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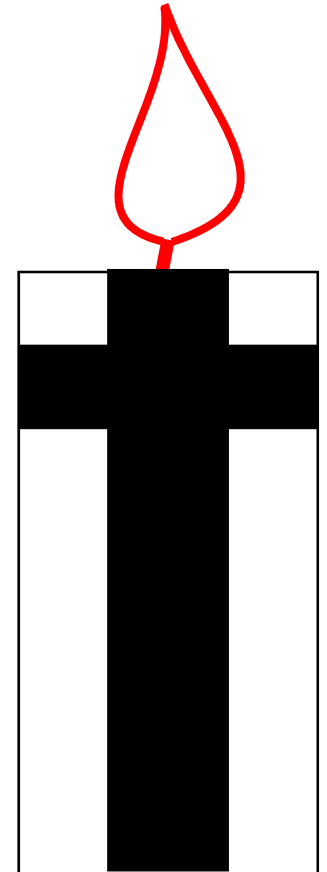
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**THE CATHOLIC MAGAZINE OF
TROWBRIDGE & WESTBURY PARISH**

no. 77 Winter 2007

20p

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Why be an Altar Server?

We are altar servers at St Johns Church Trowbridge. We have been altar servers for a year. After our Holy Communion in May 2006 Canon Liam asked for some new altar servers, so we put our names down on the sheet in the Church porch. We wanted to be altar servers because we get to take part in the Mass and help Canon Liam. We had to go to training on Thursday afternoons, after school in the Church. There were five of us altogether, all wanting to be altar servers, one was our cousin Scott. At the training we practiced the things we do at Mass, for example giving the cruets to Canon Liam and when to bring the Ciborium and the Chalice to the Alter. It was exciting being able to stand round the Alter. There was a lot to learn.

On our first day of being altar servers we were excited but a little nervous. Dominic helped us put on our robes. We did not have much to do, but on the Alter Adam's tooth came out. It was fun helping on the Alter for the first time. We got lots of praise when the Mass was over. Now we do a lot of jobs on the Alter for example holding the torches, collecting the offertory bags but our favourite job is carrying the Acolytes. It was a privilege to serve on Canon Liam's 40th anniversary for being a priest. There were a lot of altar servers on that day. We had a special job, carrying Bishop Declan's Crook and Mitre. We also held the torches. We still enjoy altar serving now and our family are very proud of us.

Daniel and Adam Lawes (Year 5 St John's Catholic Primary School)

Answers to Crossword on page 6

Down

1. Shepherds 2. Angel 3. Worship 4. Bethlehem 6. Prince 8. Mary 9. Manger 10. Field

Across

1. Star 5. Joseph 7. Room 9. Myrrh 11. Inn 12. Peace

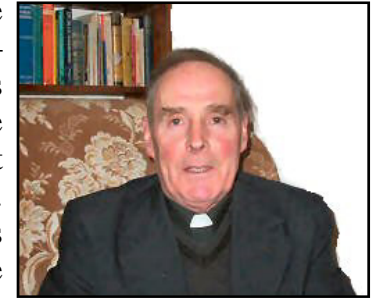
Parish Christmas Bazaar

Congratulations to Frank Geraghty and all the team, helpers and donaters raising approx £9000 for the parish. Well Done everyone



Christmas Message

Once again we have come to the time the church sets aside in preparation for Christmas – Advent. What does Advent mean? Adventus Domini means the coming of the Lord. We are called to prepare. In the words of the Prophet Isaiah: “A voice cries in the wilderness. Prepare a way for the Lord make his paths straight.” We are waiting for the glory of the Lord to be revealed in all its fullness. We live in the in between period in the history of man’s salvation. Christ has come to Bethlehem on a certain date in history: This is the First Coming. Now we wait for his Second Coming when the light of Christ in all its beauty will finally rise upon the darkness of the world. Thus the first 2 weeks of Advent focus on Jesus’ Final Coming as Lord and Judge. The Church is the Bride of Christ waiting for her bridegroom. We know that this will happen in the Lord’s good time because he is always faithful to his promises. He has proved this by his fidelity to the promises made through the prophets of the Old Testament in sending his only Son into the world. We must keep the Lamp of faith alive and alight so that when the bridegroom comes he will find us waiting.



The final 8 days prepares us for our celebration of Christ’s coming in history. (Christmas) How can we prepare well to celebrate Christmas? The answer is by keeping Advent well. Just as John the Baptist called the Jewish people to repentance and conversion so he calls us today: “Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand.” Advent is a time of conversion. The words of John the Baptist are calling us to a genuine change in our way of thinking and acting.

I am going to list a few things, which may help you during Advent to prepare well for Christmas:

- We need to keep Christmas parties to a minimum – they lead us away from the true spirit of Advent.
- To follow the daily readings for the Masses of Advent and ponder over them.

- You might decide that the best thing I can do every day during Advent is to pray the Rosary. Then you are pondering over the life of Jesus in the company of Mary who is the person God chose to bring his Son into the world.
- Maybe the very best you can do is to think about Jesus and the preparation for his birth as you go about your work every day.

One very important item in our preparation for Christmas is our Advent confession. That will help us to straighten out our lives so that we can welcome Jesus. There is the **Penitential Service** with visiting priests for Confession/Reconciliation on **Wednesday 19 December at 7.30pm** You can make your Confession to any one of the priests and be assured of a warm welcome. There will be many other opportunities for Confession during the weeks of Advent.

May I wish you many, many blessings during this Advent and great happiness, peace and joy that come from union with Christ our Saviour.

God bless you all this Christmas.

L. O'Driscoll

Canon Liam O'Driscoll

From the Editor

As 2007 draws to a close and the birth of Jesus brings renewed hope we should all look forward to things yet to come in this forthcoming year. We should also take a moment to pause and reflect on what has past. To mention just a few ~ Canon's 40th Anniversary, Father Richard's visit, St Bernadette's refurbishment, the Christmas Bazaar, numerous trips and luncheons; welcoming new people into the parish and those returning; and we also remember those who have past away, may they rest in peace.

The magazine will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2008 and we look forward to celebrating it. It is only with your continued support that we keep going. The team believe the magazine to be an important part of our community. Thank you and best wishes to you all for 2008.

'Hark, the Herald Angels, to cite but one, was written in 1739 by Charles Wesley, who with his older brother, John, started the Methodist movement in the Church of England. I don't know what religious path was trod by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, but his 'Bells on Christmas Day,' written when his son was wounded in the Civil War, has a message of faith and hope for people of every creed:

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
 Their old familiar carols play
 And wild and sweet the words repeat
 Of peace on earth, good will to men.
 Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
 'God is not dead, nor does he sleep;
 The wrong shall fail, the right prevail
 With peace on earth, good will to men.'

Frank Geraghty



Frost on the Blackthorn

Hung with weightless web-woven strands,
 White as Mary's heart-held hands,
 Strung with strands suspended where spiders bridged the winter air.
 Limned with hoar frosts sparkling gems,
 Crowned by Nature's diadems;
 Iced with eye-exciting stars
 Bright as those at Heavens baes

Awed by the inspiring sight
 In the sun-fresh morning light,
 Pausing as we take our way
 To the labours of the day;
 Wonder at the craftsman's skill,
 Instant magic, perfect, still,
 To our winter-weary eyes
 Manna in another guise.

Ecumenism of Christmas Carols

When you take time to think about it, and now is a good time to do that, Christmas Day is a very ecumenical holy day. It is ecumenical because the beautiful music that makes this season so memorable flows from a stream of songwriters and composers of virtually every Christian tradition. Their melodies are now shared by all of us.

The most popular Christmas song is 'Silent Night, Holy Night.' It was written by the Rev. Josep Mohr, pastor of the tiny Catholic Church in Arnsdorf, Austria, and Franz Gruber, the parish organist, in 1818. Its beauty and simplicity helped spread the Carol across Europe. An Episcopal bishop, John Freeman Young, translated it in 1863 from German into the English we know and love today. The next most popular Christmas songs (in the United States at least) are 'White Christmas,' 'Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer' and 'Santa Claus Is Coming To Town'.

Back to 2nd Century

Christmas Carolling did not, of course, begin with Fr. Mohr's 'Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht.' Or even with St. Francis of Assisi, who is credited with building the first Nativity crib in 1223 and leading his followers there in 'jovial singing.' The practice goes back at least to 129 A.D. according to the Oxford Book of Carols when Roman worshippers were urged to sing the 'Gloria, the angels' song,' at Christmas services. St. Francis was called the father of such carols as 'Adeste Fidelis,' although the song's true origin is unknown. It faded with the change for the vernacular after Vatican II, but its translation, 'O Come All Ye Faithful,' still stands near the top religious carols today. Its melody was composed by John Reading, Westminster Abbey organist, in the mid 18th century.

A Unitarian minister, Edward H. Sears wrote the famous 'It Came Upon a Midnight Clear,' despite his Church's disbelief in the Holy Trinity. The triumphant 'Joy to The World' was the work of an Anglican minister, Isaac Watts, the 'father of British hymnody.' Phillips Brooks, an Episcopal priest, wrote 'O Little Town of Bethlehem,' one of the all-time Christmas favourites. The triumphant 'Joy to The World' was the work of an Anglican minister, Isaac Watts, the 'father of British hymnody.'

Massage of Hope and Faith

I've not even mentioned the array of carols in French, Polish, Spanish and Italian, all rich with Catholic traditions. Choirs from private colleges of many faiths embrace these hymns during their Christmas chorales today. My favourites at this time of Christ's birth are ecumenical too, and they bring back childhood memories .

I am still going to be glam!

I will not join the blue rinse brigade or stay indoors or sit in the shade.
Shall enjoy the chocolate and the crisps, not do bowls or coach day trips.
Enjoy a lager or gin & tonic, and of course, have a crafty smoke.

Will still be wearing my sparkly shoes, will wear whatever clothes I find,
of the most unsuitable kind.

Will still be listening to Status Quo, they are even older than me don't you know.

Will still open my mouth and say the wrong thing and burst into song (even though I can't sing).

Still embarrass my family with bloopers galore, and blame it on age (well I couldn't before).

Won't go to bingo, wear twinsets or pearls, would rather have a wine and Viennese whirls.

Will still slap on the makeup, just got to be glam, because although old, I still am what I am!

Guess who?

What's on your iPod!

Pray-as-you-go is a daily prayer session, designed for use on portable MP3 players, to help you pray whilst on the move - travelling to and from work and so on.

A new prayer session is produced every day. It is not a 'Thought for the Day', a sermon or a bible-study, but rather a framework for your own prayer. Lasting between ten and thirteen minutes, it combines music, scripture and some questions for reflection. The aim is to help you to:

- become more aware of God's presence in your life
- listen to and reflect on God's word
- grow in your relationship with God

<http://www.pray-as-you-go.org/>

Birth of Christ

DOWN

- 1 Who were tending their flocks by night
- 2 Who announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds
- 3 The wise men bowed down to Jesus to _____ him
- 4 Jesus was born in this town
- 6 "The _____ of peace" - one of the titles of Jesus
- 8 mother of Jesus
- 9 Jesus was born in a _____
- 10 The shepherds were in the _____ when they saw an angel

ACROSS

- 1 The wise men followed a _____ that led them to Jesus
- 5 human father of Jesus
- 7 There was no _____ at the inn for Jesus
- 9 one of the gifts of the three wise men
- 11 Jesus could not stay at the _____ because it was full
- 12 and on earth _____, goodwill toward men (Luke 2:14)

Answers on page 26



Hi, I'm Peter and this is Lilly. Watch out for the next issue of the magazine with a new area just for us kids called "Our Space" ~ see you then. We want to hear from you so send us an email, poems, stories and jokes.

Email peterandlilly@btinternet.com



Gifts that make a difference

CAFOD

just one world

By rejecting consumerism at Christmas and buying a World Gift for families living in poverty, CAFOD supporters are really making a difference. Buying a goat for people living in poor communities across Kenya makes a long-lasting Christmas gift - improving health and nutrition for people like 67 year old Nancy Nyambura.

The small farmers' group that Nancy belongs to was given ten goats just over a year ago by CAFOD's partner, the Catholic Diocese of Murang'a. They have now bred several times. The goats, a cross-breed of German Alpine and local breeds, produce milk and manure, improving nutrition and soil fertility for the owners and their families. "Before I had the goat I had to buy milk - and money's a real problem for us so we went without," says Nancy, who cares for three of her grandchildren after their parents died of AIDS. "Since we got the goat I have felt happy and we are all healthier."



Nancy's goat gave birth three months ago. "Today one of the kids is being given to another member of our farmers' group so he can also benefit like I have," says Nancy.

World gifts aren't just for Christmas. They are available all year round on CAFOD's website at www.cafod.org.uk/worldgifts



During this year our parish has contributed £5350 towards CAFOD for our "Focus Africa" project. Thank you and may God bless you.

Annie Haywood ~ Parish Organiser

Footprints

By Margaret Fishback Powers

One night I dreamed a dream.
I dreamed I was walking along the beach with God,
and across the sky flashed scenes from my life.

For each scene I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,
One belonged to me and the other to God.

When the last scene of my life flashed before us
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that at times along the path of life
there was only one set of footprints.
I also noticed that it happened
At the very lowest and saddest times of my life.
This really bothered me and I questioned God about it.

"God, you said that once I decided to follow you,
You would walk with me all the way,
But I noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life there is
only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why, in times when I needed you most, you would leave
me."

God replied, "My precious, precious child, I love you and would never,
never leave you, during your trials and suffering. When you see only one
set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

Reproduced from the Irish Catholic, October 4th 2007.

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Whistle stop tour visits Trowbridge

On Saturday 3rd November parishioners attending the 6pm Vigil Mass were treated to a wonderful performance by the Campanet Choir from Mallorca. Led by conductor Amau Reynes and organist Pere Reynes Florit, hymns were sung in both Latin and Spanish. This also included the Kyrie and Gloria. The 22 member choir, on a European tour, delighted parishioners with their passion and enthusiasm. Their singing captured the spiritual essence of the Mass enjoyed by all.



St Bernadette's Coffee Morning

A Coffee Morning and Bring and Buy was held in St. Bernadette's new annexe on Saturday 17th November. This was very well supported and we were delighted to raise £210.00 from the event. We would like to thank everyone who brought goods for sale especially the home-made pies and cakes. Also many thanks for the donations of some splendid raffle prizes. It was a very happy morning and we enjoyed welcoming old friends and new.

We all agreed we should do this again soon.

“While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night”

The words were written by Nahum Tate who was born in Dublin. He became Poet Laureate in 1692 and the text to the carol was published his bestseller of 1700 “A Supplement to the New Version of Psalms”. The carol is now sung to a tune called the “Winchester Old”, by Christopher Tye (1500 – 1572), a choirmaster at Ely Cathedral. Handel also wrote a tune for the carol, but it is very rarely sung.

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

What a triumphant carol for Christmas Day! The carol was composed in 1739 by Charles Wesley and called “Hark! How All the Welkin* Rings”. Surprisingly, the original tune was a very sombre plodding melody. In 1840, the German composer Felix Mendelssohn composed a cantata called “Festgesang” (Festival Song) to commemorate Johan Gutenberg and the invention of the printing press.

In 1855, an English musician named William Hayman Cummings heard the second chorus of “Festgesang” “Gott ist Licht” (God is Light) and adapted “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” to its tune and this is what we sing today. The third verse descant was added by David Willcox (Choirmaster King’s College Cambridge) in 1961.

“Silent Night, Holy Night”

The lyrics of the carol were composed in 1816 by an Austrian priest called Josef Mohr, who wanted the carol accompanied by guitar. This was considered inappropriate by some people because guitars were associated with drinking songs.

On Christmas Eve 1818, Fr. Mohr asked his friend local headmaster Franz Gruber to compose a tune and guitar accompaniment so that “Stille Nacht” could be sung at midnight Mass. At first, Herr Gruber refused. Then it was discovered that the organ in the Nicola-Kirche in Oberndorf was not working. The tale goes that mice had damaged the bellows. Herr Gruber relented and composed the guitar arrangement. The carol was a huge success and has become perhaps the world’s favourite. It has been translated into about 300 different languages.

During World War One in 1914, there was a Christmas truce. “Silent Night” and “Stille Nacht” was heard on both sides of the battle lines. It was one of the few carols that both sides new by heart.

Wordsearch

```

      G
      W I X
      I O F N Q
      H P R T L N Q
      H I H S S T A R D
      C H I L D
      Q O I R V U F
      S H E P H E R D S
      D S A M X C A N J K X
      T M A N G E R
      M H A I G I J B Y
      E E Y N B D I E Q J P
      O V H C U A L Y S F F U O
      E E Y O E U L K
      N L H L W G J S I E A
      S O H P S Z O X N U M X D
      E Z S T O L S W G E J A X S W
      U E R E J O I C E R M
      V Y B P G D S B A B Y G C
      J W W H S N T I H R R V D U Y
      X F I Y B F A T H E R O D J A F U
      W Y H
      H Q N
      F E G
  
```

Angels	Baby	Bethlehem	Census	Child	Christ	Emmanuel
Father	Worship	Gifts	God	Gold	Herod	Inn
Jesus	Joseph	King	Magi	Manger	Mary	Myrrh
Prophecy	Rejoice	Shepherds	Son	Stable	Star	

There is more to Christmas than pretty Christmas trees and shopping, more than presents and family time together. Christmas is the time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel (God with Us). Just like the shepherds and magi of the first Christmas, we should worship Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Who is Jesus?

He is Jesus

In chemistry, he turned water to wine;

In biology, he was born without normal conception;

In physics, he disproved the law of gravity as he ascended into Heaven;

In economics, he disproved the law of diminishing return by feeding 5000 people with 2 fishes and 5 loaves of bread;

In medicine, he cured the sick and the blind with administering a single dose of drugs.

In history, he is the beginning and the end;

In government, he said that he shall be called wonderful counselor, prince of peace

He said no one comes to the Father except through him;

So, who is he?

He is Jesus!

He is worthy, seek his face always;

The greatest man in history;

Jesus has no servants, yet they called him Master.

Had no degree, yet they called him teacher.

Had no medicines, yet they called him Healer.

He had no army, yet kings feared him.

He won no military battles, yet he conquered the world.

He committed no crime, yet they crucified him.

He was buried in a tomb, yet he lives today at the right hand of the Father.

I'm honoured to serve such a leader who loves us!

Jesus said: "If you deny me before man, I will deny you before my Father in Heaven".

Autumn Golf Spree

Frome Golf Club-Monday 29 October 2007

The sun shone again on our golf day, led by Canon Liam. Unfortunately, we had to switch from the originally planned Saturday 27 October date due to rearranged club competitions that were taking place on the course. The result was the 12 golfers were largely OAPs and Grumpies, who had escaped the shackles of the workplace and had been released from their daily chores by their domestic goddesses! Having said that the first prize went to the only player still in full time employment (apart from Canon Liam) in the group. Tom Webber rattled up 34 stableford points to take the green jacket and a Dunlop Driver to help him play even better in the Christmas Spree.

Danny Thomas was runner-up with 32 points. If only the holes were bigger, the trees smaller and the river did not draw the ball into the fast running waters, I would be wearing the green jacket to the Parish Christmas dance! The longest drive went to John Aland on the 550 yard fifth, the only name on the marker. Most went into the trees trying to beat John's mighty hit. Bas Hanarahan's performance was the one the papers were mostly interested in at the post tournament press conference. He took the nearest the pin competition on the 137 yard tiered seventh, with a controlled chip off one foot, which stopped around 90 foot from the pin. Unlike most of the rest he got on the green! Bas also picked up a champagne moment prize for some deft club work in a ditch, which sent the ball into the river. Finally he collected the Endeavour prize, which was a giant blue plastic baseball bat to help improve his game for the Christmas Spree!

The team prize produced joint winners on 78 points of Tom Webber, Guy Turner and Bas Hanarahan, together with Brian Moore, John Aland and Danny Thomas.

Some more confusing terminology. The Handicapping System is to enable the average or not so good player to enjoy a game with the best, a Scratch player. This somewhat abrasive term is applied to a player who is capable of going around the course, where the par is 72, in 72 strokes. The average player would probably take 98 and so have a handicap of 26. So if say one of the Grumpies was to play Tiger Woods at the Frome Golf Club and Tiger scored 72 and the Grumpy 98 the match would be judged to be a draw. The reality is the Grumpy would probably be so gripped with nerves that he would score 120 !

Thanks to Rose and Laurie for hosting the refreshments and prize giving at the Lamb.

Come and join us for the Christmas Spree 3 CLUB COMPETITION on Friday 28 December at the Frome Golf Club.

Danny Thomas

Messages for

A message for Christmas By Chloe Tucker age 9

The Lord's promise was kept. Christ came to earth and brought the light to the world. The sign of the Lord's promise was the star, big and bright. The sign of the Saviour, the Christ Jesus. His birth in a stable proves he is the servant king, king of love, king of creation. Christmas is Jesus' birthday nothing more, nothing less. We must remember Christmas is special.

A message for Christmas By Molly Brace Age 9
A long time ago, God promised that he would send Jesus to help us to be closer to God. Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem. He was born in a stable because God didn't want everyone to think he was a king that lives in a palace or on a throne. Jesus is the servant King. My message is to live like Jesus

A message for Christmas By Alfie Little age 7.

God promised that there would be a saviour. Isaiah told the people the message that Jesus would be born. Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem. The star guided the shepherds and the wise men to Bethlehem and into the stable where Jesus was born. Jesus wasn't a king with a palace, jewellery and a crown. He was a servant king. Everyone was really excited because the servant king was being born. The message of Christmas is Love one another.

A message for Christmas By Conor Ramsay age 8

God had promised that he would send Jesus to spread the Word of God and to teach us the right things. God asked everybody to get ready because Jesus was going to be born and he will teach us the right things and help us to keep all our promises. Jesus was born in a stable and became the light of God. He wants us to love each other. Jesus came to teach us the right way to love each other.

A message for Christmas By Timmy Jones age 9.

God promise that he would send somebody to spread the Word of God. He sent a man called Isaiah to say to everybody to get ready because God would keep his promise. One night a star was in the sky. It was not an ordinary star. It was a star to show that Jesus was born. Soon everybody was at the feet of Jesus. Jesus was born in a stable because he was not to be a rich and famous king he was to be a servant king.

A Christmas Message By Ben Hennessey Age 8

Jesus was born in a stable because there was no other quiet place in the town. Three shepherds followed the star and it led them to Jesus. God's promised he would send a saviour. We must be friendly with one another. We must help one another.

After a sermon by Father Richard in which he mentioned "Christianity Rediscovered" I obtained a copy. It tells of missionary work among the Masai tribes in the style of St. Paul – no schools, hospitals, or demanding western style clothes – just the Good News.



We believe in the one High God, who out of love created the beautiful world and everything good in it. He created man and wanted man to be happy in the world. God loves the world and every nation and tribe on the earth. We have known this High God in darkness, and now we know him in the light. God promised in the book of his word, the bible, that he would save the world and all the nations and tribes.

We believe that God made good his promise by sending his son, Jesus Christ, a man in the flesh, a Jew by tribe, born poor in a little village, who left his home and was always on safari doing good, curing people by the power of God, teaching about God and man, showing the meaning of religion is love. He was rejected by his people, tortured and nailed hands and feet to a cross, and died. He lay buried in the grave, but the hyenas did not touch him, and on the third day, he rose from the grave. He ascended to the skies. He is the Lord.

We believe that all our sins are forgiven through him. All who have faith in him must be sorry for their sins, be baptised in the Holy Spirit of God, live the rules of love and share the bread together in love, to announce the good news to others until Jesus comes again. We are waiting for him. He is alive. He lives. This we believe. Amen.

Margaret Keane

From the Youth Group.....

A number of people from the parish have asked us how we are getting on with plans to go to Sydney next year as part of the World Youth Day celebrations which will be attended by Pope Benedict. A lot of people gave money to us when we did our sponsored bike ride to Bath, and we are very thankful to you for that, but.. Australia just seemed a bit too much and we have decided that instead we will do a pilgrimage closer to home. We will, at some time in 2008, spend a weekend in Dulverton, which is a centre run by the Diocese of Clifton for young people to have residential retreats. Watch these pages for more information. In the meantime we have had the usual selection of games nights, prayer events and pizza evenings. We have been really pleased to welcome some new members and would say new young people are always welcome. Sunday 25th November was Youth Sunday, and we were pleased to be asked to plan the 6pm Mass. This we did, and everything went well and we enjoyed helping out in the parish.



Watch these pages for more information. In the meantime we have had the usual selection of games nights, prayer events and pizza evenings. We have been really pleased to welcome some new members and would say new young people are always welcome. Sunday 25th November was Youth Sunday, and we were pleased to be asked to plan the 6pm Mass. This we did, and everything went well and we enjoyed helping out in the parish.

We will meet again in January 2008 and would welcome any young person aged 13 or over to help us plan some future events.

Your youth group team Peter, Gail, Mike and Alison



A message for Christmas By Joshua Brennan age 8

Thousands of years ago God made a promise and he kept it. He sent his son to save us. Jesus was born in a cave to show that he wasn't the sort of king that sat on a throne. If Jesus wasn't born, we wouldn't have Christmas. The message of Christmas is to Love one another.

My message for Christmas By Christopher Godwin age 7.
The message of Christmas is that Jesus was a king but wasn't born in a palace. He was born in a stable and that shows that he was a servant king. The tree kings came because they saw the star and they brought gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. The star was a sign that God had kept his promise to his people. My message is to listen to God.

A message for Christmas By Ellie Issacs age 7

God promised that he would send his son to earth. Isaiah told everybody to get ready for Jesus birthday at Christmas. Christmas doesn't just mean that you get a tree and presents. It means we should remember Jesus, Mary, and God and share everything. My message is to share with each other.

On Christmas Night By Kyra Lampard Age 7

Jesus' birthday is on Christmas day. That is why we celebrate his birth and Gods promise that Jesus would come very soon. The star was a sign that Gods promise was kept. Isaiah was the one that told the people to get ready, but some people did not believe him. My message is that Jesus is really happy when we celebrate his birthday.

Christmas By Max Johnson age 8

God promised that his son would save us, that he would be born in a stable and would be a different king to rich ones. As a sign of his promise he would send a star. Soon God's people were beginning to wonder whether he was really going to send his son, so he sent Isaiah to preach and tell people that Jesus was going to come. He went around towns and villages to tell them. At the birth in a stable Mary told Joseph that the name was to be Jesus and because he was born in a stable and because God's promise was kept a star appeared in the sky. The star attracted the wise men and the angels told the shepherds. The star was big and bright. When the wise men came they came with myrrh, gold, and frankincense. God sent his son that day because his people were ready. Are you ready?

Christmas 2007

Home is a Holy Place

Some of the Pastoral Council have been working on a hand out for parishioners to encourage families to see their homes as Holy Places, with activities that can promote this. The leaflets should be available shortly.

We have included a variety of ideas for everyday, and for the season's of the Church's year. One idea for Advent is to make a Jesse Tree, but this might not be something that you are familiar with.

So what is a Jesse Tree?

The Jesse Tree is named from Isaiah 11:1: "A shoot will spring forth from the stump of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots." It is a vehicle to tell the Story of God in the Old Testament, and to connect the Advent Season with the faithfulness of God across 4,000 years of history. The Branch is a biblical sign of newness out of discouragement, which became a way to talk about the expected messiah (e.g., Jer 23:5). It is therefore an appropriate symbol of Jesus the Christ, who is the revelation of the grace and faithfulness of God.

How do I make one?

A Jesse tree, can be either a banner or a poster on a wall, with the symbols fastened to it; or a tree, with the symbols hung from the branches.

The background is usually Purple or Blue (the colours of Advent), with a large cut stump and a single green branch growing from one side. The symbols are attached around the branch, usually with a star as the last symbol at the top.

If a tree (real or artificial, as long as it's green) is used, it should be a relatively small one if only one ornament a day is to be added. A large tree can be used if all of the children make ornaments each Sunday, or if the ornaments are a communal project. The ornaments can be widely varied, from simple hand coloured paper from the children, to more elaborate craft items. Different styles can be used each year.

While it is sometimes tempting to apply "quality control" and exclude some ornaments on a sanctuary tree, especially those done by children, it is probably better to allow them for the sake of community and celebrate the unity of the tree itself, and what it represents in providing a place for such diversity.

rumour even has it that she went along to help in running a market stall in Devizes on one occasion with some success!

Sister regularly attended the parish social events where her enthusiasm for music, dance and friendly chat were infectious and always added to the occasion. In her seven years with us all Sr Leonard won our hearts and we were sorry when age and ill health enforced her retirement to Ireland. Now we pray that God will take her to his heart and grant her the peace and joy of Heaven.

Eternal rest give unto her, o Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her, and may she rest in peace. Amen



As we journey with the Holy Family to Bethlehem, we pray for all who make forced journeys. Give them strength to carry on and courage to walk the road ahead.

Wake up, little baby God and hear our cry

As we hear the innkeeper say there is no room, we pray for refugees for whom there is no country. Gather them to yourself and keep them free from harm.

Wake up, little baby God and hear our cry

As we contemplate that first Christmas night, we pray for those with nowhere to lay their head. Comfort them in their need and uphold them in their plight.

Wake up, little baby God and hear our cry

As we listen to the cry of the infant king, we pray for children everywhere born into poverty. Wrap them in your love and uphold them in your tender mercy.

Wake up, little baby God and hear our cry

As we remember the fear of the shepherds in the presence of the angels, we pray for all who are afraid to look ahead. Reassure them with your presence and embolden them to face the future.

Wake up, little baby God and hear our cry

As we recall the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, we pray for all who flee from danger. Enfold them in your care and challenge us to offer our protection.

Wake up, little baby God and hear our cry, that justice may be born.

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From *Images of Prayer*, ed. Linda Jones, published by CAFOD

Sister Leonard Casey 1923-2007

It was with sadness that we learnt of the death of Sister Leonard on the 10th November this year at the age of 84 years. Sadness relieved by many fond and happy memories that she leaves with us following her years spent working for us all in Trowbridge/Westbury. A brief profile of her life as a member of the religious order of St John of God will show the degree of work and experience she gained as she lived her vocational life in her love for God and his people.

Born: 21.10.23 Kilworth Co Cork

Entered Religious Life: 8.9.45

First Profession: 6.9.48

Final Profession: 6.9.51

Ministry:

1948-52	Hospitality – Cardiff
1952-63	Hospitality - London
1964-67	Bursar & craft teaching – Nigeria
1969-71	Archives – Propaganda Fide – Rome
1971-81	Hospitality – Irish College – Rome
1981-95	Parish work – Bristol
1995	Parish work – Trowbridge/Westbury
2002	Retired to Ireland

Although Sr Leonard worked for the parish as a whole I am sure that the people of Trowbridge will understand that those of Westbury regarded her as their own! We all remember her warmth and good humour even in the face of cold, wintry journeys to early morning Mass on Sundays at St Bernadette's – not always easy, as you get older.

She was a great storyteller and had a wealth of tales to tell – oft repeated over the years but always able to raise a laugh and lift the spirits. Her visits to the sick and elderly, and her work with the young children of the parish were greatly appreciated and enjoyed by all who felt the benefit of her love and guidance.

Sr Leonard had a very real gift as a needlewoman and samples of her exquisite work can be seen in both St John's and St Bernadette's churches. Beautifully embroidered vestments, altar linen and tapestries she leaves behind for the pleasure of us all. The members of her weekly sewing group, few of whom had her talents, were inveigled into sewing and knitting for fund-raising events for the parish and

What symbols could be included?

The story of God in the Old Testament can be told either in terms of the main characters of the story, or of pivotal events that helped shape and define the people's journey of Faith through the Old Testament. The Scripture readings given here provide an outline of the story. Since some of the characters and events are recounted over many chapters, some will need to be summarized and a single selection of Scripture that encapsulates the story, usually 4-8 verses, selected for public reading.

The actual story that is told with each symbol should be a short (2-4 min) summary of the person or event, including their significance in the unfolding witness to God's self-revelation in history. While connections can be made where appropriate to New Testament events, the Old Testament story should not be treated only as preparation for the New Testament. The continuity of God's love, patience, and grace across the centuries to the most unlikely people in the midst of their failures should be the focus. Of course, that climaxes in the Incarnation. But we as Christians need to listen to the Old Testament Story for what it teaches us about God and ourselves, rather than use it to get to something else.

Continued page 14 and 15

IRISH HOLIDAY COTTAGE at CLASHMEALCON, COUNTY KERRY

Enjoy the freedom and space of Ireland, at Clashmealcon, County Kerry located in 1.3 acres overlooking the Atlantic Ocean at the mouth of the Shannon Estuary.

The bungalow has 3 double bedrooms, the Master bedroom containing a double bed and the other 2 rooms twin beds. The dining room overlooks the Atlantic and the sitting room offers open fire, TV and DVD player. The kitchen comes with cooker, microwave, fridge, washing machine and most cooking utensils, cutlery and crockery.

The cottage is only 3 minutes from Ballyduff, which has 2 small convenience stores, restaurant/pubs and a fast food take away. 10 minutes away is the picturesque village of Ballybunion, with its world-renowned Golf course and child friendly scenic sandy beaches.

Contact Details:- Helen Davies, Tel No 02380 619221,
Mobile No 0798 5088 056, Email: douglas_davies@yahoo.co.uk

Table of Scripture Readings for the Story

Date	Persons	Events/Themes	Scripture	Symbols
First Sunday	Introduction of the Jesse Tree		1 Sam 16:1-13, Isa 11:1-10	The Tree
Mon Wk 1	God	Creation	Gen 1:1-2:3	Dove
Tues Wk1	Adam and Eve	The First Sin	Gen 2:4-3:24	Tree with Fruit or Apple
Wed Wk1	Noah	The Flood	Gen 6:11-22, 7:17-8:12, 20-9:17	Rainbow or Ark
Thur Wk1	Abraham	The Promise	Gen 12:1-7, 15:1-6	Field of Stars
Friday Wk1	Isaac	Offering of Isaac	Gen 22:1-19	Ram
Sat Wk1	Jacob	Assurance of the promise	Gen 27:41-28:22	Ladder
Second Sunday	Joseph	God's Providence	Gen 37, 39:1-50:21	Sack of Grain or Coat
Mon Wk2	Moses	God's Leadership	Exod 2:1-4:20	Burning Bush
Tues Wk2	Israelites	Passover and Exodus	Exod 12:1-14:31	Lamb
Wed Wk2	God	Giving the Torah at Sinai	Exod 19:1-20:20	Tablets of the Torah
Thur Wk2	Joshua	The Fall of Jericho	Josh 1:1-11, 6:1-20	Ram's Horn Trumpet
Fri Wk2	Gideon	Unlikely Heroes	Judg 2:6-23, 6:1-6, 11-8:28	Clay Water Pitcher
Sat Wk2	Samuel	The Beginning of the Kingdom	1 Sam 3:1-21, 7:1-8:22, 9:15-10:9	Crown
Third Sunday	David	A Shepherd for the People	1 Sam 16:1-23-17:58, 2 Sam 5:1-5, 7:1-17	Shepherd's Crook or Harp
Mon Wk 3	Elijah	The Threat of False Gods	1 Kng 17:1-16, 18:17-46	Stone Altar
Tues Wk 3	Hezekiah	Faithfulness and Deliverance	2 Kng 18:1-19:19, 32-37	An Empty Tent
Wed Wk 3	Isaiah	The Call to Holiness	Isa 1:10-20, 6:1-13, 8:11-9:7	Fire Tongs with Hot Coal
Thur Wk 3	Jeremiah	The Exile	Jer 1:4-10, 2:4-13, 7:1-15, 8:22-9:1-11	Tears
Fri Wk 3	Habakkuk	Waiting	Hab 1:1-2:1, 3:16-19	Stone Watchtower
Sat Wk 3	Nehemiah	Return and Rebuilding	Neh 1:1-2:8, 6:15-16, 13:10-22	City Wall
Fourth Sunday	John the Baptist	Repentance	Luke 1:57-80, 3:1-207:18-30	Scallop Shell
Mon Wk 4	Mary	The Hope for the future	Luke 1:26-38	White Lily
Tues Wk 4	Elizabeth	Joy	Luke 1:39-56	Mother and Child
Wed Wk 4	Zechariah	Anticipation	Luke 1:57-80	Pencil and Tablet
Thurs Wk 4	Joseph	Trust	Matt 1:19-25	Carpenter's Square or Hammer
Fri Wk 4	Magi	Worship	Matt 2:1-12	Star or Candle
Dec-24	Jesus	Birth of the Messiah	Luke 2:1-20	Manger
Dec-25	Christ	The Son of God	John 1:1-18	Chi-Rho Symbol



Examples of a finished Jesse Tree

