



Welcome to the second edition of *The Word*. We want this to be a way of communicating within the parish community. So if you have something which you want to share or something that you would like to see in a future issue please get in touch with us at parishnews@friar.org - or leave mail in the Parish Office marked for our attention. Above all please tell others about this publication.

AGM Q&A

At the last AGM (July 2016) a number of questions were raised and we wanted to bring you the answers here. However, as space is at a premium we are unable to do so. Nevertheless we have now published these Questions and Answers on the parish website. (If you are reading this electronically you can follow this link):

[AGM2016 Questions and Answers](#)

Lent

Fr Quentin says: The observance of Lent has many purposes. Among them is a steady contemplation of the suffering and death of Jesus. If this is lacking then prayer is most likely to degenerate into sentimentality.

What is the origin of the word Lent?

The word Lent comes the Anglo-Saxon word meaning to lengthen and Lent comes at a time when the hours of daylight are lengthening as Spring approaches.

With the Gospel in your pocket:

(Pope Francis Monday, 9th January 2017)

It is essential, said the Pope, *“to read the story of Jesus: yes, the Gospel is the story of Jesus, the life of Jesus, it is Jesus himself, it is the Holy Spirit that shows us Jesus there”*. For this reason Francis wanted to renew his advice: *“Please, do this: each day a passage of the Gospel, a small one — three, four, five minutes”*.

It is precisely by reading it that the Gospel is understood, *“and this works within: it is the Holy Spirit who then does his work. This is the seed. It is the Holy Spirit who makes the seed sprout and grow”*.

Communion to the sick and housebound

Fr Quentin: *“Slowly we are making progress. Cathy Mair has kindly taken in hand the task of drawing up a roster of Ministers willing to take communion to those unable to join our parish family in church of a Sunday. Slowly we discover more who will welcome regular communion. We rely on you to tell us, and not be shy. “I don’t like to bother you” is a frequent cry. Bother? Jesus takes enough trouble. Who are we to stop him?”*

If you know of anyone in the parish who would value receiving Holy Communion in their own home, please contact Cathy Mair at

catherinemair2001@yahoo.co.uk or telephone the Parish Office between 9.30am and 1.30pm.

Steward of the Gospel

Following the recent Bishop’s pastoral letter on the SG initiative, leaflets with short questionnaire were handed out at Masses on 12th February. Longer questionnaires were given to leaders of parish groups and PPCs.

A parish afternoon tea has been arranged for 12th March, 3-5pm to discuss the issues raised by the Bishop’s letter and to co-ordinate the parish response to it. Since our future plan necessarily requires more active participation of the laity, the discussion will be stimulated and moderated by a panel consisting of the leaders of parish groups. During the tea, attendees will have the opportunity to learn about and join in the activities of these very active groups.

Recent meetings between the Steward and the group leaders have produced very interesting feedbacks and positive suggestions. Please come along to join in the discussion and to learn how your fellow parishioners are doing God’s work in the community and how you can join them to do so.

Lent – a time of giving?

The ministry of Steward of the Gospel looks to a future time when we will have even fewer priests than now. The stark message is that the church will rely even more on the laity in the coming years. The Tablet had an excellent article about volunteering. You can read it here: thetablet.co.uk/archive. If you would like to know more about giving some time to volunteer within the church please contact us: STOCParishCouncil@btinternet.com

Brentwood 110 not out - by Fr Quentin

In 1917 it was horses and carts that trundled past St Thomas’ taking a day to reach Cambridge. Cars were a rarity, air travel a futuristic speculation and IT beyond the wildest dreams of fantasy.

We have moved into a different world. Brexit alerts us that the secular world is moving even faster into the unknown. Diocesan Centenary celebrations, Stewards of the Gospel, Bishop’s letter all push us to realise the same pace of change is already at work in our church. What will our parish, diocese, domestic catholic practice be even 10 years ahead? What resources will we still have? Over much we have no control. But we are in control of our inner faith, of the values we hold dear and to which we are prepared to give our time and energy.

The parish of St Thomas will decline or flourish according to the measure in which every one of us engages. You now are the priests, the prophets, the leaders. God told you that at your baptism.

Parish Council News

Following Fr Quentin's recent sermon about the laity's contribution to parish affairs, this is an appeal to you all. The Parish Council has a number of sub-committees (below) which need more members if they are to achieve what they should. If you have an interest and might like to be actively involved, please contact the groups below:

Becket Centre

It does not manage itself, and is an invaluable asset which we need to look after and use fully. Contact us at STOCParishCouncil@btinternet.com

Caring Group

We seek to support and facilitate the work of the various caring ministries within the Parish. Our purpose is to coordinate the work of these ministries in the Parish and provide links where this is appropriate. Examples are Dementia Friends; St Vincent de Paul Society and the Assisi Lunches. The Assisi Lunch groups are looking for drivers to help transport guests to their Assisi Lunches, if you are free during the day on the last Friday of the month and feel able to help please leave your contact details with the Parish Office.

Fabric team

Where we worship, meet, gather, entertain, work and play should be a safe environment. The Fabric team is all about maintaining a safe environment. This consists of roofs, drains, walls, doors, lighting and power, heating, furniture, just to mention a few. We are presently a small group, and in need of new recruits. The task ahead requires skills in the building trades, computers, DIY, design/decorating, but most importantly willing hands. Come join our skills bank!! Contact us at STOCParishCouncil@btinternet.com

IT and Communications

The aim of our group is to facilitate communications within the parish. This will ideally be by means of Social Media, an electronic Parish Quarterly News sheet and the Parish Website. It is our intention to set up a new parish website in the fairly near future.

We welcome volunteers with applicable skill sets and enthusiasm who can help in all of these areas.

Contact us at STOCParishCouncil@btinternet.com

Liturgy Committee

The Liturgy Committee has the following aims:

- To coordinate and have general oversight of all liturgies in the parish.
- To give or facilitate assistance where needed.
- To act as a contact point between the various liturgical groups and the parish council.
- To facilitate problem resolution.

The Committee consists of a large number (more than 35) distinct groups, covering a variety of functions both directly within the mass and also those that support parish life.

We are looking for volunteers who are able to devote time to communication and contact with the various groups. Contact us at:

STOCParishCouncil@btinternet.com

CAFOD - What's the Lent Appeal about?



Whether you want to make a one-off donation, give something up for Lent, or would like to donate regularly, every gift will help hard-working people like Florence in Zambia do amazing things...

Florence is 41 and lives in northern Zambia. When her husband died in a mining accident, she struggled to make a living. Thanks to donations, CAFOD's partner in the area, the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, gave Florence tiny fish - the size of your thumb. They also taught her to build fish ponds and care for the growing fish. Your donations make the Sisters' work possible. Florence transformed her whole life with just a small amount of help. *"I can send my children to school now and I can feed my family."* Give to the CAFOD appeal this Lent to support projects that help people transform their lives. <http://www.cafod.org.uk>

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT: 27 Feb - 12 March



When we come together we can change the way people think about trade and the products on our shelves - the Fairtrade movement is made up of ordinary people doing extraordinary things in their communities for Fairtrade. Our actions can change the lives of farmers and workers. When you shop, buy Fairtrade when you can.

Great news: @coopuk have announced 28th February they will buy all the cocoa for their products #Fairtrade.



Parish sponsored walk for bccs

The sponsored walks that take place each year in parishes around the Brentwood diocese are a major fundraiser for **bccs** (Brentwood Catholic Children's Society). **bccs** provides essential counselling for children and young adults of all faiths and none up to the age of 18 years.

Our walk through Epping Forest for this deserving charity for takes place in June. It's a very social event and suitable for all ages. Families are especially welcomed. Details for the walk this year will be published shortly in the parish weekly newsletter. Find out more about the work of **bccs** at <http://www.bccs.org.uk>

Internet resources

Pope Francis at the Vatican:
<http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html>

Follow Pope Francis on Twitter:
<https://twitter.com/Pontifex>

St. Thomas Parish Website:
<http://www.stthomaswoodford.org/parish/default.aspx>

The Art of Dying Well - what does the church say about death? <http://www.artofdyingwell.org/>

Steward of the Gospel: What is all about?
[Steward of the Gospel Questions](http://www.stewardofthegospel.org/)

Find us on Facebook - Please go to:
[St Thomas of Canterbury Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/stthomaswoodford) and 'Like' us.