make the sign of the cross blessing themselves, others press their Rosary beads into the condensation that oozes from the cracks in the rock. All absorbing the holiness, the stillness the peace in the air. It never fails to bring tears to my eyes! Their humility , their awe, their reverence and genuine love for Our Lady is so very apparent . Everyone bringing their needs, their heart breaking petitions to the Queen of Heaven. My heart, my mind is spiritually uplifted at the joy expressed by the helpers, the serenity of the sick, the "oneness" of us all, united in petition and thanksgiving to Jesus' loving Mother. Mother of us all.

Sonia Briffit

More riddles from Marie

- I have a tail and a head but no body. What am I?
- What falls but does not break, and what breaks but does not fall
- What can run but never walks, has a mouth but never talks, has a head but never weeps, has a bed but never sleeps?
- I never was, am always to be, no one ever saw me, nor ever will, and yet I am the confidence of all to live and breathe on this terrestrial ball.
What am I?
- Pronounced as one letter, and written as three, two letters there are and two only in me, I'm double, I'm single, I'm brown, blue and grey. I'm read from both ends and the same either way. What am I?

Answers on back page

This is your community magazine, now we are all at home, self -isolating, let me know how your managing.

How are you keeping yourself busy? Do you have hobbies? If you make things let us see photos of anything you have made.

Are you involved with or know of a local charity? Would you let me know about it or write a piece yourself and send it in.

Do you have a poem that is important to you? Or do you write poetry and have a poem you would like to put in the magazine? please send it in.



Compiler and Editor- Angela Clarke - to contact me

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The editor, fuelled by mountains of biscuits, gallons of tea and Somerset radio has finally put the magazine “to bed”



Yay!

Items for inclusion in July's edition to Angela no later than Friday 19th June please.

Otherwise I cannot guarantee they will be included.

Answers to riddles

1. Coin.
2. Night falls – day breaks
3. A river
4. Tomorrow
5. An eye