

Outlook



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Welcome from the Outlook Editor

Miranda Reading

Welcome to the Lent edition of Outlook!

As I write, a pale yellow sun is shining through tendrils of fog – typical January weather! However, the sun reminds us that Spring is not too far away! But the winter weather can still be beautiful – just look at this month's cover and the wonderful photo of Ruislip at dusk, taken by our designer, Nik Parsons.

We are now heading into the solemn penitential season of Lent, which begins this year on the 5th of March, Ash Wednesday. At the masses on this solemn day, crosses of ash are marked on the foreheads of the congregants. The reason for this is to remind us that 'from dust you came and to dust you shall return.' With the Assisted Dying Bill in the report stage in the House of Commons, and discussion of how to have a 'good death' is everywhere, we are reminded that as Christians, we do not fear death but rather look on it as an essential stage of our journey to meet with Him. As my grandmother used to say, it is but a sleep from which we will wake in the arms of God. Let us pray for our politicians as they deliberate such a momentous step, whether or not we agree with the cause.

We have many interesting articles and contributions this issue and I hope you will enjoy them. We have an extended Kidszone this issue, with lots of different writings and poetry from young people in the parish as well as some brilliant contributions from adults. The only thing missing this issue is the crossword – our compiler, Jude, is on his holidays! He'll be back next issue.

Could you contribute something to the magazine? Do send us your thoughts, your prayers and your stories. All contributions and feedback by 16th March 2025 please to MirandaAtStMartins@gmail.com. Thank you.



Member Editor 2025
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Fr Robert Writes..

Dear Friends,

The beginning of 2025 brought an unusual ecclesiastical experience. Usually the Sunday after Christmas is 'The Holy Family', then we trot into the stable with the Magi and celebrate the Epiphany. However, this year, because of the day on which Christmas fell we found ourselves celebrating 'Christmas 2'. I did not appreciate the unusual nature of this until I looked at the gospel on which I would preach; John Chapter 1. This famous chapter of St John's gospel is the usual fare for Christmas Day, and that is it. This poetic chapter having had an outing at our Carol Service and then on 25th is put away for another year. I do not have to worry about 'fleshy Words' of another 11 and half months. Yet, this year, Christmas 2, John 1, and it is not even Christmas Day! This meant I had to revisit this reading for the year ahead and not simply from the perspective of the manger.

Hence, I thought I would share my thoughts again which takes me back several years to a conversation with my departed elder brother, James.

James once told me how much he used to enjoy a Pub Quiz, (our St Martin's Quiz in January would have been mother's milk to him). However, his love affair with beer-fuelled trivia was ended once he went up to Oxford.

I naturally asked him why the sudden change of heart, to which he replied, "You don't get many questions, such as, 'name three of the Spice Girls'?"

What do they ask? I replied.

“Ah, the favourite is, “Name the work in which this is the opening sentence? The story”, he continued, “is usually a Greek Myth and, the quote is read out in Ancient Greek!”

The assumption is that the opening sentence would be so familiar that it would reveal the name of the work.



In fact, the day before I preached on Christmas 2, Thought for the Day on the Today programme began with: ‘The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there’. The opening sentence from L. P. Hartley’s 1953 novel *The Go-between*.

It struck me that what was true for Pub Quizzes in Oxford and Thought for the Day was also true for The Gospel of John:

‘In the beginning was the Word, and the word was with God and the Word was God’. (For Oxford Pub

Quizzers: Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος, καὶ ὁ Λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος)

These words are perhaps some of the most profound words in the bible, if we are to judge profundity by implication.

St John’s opening words are deliberately targeting two audiences. First, a Jewish audience, as his opening sentence deliberately echoes the opening words of the Torah:

‘In the beginning God...’

Secondly, John addresses a Gentile, Hellenistic audience by his use of Greek philosophical terms and ideas. John employs the word, ‘Word’. To those of us who shout at the radio when politicians are obfuscating, this seems like a strange choice of words, why not simply say ‘Jesus’; ‘In the beginning was Jesus, and Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God’. After all, as the chapter progresses, the reference is made abundantly clear. Yet, John uses ‘Word’.

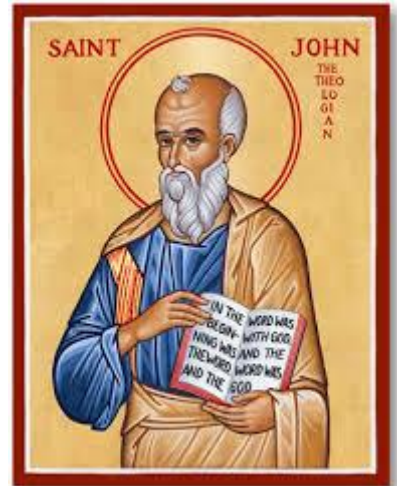
This technical, philosophical term ‘Word’ is, in the original Greek, ‘Logos’ (Λόγος). Logos was the summit, the source, the completeness of everything, thus Logos was, by extension and definition, God, because only God could have all those aspects.

The Stoics understood 'logos' as 'the rational principle by which everything exists'. Logos was the essence of life, without logos there could be no life. Hence, John in verse 4 saying:

'In him was life, and that life was the light of all'.

It is this element of 'life' that is so significant, so profound.

However, employing the language of logos as the Stoics did, can lead us to a cold, formulaic place. Here we are merely rational spectators of that which is done to us by the complete logic of the logos. Perhaps, unsurprisingly then the Stoics believed in the removal of passion seeing it as illogical and irrational and destined for the fall of humanity. They strove for dispassion, what they called *apathia* where we get the word apathy from. But that is not the logos of St John or the later Church. The Word made flesh knew passion. The Word made flesh experienced the passion and pain of the cross, that place where the irrational seemed to have won the day, and, of course as the days before Christmas 2 reminds us, we celebrate the passion of the Word made flesh when we see God in a manger; what is logical, rational, apathetic about that?



No, the Word made flesh is more dynamic than that, and the passion seen in the incarnation and the cross meaning that we too are transformed.

In the Church every Mass/Eucharist reminds us of that act of sacramental transformation, the Word being made flesh shown in bread and wine.

In the West we talk of *sacraments* and yet, the Eastern Church refers to *mystery*. Sometimes I think, it helps to be a little more eastern, particularly as we wonder at the opening sentence of St John's gospel. For sacrament can sound formulaic, whereas mystery, in the true religious sense, does not simply mean enigma, i.e. the unexplainable, but something revealed only in part because, as Fr. Kallistos Ware says, 'it reaches into the infinity of God'.

Plato, who was definitely **not** a Stoic, said, "The beginning of truth is to wonder at things".

St John said in v14 of his first chapter, “The Word became flesh and lived among us,...full of grace and truth.”

The opening words of St John’s Gospel, at the beginning of 2025, should cause us to wonder. New years are a chance, for the combination of new starts and the renewal of things which have perhaps lay dormant. Week in and week out this coming year, as we celebrate the Eucharist we are asked to renew continually our sense of wonder at that mystery of the Word becoming flesh, because in the words of St John of Kronstadt:

‘In the words take, eat, drink there is contained the abyss of God’s love for humankind. O perfect Love! O all-embracing Love! O irresistible Love! What shall we give to God in gratitude for this Love?’ (Met. Kallistos Ware *Sacraments of Healing* 2023 p. 71)

My prayer for you is that you find that type of love being made flesh in your life. That really would be a good start to the Story of 2025.

Your friend and priest,

Fr Robert



Dates for the coming weeks and months....

February 2025

Sunday 2nd February Candlemas – Masses at 8am, 9.15am and 11.15am

March 2025

Wednesday 5th March Ash Wednesday – Masses at 9.30am and 7.30pm

Wednesday 12th March Lent course begins

Tuesday 25th March Annunciation of the Lord – Mass at 7.30pm



Contributed by Pawprint

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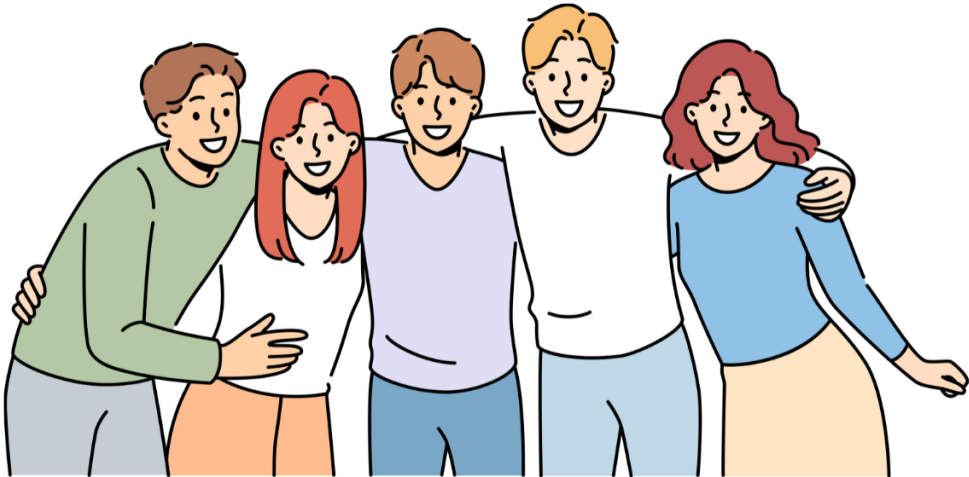
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Ask S. Martin



Dear St Martin,

Fr Robert has some very nice Robes that he wears for Mass, but every time I go, he seems to be wearing a different colour! Why do his robes change colour?

Brothers and sisters,

This is often one of the most perplexing things about the high church to the uninitiated. Why does the priest wear vestments and why do they change colour? To answer the question, we must first establish what vestments are and why priests and others wear them. Vestments are the garments largely worn for the Eucharist but are also worn in other settings such as weddings, processions, etc. The reason for this is to emphasize the importance of services, particularly in the case of the Eucharist.

The reason why the colours of vestments change is due to the different meanings of the colours reflected by the Church Calendar.

Green – worn during Ordinary time, which occurs between Christmastide and Lent, and between Eastertide and Advent. Green symbolizes the gifts from God that inhabit our everyday lives.

Purple – worn during Advent, Lent, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, and may be worn during Requiem Masses, All Soul's Day, Remembrance Sunday, and Office for the Dead. Purple symbolises repentance and penance, fitting the themes of Advent and Lent in the church calendar as well as those other times when purple is worn.

Rose – worn during Gaudete Sunday (3rd Sunday of Advent) and Laetare (4th Sunday of Lent). Rose is worn to mark a softening of the penitential period in the season, meaning that it is allowed to break our Lenten and Advent fasts.

White – worn on Christmastide (from Vigil of Christmas to the Baptism of the Lord), Holy Thursday, the Easter season (from the Easter Vigil up to the Vigil of Pentecost), Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, Feasts of Our Lord other than those of His Passion, Marian feast days (Blue and White), the Feast of Saint Michael and All Angels, feasts of non-martyred saints or confessors, Feast of Saint John, Feast of the Conversion of Paul the Apostle, the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, other feasts of Saint Joseph, Feast of All Saints, Sacrament of Baptism, Sacrament of Matrimony, Sacrament of Holy Orders. White is worn on celebratory days because white symbolizes rejoicing and purity of soul. Blue and White vestments are worn during Marian days as blue symbolizes the Virgin Mary and white her purity.



Red – worn on Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost, Feasts of the Passion of the Lord, Feasts of Martyrs, Apostles, and Evangelists, as well as the Sacrament of Confirmation (or white). Red is worn on these days as it represents the blood of Christ that was shed during his passion and represents the fire of the holy spirit.

Black – worn on All Soul's Day, Requiem Masses, and Remembrance Sunday. Black is worn on these days as a symbol of mourning, penitence, and humility.

Gold – may be worn on certain high celebrations such as Christmas and Easter.

(Sarum Rite) Blue – may be used as an alternative to purple in advent to symbolize hope and expectation.

(Sarum Rite) Unbleached Linen – may be used as an alternative to purple during Lent to depict humility.

I hope, my brothers and sisters, that this guide will help you to fully comprehend the sacred acts of the church and the meaning behind them.

With all my sincerest thoughts and prayers,

Sanctus Martinus Turonensis

Saint Martin of Tours (with a little secretarial help from Alex Chapman)

Prayer for Peace

We pray without ceasing for justice, reconciliation, peace and an end to hatred and war.

We also pray for God to change the hearts of all leaders and decision-makers in our countries and around the world, for we are in dire need of hearts that love, show mercy, and are willing to live in unity with others – hearts that respect human dignity and choose life, rather than death.

We entrust the countries of our Lord's earthly home into the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, asking him to have mercy on us all and to give us his peace and blessing.

Amen.

Archbishop Hosam Naoum, Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem





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printers of Outlook - the St Martin's parish magazine

It wasn't me!

By Jide Menakaya

In 2001 Shaggy, a famous American rap musician penned the lyrics to an international best seller based on a conversation between two friends titled, 'It wasn't me' The album which sold over 1.5 million copies was number one in many countries including the UK. The first stanza reads,



(Yo man)Yo
(Open up man) What do you want man?
(My girl just caught me)
You let her catch you?
(I don't know how I let this happen)
With who?
(The girl next door, you know?) Man...
(I don't know what to do) Say it wasn't you

(Alright).....

<https://youtu.be/pslgz9o8meM?si=RkiFS6zoxol85LZ>

In 2024, we started the year with the unsettling findings detailed in a television drama, *Mr Bates and the Post Office*. At the conclusion of the Post Office inquiry, the statements from the key players at the inquiry, the Post Office, Fujitsu and the former Chief Executive all acknowledged there had been immense suffering to Sub postmasters because of their actions, but, crucially they all claimed, it wasn't me...

Shifting the blame onto someone else is not a new phenomenon. At the 2024 service of nine lessons and carols, we were reminded of Gods visit to the Garden of Eden at the beginning of time to enquire from Adam and Eve why they had disobeyed instructions. Why did you eat of the forbidden fruit?, Adam was asked. 'It wasn't me' he replied, 'it was Eve my companion that made me eat it' Why did you eat the forbidden fruit? Eve was asked. 'It wasn't me' replied Eve, 'it was the serpent who made me eat it...'

No wonder God was frustrated with them, punished them severely and banished them from the Garden of Eden forever. On the last Sunday of Advent we glimpsed the contrast with Mary as she prepared to give birth to Jesus. Mary had immediately accepted her role as the Mother of Jesus by saying to Angel Gabriel, 'I'm the hand

maiden of our Lord, let it be to me according to thy will'. Despite the optics of the circumstances, a pregnant unmarried poor young woman visiting an older pregnant cousin, a member of the society establishment, this was a celebratory event as both women reflected on the potential future impact of their personal decisions. It's fitting we pray the Angelus to immortalise this moment.

<https://youtu.be/x9HTuls70tQ?si=PQj0CoED8yhqE07I>

The joy of Jesus's birth was accompanied by several hard choices. Who was responsible for arranging accommodation for the couple at Bethlehem prior to their arrival with Mary in labour? As there was no room at the inn, they accepted a lowly cattle shed, made it clean and comfortable and safely delivered Jesus. After His birth, cash strapped Joseph had a choice to suddenly embark on an unplanned expensive journey to Egypt to escape Herod's murderous intentions based on a dream..... or ignore the angel's request completely! Had Joseph and Mary decided to pass the buck, we would all be in a different place today.



The 2024 Advent and Christmas season provided the contrast between what we gain or lose depending on the decisions we make, our capacity to take responsibility, the courage to reflect on our actions, determine a new course for our lives and the resulting impact it would make on those around us.

Let's return to Shaggy's best selling album. As the piece concludes, the reflective friend chastises the other whilst taking responsibility for his actions. The rap ends with these words.....

'Gonna tell her that I'm sorry
For the pain that I've caused
I've been listening to your reason
It makes no sense at all
We should tell her that I'm sorry
For the pain that I've caused
You may think that you're a player
But you're completely lost – that's why I sing'

Perhaps your new year's resolution for 2025 could be.....It was me!

The Hardey Column – The Chilean Lake District

By Tim Rollin

The Chilean Lake District is a spectacular and beautiful place. The scenery is superb and there is good fishing, especially on the rivers leading from the lakes. Each lake has a volcano nearby. My father was a keen fisherman and loved fishing for trout and salmon on the rapids of the river Toltén, leading from Lake Villarica. The fishing was done from a rowing boat manned by a local oarsman, usually one passenger to a boat though as children, my sister and I were each accompanied by a parent. One had to use an experienced boatman since he had to navigate the boat through the rapids. The fish we caught were either salmon or Chilean brown trout. The salmon fought like tigers, and we lost more than we caught, but the brown trout, once they were on the hook, just had to be reeled in and they put up no resistance at all. My sister's diary records meticulously each day's record of catches for each member of the family, though sadly she doesn't record the variety of fish caught. For instance, on the 18th January 1955, she records: Ma 2, Pa 5, Tim 3 (me) and herself (Briony) 5, 15 altogether. A very good day's catch. She also recalls somewhat fearfully, being in a boat with a boatman who kept clandestinely swigging from a bottle of wine as he rowed. She was about twelve and a half at the time.

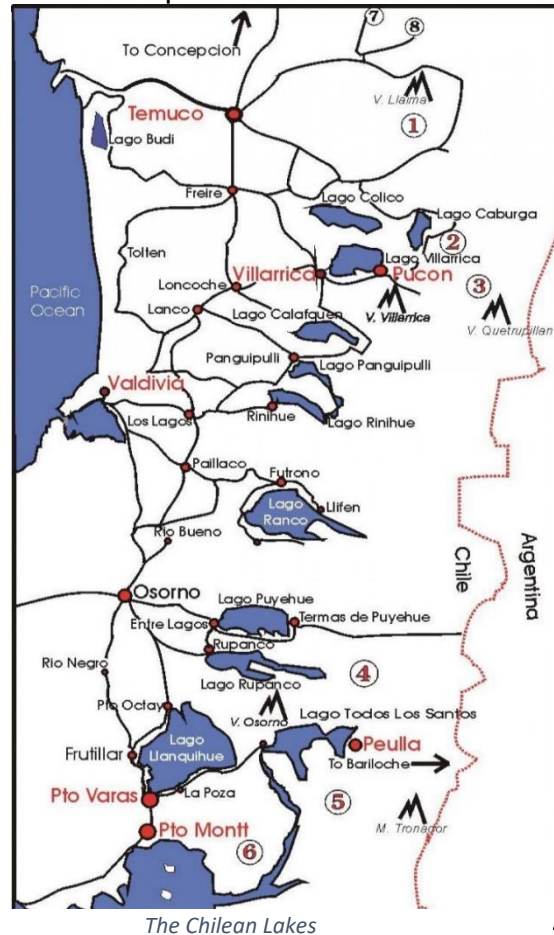
From north to south the lakes are Villarica, Calafquén, Panguipulli, Riñihue, Ranco, Puyehue, Rupanco and Llanquihue. To me their names alone sound like music. The largest of all is

Llanquihue with an area of about 33 square miles and a depth of 5,000ft. By comparison, our Lake Windermere, the largest lake in England is about 6 square miles and 220ft deep. Apart from Villarica, the names are not Spanish, but are those given to them by the native Mapuche Indians since time immemorial. For many years, the Spaniards were content to have an unofficial border with the Mapuche, on the River Bío-Bío, which lay just north of the lake district. To the south of the Bío-Bío, the land remained Mapuche territory until the early 1800s This was no altruistic pause in the process of the expansion of the Spanish Empire, but a practical development resulting from the fierceness of Mapuche resistance, especially once



Villarica volcano and lake – there is always a plume of smoke

they learned to become expert horsemen. This resistance was weakened over the years by the introduction of European diseases such as smallpox to which the Mapuche had no natural immunity. In addition, pressure to expand by new Spanish immigrants and by 'Criollos' (native to Chile of mixed or Spanish parents) caused ever increasing encroachment on Mapuche lands, resulting in their complete takeover. The Chilean disregard over the years since independence for Mapuche rights can be seen as something of a black mark. There are still protests being made by Mapuches to try to restore some of their rights. Interestingly, when I was at school in Chile as a small child, I was taught nothing about the Mapuche, except in a very generalised and superficial way about Chilean 'red Indians'. Now protests are mainly about land rights. Mapuche land was seized by Spanish settlers, once Mapuche resistance south of the River Bío-Bío had been overcome. Indigenous Mapuche were left with only the scraps. It is a tale familiar throughout north and south America



The lakes themselves are very deep, just as the mountains are high, and result from the same process of the movement of tectonic plates described in an earlier article. There is a sort of concertina effect where the mountains are squeezed higher and the lakes deeper.

The Lake District lies between Temuco in the north and Puerto Montt 100 miles to the south.

Just as the Pacific beaches around Valparaiso are popular holiday destinations in the summer months, possibly for shorter holidays since they are so close to Santiago and Valparaiso, so are the lakes a magnet for tourists taking their summer holidays. The scenery is breathtaking, though one very soon accepts that as normal. It is only when one is away from them, that one realises how much they are missed. My visit in 2016 included a week in a holiday cottage on the shores of Lake Panguipulli. The

waters were crystal clear and beautifully warm(ish), and there were none of the crowds you would get as if on a bank holiday. The town of Panguipulli wasn't a tourist town at all, but a typical Chilean country town with a dusty main road which happened have stunning views of its lake.

During our stay there, the younger members of our group got their kicks by white water rafting down the rapids of the exit river.

Alison has relatives in the strangest places. Her connection with Chile is probably greater than mine, even though I was born there and lived and worked there for some time. Her mother was born in Chile, along with two brothers and three sisters, who were all part of the British community at the time. Alison's mother married out there the year before the war and came home as a young bride just in time to live through it. She and her new husband travelled aboard the *Boscoop*, (the same ship my family travelled on in 1948, when I first really encountered Britain). She always pined for Chile, but never went back. Most of her brothers and sisters also came to Britain over the years, effectively founding a small Chilean community in south east London, so she may not have felt as cut off from the country as one might imagine. Some of her relatives remained behind, including two fairly distant cousins named Derek and Harry Smith. Derek has sadly died, but Harry is still living on the farm which they have named *Fundo Niagara* near Temuco and the lake district.



Will it hold?

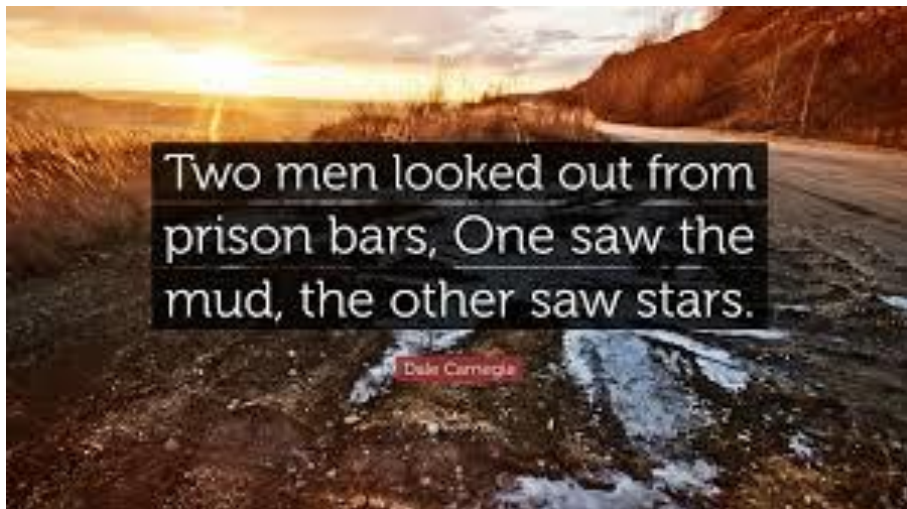
South of this, the land effectively becomes a series of islands divided by fjords and inlets.

The largest of these islands is Chiloé. South of Chiloé communications become much more difficult and roads such as they are, are probably unpaved gravel. If you got stuck behind a lorry throwing up clouds of dust, you had very little chance of overtaking since you couldn't see anything, so progress could be slow. Bridges over the rivers and streams leading from the

mountains to the sea were very dodgy-

looking wooden plank structures which looked as if they wouldn't even carry a bicycle across, yet they proved to be remarkably sturdy.

Go further south still and you may encounter glaciers on your route. It is only when you reach Punta Arenas in the far south, which lies on the Straits of Magellan that you approach 'civilisation' again. Originally Punta Arenas grew as a result of passing trade through the straits. Now it is an oil town. When I was working in the early 60's as a very young accountant, I was sent there. The town then had only two large buildings in it - the offices where I was working and the hotel where I was staying. You could see one from the other. All the other buildings were mostly single or sometimes two storey buildings. The actual oil fields were on the Island of Tierra del Fuego, at a place called Sombrero. I flew the short journey there and back on a DC3 aircraft (which was known during the war as the Douglas Dakota). My recollection is that it was unheated and unpressurised and I swear there was an icy draught whistling along the corridor between the seats. Still the flight was only half an hour each way and we were all wrapped up warm, so we didn't get too cold!



Contributed by Janet Tippets (From 'The Golden Treasury')

Midnight Mass – a perspective from other Churches

Midnight Mass in Malaga By Susan Brennan

Where to go for Midnight Mass whilst in Malaga at Christmas was an easy enough decision as there is just one Anglican church in the city: St. George's.

I went to find the church one sunny afternoon in December and got as far as the English cemetery, but the gates were locked. I thought the church was in the grounds, but it couldn't be seen through the gates.

Fast forward now to Christmas Eve, about 10.30pm, for my return to the cemetery where the gates were now wide open. A wide path lay ahead, with graves on either side. Leaving the lights and noise of the main road behind, my husband and I walked up the twisting path, going deeper into the cemetery. Just as we began to think that a night visit to an unknown cemetery was not my best idea, we saw a small building festooned with lights and an open door exposing a beautifully lit church; we could even see a twinkling Christmas tree inside. The contrast from dark to light was breathtaking.

We were greeted warmly by Fr. Louis Darrant, the Chaplain, as we joined the other three members of the congregation. As the service began, with organ music courtesy of a mobile phone app, I took a peep behind me: the church was packed!

Just before the dismissal, Fr. Louis addressed us and made a confession. As this was the first time Christmas Eve Midnight Mass had been held at St. George's, he was only expecting about 10 people. It was his intention to give everyone a glass of brandy as they left, to keep them warm on their journey home. Despite realising that he hadn't brought enough brandy, Fr. Louis managed to perform the impossible (whilst still conducting the service single-handedly), by finding additional bottles of alcohol to share with his congregation of locals and visitors. At the end of the service, everyone gathered outside the church to express how impressed they were at the "miracle" achieved, whilst appreciating the hospitality offered. I told Fr. Louis how much I had enjoyed attending the service and mentioned that as it could be of interest to the readers of our parish magazine, I may write an article about it. "Oh, please do, and send me a copy" was his reply. So here it is, Fr. Louis. Gracias!

Background note about the cemetery

St. George's church was built in the first Protestant Cemetery in mainland Spain, created in 1831. Prior to that, the death of a non-Roman Catholic in Spain was problematic as no provision was made for their burial. In Malaga, non-Catholics could only be buried at night, on the beach, in an upright position, and left to the mercy of the waves and prowling dogs!



St. George's Church, Malaga, with door open and lit to welcome everyone to Midnight Mass.

Midnight Mass in Machynlleth By Miranda Reading

Tony, Paul and I, along with my mother, Nerina, attended Midnight Mass in 2024 at St Peter's, Machynlleth, the church where I was baptised, confirmed and married. Over six generations of my family have worshipped here. When we approached on Christmas Eve it was a wet and windy night (hardly surprising in Wales) and we were relieved to see the lit-up church, welcoming us to our Mass.

As usual, on Christmas Eve, the church was well-attended. It was a bilingual service, in Welsh and English as is customary at St Peter's. Our celebrant was the Rev. Miriam Beecroft. Her sermon was designed to appeal to all ages and she gave out small presents, asking individual members of the congregation if they would keep or share them. Most of us said 'share', until the Cadbury's Crème Egg was discovered and the child given it said 'keep'! Rev Miriam explained to us that she had been amazed to see Easter eggs on sale in the Spar, before Christmas had even been celebrated!

The point she made about sharing was something we can all share – the good news of Jesus's birth. She challenged us all to share this news with someone. I now share this experience with you all, our Outlook readers, that God loved us so much he gave his only begotten Son to help save us all so that we might never be afraid, just reach out our hands. What a wonderful message, not just for Christmas, but for all the year around.



St Peter's, Machynlleth on Christmas Eve

Christmas at St Martin's

Christmas at St Martin's was a lovely experience for all, from the Advent Quiet Morning through to the joyous Masses of Christmas Day. A boisterous Christmas Dinner was held at Browns in Ruislip. The Service of Nine Lessons and Carols saw over 150 people attend St Martin's and join regular churchgoers for mulled wine and mince pies organised by Mandy Al-Salami, Judith Kaplan and Miranda Reading. The choir were in fine voice, with a beautiful rendition of 'Oh Holy Night'. The Christmas trees were erected by Derek Cunliffe and his team of burly men whilst the decorations were done by Sarah Jacob. Our thanks must also go to Fr. Robert and all others who helped in different ways, both large and small, to make Christmas at St Martin's wonderful.



The Christmas Tree



The Crib

Photos by Mervyn Hogg

An American in (the) Parish

By Rowland Linder

If I'm honest, this has been something of a difficult time to be the resident American in the Parish. The United States does seem, by many measures, to be hurtling towards a crisis. Regardless of one's own political leanings, Regardless of one's political opinions, the initial shock felt when Trump proposed a cadre of new advisors—regarded by one critic as of 'low character and dubious qualification'—now pales in comparison to his more recent claims that we'll soon be acquiring Canada and taking over Greenland.



Courtesy of The Independent (UK)

Amid this political turmoil, America is also subject to a more pressing threat: the wildfires in Southern California, which hit me a bit closer to home. My father lives in Los Angeles, and many of my friends from university do as well. When my dad returned home from England on 11 January, there was so much ash in the air that I could hear him coughing on the phone. Thankfully, his home has been unaffected by the fires, but his friends and colleagues have not all been so lucky.



Courtesy of ABC News

The effect of the fires has been devastating. Estimates of the damage range between \$135 billion (£111.5 billion) and \$150 billion (£124 billion). This may make the Los Angeles wildfires the worst natural disaster the US has ever seen, in terms of costs associated and the scale of the destruction. To add insult to injury, others are attempting to profit from this time of crisis: prosecutors have charged nine people with looting, and another man of intentionally lighting one of the fires.

It might be tempting, then, to regard the United States in this moment as heading towards collapse. In some ways this is literally being enacted in California: 11 churches, temples, synagogues, and mosques have been totally destroyed by the fires. However, I think such a conclusion would be a mistake. As Isaiah 43 reminds us, ‘when you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.’ We as Christians have a faith founded on a God who is with us in the midst of suffering, and we bear witness to that even now.

I have been particularly moved to hear the people of California mentioned in our prayers at St Martin’s daily since reports of the fires began. I find such comfort in this upwelling of prayer and support for members of our Christian family, even when they’re 5,437 miles away. As we say each time we take communion, ‘though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.’ By continuing to pray for others, we enact this, taking on the suffering of others as our own. In this way we follow Christ, who loves us so that we may love others. As St Paul writes in 2 Corinthians, ‘[God] consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God.’



The Episcopal Bishop of Los Angeles, the Rt Revd John H. Taylor, spoke to this when he said: ‘In emergencies such as this, ... we reclaim our oneness in Christ. We gather at the foot of the cross and we enfold one another in our arms and in prayer; and we pledge to continue to glorify God and to care for one another, especially those most at risk and most in need.’ Even—or perhaps especially—in times of crisis, we as Christians love God and love our neighbours (even those neighbours thousands of miles away) in equal measure, and no other commandment is greater than these.



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Meanwhile in America.....



Contributed by Jack Sheen

Pathways in Spirituality

By David Hudson

Spirituality

There have been many attempts to follow the ways of Jesus and the early Christian communities to find the right combination of praying and living, which is Spirituality.

Franciscan Spirituality

Franciscan Spirituality is one of living in the world by following in the footsteps of Jesus and experiencing God's giving, revealing, leading, guiding, motivating and inspiring, as exemplified in the lives of St. Francis, St. Clare and St. Bonaventure. From the life and spiritual experiences of Francis and Clare, we turn to look at St. Bonaventure, who tried to form a theology out of the Spiritual experiences of Francis and Clare.

"The Soul's Journey Into God"

Bonaventure's most famous spiritual work, includes in the steps of each chapter the words 'On Contemplating' that gives us an understanding of the meaning of Franciscan contemplation.

As has been already mentioned, Francis lies at the heart of Bonaventure's thinking, but he was also influenced by Hugh and Richard of St. Victor who believed that invisible things had to be represented through visible things, and act as God given symbols to confront a person and elicit a response – providing 'food for thought'. For Hugh and Richard, Christianity was essentially a history of our spiritual journey: coming from God, acting in the world and returning to God for eternity. Richard distinguished six different degrees of contemplation in this journey and three objects of contemplation: material; spiritual; and the divine reality of God.

In order to understand what Francis experienced, Bonaventure withdrew to Mount La Verna to consider the various ways we can come closer to God. This was where Francis had experienced a six-winged Seraph and received the marks of the stigmata (the wounds of Jesus on the cross). Especially important to Bonaventure was to understand Francis' experiences of the six-winged Seraph.

The six-winged Seraph

Isaiah tells us that the seraphim are six-winged fiery angels who surround the presence of God and who worship God continually. With the cherubim, Seraphs are among the first hierarchy of angels next to the throne of God.



" In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their

faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.'" (Isaiah 6:1-3).

Whilst reflecting, Bonaventure realized the six-winged Seraph symbolized six levels of illumination – the steps or stages a person can pass into God's peace. For Bonaventure there are no other paths than through *"the burning love of the Crucified"*. Bonaventure divides this work into seven chapters, each given a title for better understanding, and based on the six wings of the Seraph. He ends with Chapter 7 – *On Spiritual and Mystical Ecstasy*.

Bonaventure begins with the Prologue:

"In the beginning I call upon the First Beginning from whom all illuminations descend as from the Father of lights, from whom comes every good and every perfect gift.... that he may enlighten the eyes of our soul to guide our feet in the way of that peace which surpasses all understanding. This is the peace proclaimed and given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ and preached again and again by our father Francis".

The six wings of the Seraph symbolize the six steps that begin from creatures and lead up to God, entering only through the Crucified. Bonaventure invites us to reflect, as a mirror, on the world and on our soul – that it should be cleaned and polished by what we read not to "run rapidly but mull them over slowly with the greatest care".

We will look at the various ways of Franciscan contemplation in the next issue.



**"If you cannot find
Christ in the beggar
at the church door,
you will not find Him
in the chalice."**

- SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Bookworm Explores the Outlook Magazine

By Valery Cowley

The Monthly Journal 1959-60

January 18th 1959 was the Sunday when the changes to Sunday a.m. services began.

This number had fewer pages to curb printing costs, as the magazine had been losing money.

The bronze figure on the High Altar cross was gifted by Fr Curson and a black purple frontal for St Michael's Altar given by him and Miss Gower.



Fr Donald Nicholson assisted over Christmas. The usual New Year card came from Bec with a prayer of St Anselm. However, the local Roman Catholic Magazine had a hostile article about the Vicar and 'the two-way traffic' between the two Communion.

Dennis Edwards introduced a new series of articles on London churches. 'The Sign' took up the rest of the magazine.

February 1959 featured Lenten observance. An 'At Home' was to be given in the Parish Hall by the Vicar, his wife and Churchwardens. The Lenten preacher was Rector of Perivale, his course based on Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress'.

The Church Unity Octave was better observed than before. The Parish 'Year Book' was on sale, price sixpence, in aid of the Restoration Fund.

Dennis Edwards wrote about St Bride's, Fleet Street. The Over Twenty Club continued its busy activities.

In *March* the Vicar expressed concerned about those who ignored Lent, in a parish where the traditional Holy Week ceremonies were fully observed.

The Bell Ringers lamented the death of a reliable member of St Martin's Guild.

The 'At Home' was a great success and Lenten services were well attended, despite an outbreak of 'flu. Nearly seventy were preparing for Confirmation. The new lighting system was admirably 'sound, modern and safe'.

St Helen, Bishopgate was the featured London church.

In *April*, the changing service times seemed justified.

St Bartholomew the Great was described.

Church restoration continued with the co-operation of considerate workmen. Pews were lowered and the flooring reflagged. Pitch-pine from the North Aisle demolished screen was used to repair pews.

A new sanctuary lamp was to hang before the High Altar and there were welcome donations to the Restoration Fund.



The church Electoral Roll was the largest in the Rural Deanery.

There was an article on Catholic outward ceremonial.

June's issue featured the Walsingham Appeal, Saint of the Month, and A Meditation for Corpus Christi.

The Vicar's return to the Holy Land after fifteen years was to produce talks with colour slides. He was no longer local RAF chaplain as the Air Ministry had moved to Surrey.

The Prayer Group was to meet only once a month, with a specific subject instead of general intercessions.

The dwindling attendance at Sunday Sung Mattins, moved to 10.30 a.m., made its continuance doubtful.

A quarter peal of bells, conducted by Tom Collins, celebrated the Dedication of the new Church of St Mary, South Ruislip, to which the Mothers Union presented a white Wedgwood vase.

In *October* the Bishop of London wrote about 'illegal practices in the conduct of church services', The Carshalton Controversy, over the use of the Roman Mass was discussed.

Temple Church was described.

In *February 1960* an article from Bournemouth was reprinted describing Jehovah's Witnesses.



St Clement Danes and St Mary-le-Strand were featured.

The choir reviewed the various honours accrued by its members and a successor to Miss Mortimer was appointed as Sunday School Superintendent.

World Refugee Year and a Ruislip Fortnight from May to June in aid of the Restoration Fund were to be supported. Bath salts

continued to be produced and sold for this by the Akers family.

A parochial branch of the 'Friends of Mauritius' was set up.

Seventy-three Confirmation candidates, including ten adults, were in preparation.

A Faculty was to be applied for, for the statue of Our Lady and the sanctuary lamp. The hatchments had been cleaned, repaired and restored.

Five St Martin's ordination candidates were in training, with a sixth to begin in July and two or three (boys, of course!) seriously considering their vocations.

Family Purse contributions needed increasing to cover the estimated 1960 budget.

The Church of England Yearbook revealed that over three thousand people left the Church of Rome annually, whereas eight hundred Anglicans joined it.

Church Welcome – Some Views from Volunteers

By Geoff Smith and Janet Tippets

Geoff Smith writes:

“Following retirement, I was able to volunteer for the Church Welcome scheme. Initially, I thought it may be a bit boring or tedious, how wrong I was!

It's transpired to be a wonderful opportunity to promote both the beautiful building of St Martins and expand on the regular worship which takes place. I began by taking a book however, soon discovered that there was little opportunity to read uninterrupted so ditched that. I now try to re-read the previous Sunday's Gospel and readings but often end up reading them several times over forgetting where I got to after chatting to a visitor.

Every visitor is so different, for many, it's their first visit and often quite local who explain that they've passed the church "thousands of times" but never been inside. Others are from abroad perhaps visiting friends locally and recently there have been two separate couples who were married at St. Martins. One couple, married by Fr. Richard Fenwick went on honeymoon to Canada, fell in love with it and emigrated. They were visiting the UK with two daughters for the first time in 40 years and were delighted that the church was open.



The others were home to Ruislip from New Zealand and were astonished that Fr. Simon had retired!

Three young lads in jeans and hoodies spent ages looking about and all touched their mobiles to the credit card reader and said thank you before leaving, everyone is so lovely.

The organist from South Harrow Baptist Church popped in to drop some flyers off advertising his upcoming organ recital and spent at least an hour extolling all the capabilities and imperfections of every organ it seemed in the country! An historian from Cowley recently enthused over the wall paintings whilst so many ask about the stained glass windows. This has necessitated boning up on the historical guides and

I am now able to point out the green man, Seven Deadly Sins wall mural, the Purbeck marble Norman font and the alternate round and octagonal columns in the south nave without reference to the books!

It is so humbling when people gingerly open the door and ask, is it OK to come in or, am I allowed to light a candle? I do feel a welcome "good afternoon" and a smile is so important. Some of course, quietly enter for private prayer and leave perhaps with a simple nod of acknowledgement but everyone mentions the peace and presence which consumes them. The soft Gregorian chanting just adds to the aura and beauty which we sometimes take for granted.

I welcome everyone and at least two St Martin's stalwarts have commented to me that it's nice to be welcomed to their own church by a stranger! Getting to know regulars at services I don't attend has been another unforeseen spin off.

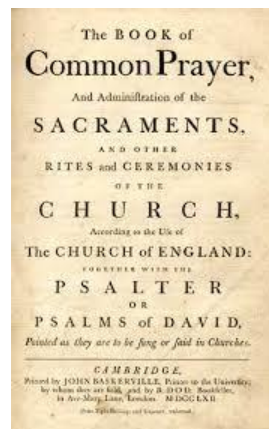
Far from being a chore, it is an absolute privilege to be part of the welcome team. Mothers with screaming babies, toddlers running amok, those with dogs, those just seeking somewhere warm and dry. It is just amazing how quickly the time goes, so no surprise I rarely get to finish the Gospel in one go!

If you can spare an hour or so once a week, I would thoroughly recommend it. It's an opportunity to spend a peaceful hour in God's presence - but be prepared for interruptions!"

Janet Tippets writes:

"When you are sitting quietly in a pew doing Church Watch you gradually get the feel for those who come to experience peace and quiet and/or those who need a listening ear.

One day an elderly lady came in dressed in deep black, looking distressed. I quietly asked if she was all right. It transpired that a lifelong friend had died, and she was too far away to go to the funeral. She decided to go to St Martin's during the time it was taking place. Going on her age, I picked up the 1662 Book of Common Prayer and asked her if she would like us to read the funeral service together. We held hands while we read and when it ended she sat quietly for a few minutes, thanked me profusely and left. I have never seen her since."



3 Ways To Overcome The Sin Of Anger



Go to Confession

Regularly receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation helps you acknowledge and seek forgiveness for angry outbursts. Confession also provides spiritual grace to strengthen you against future temptations.



Attend the Holy Mass

The Mass is a reminder of Christ's self-sacrifice and His perfect example of enduring suffering and injustice without anger. Reflecting on Christ's sacrifice can inspire you to face difficulties with a calm and loving heart.



Meditate on Scripture

Reflect on what's causing your anger through self-examination or spiritual direction, allowing you to recognize the root causes and address them. Meditate on passages that deal with anger can provide insight and healing.

Solution to Last Edition's Crossword

¹ M	A	² L	T	³ A		⁴ C		⁵ J		⁶ A		⁷ T		⁸ A
I		O		V		A		⁹ U	R	N		H		M
¹⁰ C	U	R	E	D		T		D		G		E		O
H		D		¹¹ E	V	A	N	G	E	L	I	S	T	S
¹² A	S	W	A	N		C		E		I		S		
E		E			¹³ C	O	N	S	E	C	R	A	T	¹⁴ E
¹⁵ L	O	G	I	¹⁶ A		M				A		L		T
M		R		¹⁷ B	A	B	Y	¹⁸ L	O	N		O		H
A		E		E				A		¹⁹ S	I	N	A	I
²⁰ S	T	E	A	L		²¹ E	D	N	A			I		O
		T				X		D		²² S	H	A	R	P
²³ B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M		I		N		I
O		H				U		A		²⁴ H	O	S	E	A
²⁵ R	H	E	G	I	U	M		R		O				N
N		E				E		²⁶ K	I	N	G	S		S

KIDS ZONE



Kids Zone....Kids Zone....Kids Zone.....Kids Zone.....Kids Zone.....Kids Zone....

Hello! Welcome to the zone for the Kids of St Martin's! This is intended to be *your* space with things that interest *you* as well as things relating to you and your doings. This space will encompass BWI news and Young Church.

We'd also like to welcome contributions to the Kids Zone from our younger readers. It can be something you've done at school, a favourite pet, something that you've done at school or simply your feelings about God and the Christian world. Send your contributions of 50-300 words to MirandaAtStMartins@gmail.com by the 16th of March 2025.

Kids Zone....Kids Zone....Kids Zone.....Kids Zone.....Kids Zone.....Kids Zone....

Word Search



All the words listed below are in the puzzle - left, right, up, down or diagonally. After you have found all the words, arrange the leftover letters in the correct order to form the mystery answer.

Belief, Bible, Cross, Forgive, God, Jesus, Repent, Risen, Sin, Spirit, Trinity, Word

Credit: Sandra Carter

<https://www.christianbiblereference.org>

What's on at Bishop Winnington-Ingram Primary School

Our vision: 'My Cup Overflows' Psalm 23:5

A community that gives each child an outstanding spiritual, academic and practical education and instils an awareness of the overflowing joy, love and peace that comes from God's love for us, so that they are able to achieve their potential and truly experience 'life in all its fulness' (John 10:10).



Welcome to your regular update from BWI Primary School!

It has been a chilly start to the new term in 2025, but it's been lovely to see so many our children at BWI embracing the winter weather with enthusiasm! Our intrepid Forest School participants braved the cold for some frosty outdoor learning and our Early Years children have been kept busy rescuing sea animals from the ice.

Looking ahead to spring, our young gardeners have been busy planting bulbs, and it's wonderful to see their excitement as they monitor the progress of the green shoots. We're thrilled to announce that children from BWI will be participating in the Ruislip Horticultural Society's Spring Show at the end of March – do come along to see the results of their efforts!

Reflecting on the end of last term, I want to express my gratitude for the wonderful Christmas celebrations we shared with St Martin's: the Christingle and end-of-term Christmas Service were beautiful. Our younger children's Nativity plays were also a resounding success, bringing joy to all who attended.

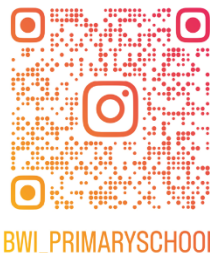
I'm also delighted to share that our 2-year-old nursery is now at full capacity. It has been lovely to welcome these little ones and their parents into the BWI family, and to see them settling in so well and beginning their educational journey with us. Our dedicated EYFS team has been working tirelessly to ensure a smooth transition for these newcomers. While the nursery is currently full, we will have spaces available later in the year. I encourage interested parents to book a tour – we would be delighted to show you around our wonderful school.

Thank you for your continued support of our school community. Here's to a fantastic year ahead!

Mrs Hale



Remember to follow us on Instagram for a glimpse into the vibrant life of our school and celebrate some special days alongside the children in school.



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The Tabernacle

By Hugo Gotham (Age 12)

The Tabernacle is a tent that God ordered the Israelites to build.

Exodus **26** “Make the tabernacle with ten curtains of finely twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim woven into them by a skilled worker. ² All the curtains are to be the same size—twenty-eight cubits long and four cubits wide. ³ Join five of the curtains together, and do the same with the other five. ⁴ Make loops of blue material along the edge of the end curtain in one set, and do the same with the end curtain in the other set. ⁵ Make fifty loops on one curtain and fifty loops on the end curtain of the other set, with the loops opposite each other. ⁶ Then make fifty gold clasps and use them to fasten the curtains together so that the tabernacle is a unit.

⁷ “Make curtains of goat hair for the tent over the tabernacle—eleven altogether. ⁸ All eleven curtains are to be the same size—thirty cubits long and four cubits wide. ⁹ Join five of the curtains together into one set and the other six into another set. Fold the sixth curtain double at the front of the tent. ¹⁰ Make fifty loops along the edge of the end curtain in one set and also along the edge of the end curtain in the other set. ¹¹ Then make fifty bronze clasps and put them in the loops to fasten the tent together as a unit. ¹² As for the additional length of the tent curtains, the half curtain that is left over is to hang down at the rear of the tabernacle. ¹³ The tent curtains will be a cubit longer on both sides; what is left will hang over the sides of the tabernacle so as to cover it. ¹⁴ Make for the tent a covering of ram skins dyed red, and over that a covering of the other durable leather.

¹⁵ “Make upright frames of acacia wood for the tabernacle. ¹⁶ Each frame is to be ten cubits long and a cubit and a half wide, ¹⁷ with two projections set parallel to each other. Make all the frames of the tabernacle in this way. ¹⁸ Make twenty frames for the south side of the tabernacle ¹⁹ and make forty silver bases to go under them—two bases for each frame, one under each projection. ²⁰ For the other side, the north side of the tabernacle, make twenty frames ²¹ and forty silver bases—two under each frame. ²² Make six frames for the far end, that is, the west end of the tabernacle, ²³ and make two frames for the corners at the far end. ²⁴ At these two corners they must be double from the bottom all the way to the top and fitted into a single ring; both shall be like that. ²⁵ So there will be eight frames and sixteen silver bases—two under each frame.

²⁶ “Also make crossbars of acacia wood: five for the frames on one side of the tabernacle, ²⁷ five for those on the other side, and five for the frames on the west, at the far end of the tabernacle. ²⁸ The centre crossbar is to extend from end to end at

the middle of the frames. ²⁹ Overlay the frames with gold and make gold rings to hold the crossbars. Also overlay the crossbars with gold.

³⁰ “Set up the tabernacle according to the plan shown you on the mountain.

³¹ “Make a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, with cherubim woven into it by a skilled worker. ³² Hang it with gold hooks on four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold and standing on four silver bases. ³³ Hang the curtain from the clasps and place the ark of the covenant law behind the curtain. The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. ³⁴ Put the atonement cover on the ark of the covenant law in the Most Holy Place. ³⁵ Place the table outside the curtain on the north side of the tabernacle and put the lampstand opposite it on the south side.

³⁶ “For the entrance to the tent make a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen—the work of an embroiderer. ³⁷ Make gold hooks for this curtain and five posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold. And cast five bronze bases for them. (NIV)

This is how they built the Tabernacle. It was built to be a house for God and was cared for by the priests and High Priests, Aaron’s descendants.

I built my own Tabernacle out of paper with my family. It’s not very stable, but it provides a visual representation of the portable tent of God that the Israelites used in Exodus.





The Tabernacle

We Are the Same!

By Nicola Cook (Age 11)

There is no difference between me and you
We are all the same

My skin is black and yours is white
But the difference is only the words that you write

I came to this world with blessings from God
I grow with my believes my passion is my heart

And I know changes would happen in the history card
Yes, this time begins, the freedom is ours

I feel this in my veins, my soul wants to start new reigns
I feel like a Pegasus flying towards the sun
Which kisses my face and makes me feel fun

My wings are full of power and hope and I stopped feeling
My wrist from the horrible rope

Proud of my bleak history so glad that people said sorry

THE FUTURE IS YOURS, FREEDOM IS OURS!

St Martin's Church

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Church Hall Bookings	Gill Dargue	Tel: 01895 625 456
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Toddler Group	Vacancy	
Tower Captain	Judith Roberts	Tel: 01895 638143
Young Church 9.15am	Vicky Golby	Tel: 07770 782922

Please submit all items for the February/March issue to MirandaAtStMartins@gmail.com by 16th March 2025.

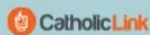
Don't forget to include your contact details if sending material by post.

Outlook is published every other month. The next edition will be April/May 2025.



"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will hear you. You will seek Me and find Me; when you seek Me with all your heart, I will be found by you, says the Lord."

Jeremiah 29:11- 13





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PLEASE CALL US TO BOOK YOUR FREE CONSULTATION

Most people associate care with residential care homes and the end of independence. However, there is the option to stay at home whilst receiving dignified, professional elderly care.

Some people have lived in the same house for decades and it can be heart-breaking to leave it for an unknown place that might not feel as welcoming, familiar and have the cherished memories as your home does. It can also be extremely confusing to move someone with dementia out of familiar surroundings.

If you or your family member is struggling with day-to-day tasks, feeling lonely, need someone to take them shopping, attend medical appointments, or just need someone they can count on to provide care and help that is needed. That is exactly what we do at Home Instead. We provide bespoke, flexible older person's care that is dignified thanks to our compassionate, friendly CAREGivers.

We have found that when you start providing a little help at home to older people, it can help prevent accidents and delay the need to move out of their own house. Our CAREGivers build a strong relationship with their clients which allows them to spot any changes in their health or behaviour and take the necessary actions to prevent the situation from getting worse.

The background of the advertisement is a long-exposure photograph of a street at night. On the right, a traditional Tudor-style building with dark timber framing and white walls is illuminated. A sign above the entrance reads 'coopers'. To the left, a modern building with a curved, illuminated facade is visible. Light trails from cars and streetlights create a sense of motion and activity.

coopers
est 1986

**Personable, Professional
& Proactive**

**Successfully moving people
since 1986**

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