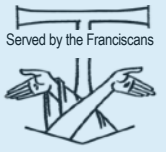




ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY
Woodford Green



TheWord TheWord TheWord

Issue 4 - Easter 2018

Welcome to the 4th edition of The Word. In this issue we are again focusing on some of the groups that are active in our parish. If you would like to know more about them then please contact the group leader, the Parish Office or email us at parishnews@stthomaswoodford.org

Also in this issue we are featuring some articles which have recently been added to our website. This is to highlight the sort of things which you can expect to find there (<http://www.stthomaswoodford.org>)

If you would like to feature your group, ministry or activity in a future edition then please send a mail to parishnews@stthomaswoodford.org. Your contributions are vital to keep alive the communication within our parish family. Ideally articles should be up to 75 words but if space permits the article can be longer.

Children sometimes ask . . .

Children sometimes ask: Did Jesus have to go to Mass as a child? As a Jew he attended Temple and Synagogue worship - known as Haggadah - when words of Scripture were read, as words to be heard and passed on to the next generation: God's promise is in words spoken.

With the coming of Jesus, the Christmas message, God's word is now a person. The Word made flesh; what he did at the Last Supper was transform his real presence into verbal form - a living prayer which makes his life death and resurrection present by making him present.

Reflect, before we go any further, on what it is we are doing, or what we are not doing whenever we gather at that table. We are not there simply to watch a ceremony - we are there because we are the ceremony - each one of us, all equal but not the same.

When we celebrate all of the seven Sacraments we share in three realities:

- First, through symbols and signs, God shows us what is happening [e.g. symbols like wedding/engagement ring] - so too with other symbols: water, oil, bread & wine, words of promise and healing . . .
- Second, God actually does what he shows . . . [This is my body = this me]
- Third, offers us the power [Sp.S] to become what we are receiving - body-given . . . [Ministry of service]

In the Mass, the central Sacrament, Jesus is really and truly present with us and for us, and in as much as we are willing to receive what he offers, we can become one with him and with each other.

What makes the Sacraments different from other holy actions - is the special Grace belonging to each one of them: not only am I able to receive - I am being challenged to become what I am receiving: Most especially is this true of the Mass. This is my body/blood... for you...we are encouraged and challenged to become body given and blood poured out - i.e. service - to go out and be for others who he is for us.

We can't do this without his help – which is why we go to Mass!

Fr Austin Linus

SVP Conference of St Thomas of Canterbury, Woodford Green

Your local Conference of the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) owes its origin to Blessed Fredric Ozanam who in 1833 started this work of charity in Paris. Fredric, in conjunction with some fellow students at the Sorbonne, began to help the poor people in that city. Paris was still recovering from the French Revolution and poverty was a major problem. Fredric dedicated this work to the Apostle of Charity, St Vincent de Paul, hence our name and the Society spread quickly. Within 10 years the SVP was established in England and our own Conference was established in 1908.



Apart from a core staff at National Office, members of the Society are volunteers. Our membership at Woodford consists of a dozen people, women and men, meeting fortnightly to pray and report on our work.

The basic work of the Society is to care for those who are experiencing financial problems, sickness and loneliness. The SVP aims, where possible, to establish a person to person contact with those we try to assist. Hence, visiting people in their homes is the main activity; however, with people living longer, visits to nursing

homes have increased greatly over the past 20 years. Hospital visiting will always occupy much of our time with large hospitals like Whipps Cross having to cater for an increasing number of patients. Dementia is a special concern for our Society, recently a special session was held in Euston (St Aloysius Church) to equip us better to assist those suffering from this illness. Conference members have also benefited from attending an Alzheimer's Society awareness session and subsequently became Dementia Friends.

In Woodford we are ever grateful to our Franciscan Friars for 109 years of support, to the never failing generosity of the parishioners and to generations of past members for their loyalty and hard work in leaving current members in a healthy situation.

Thanks are due to the various Heads of our local schools who have, in great confidence, referred families to us who have requested help from the SVP.

In conclusion, any of you dear readers who might feel drawn to this work is welcome to speak to any of the Conference members. You can also leave your contact details with the Parish Office and we would be happy to contact you.

Assisi Lunch Group

Once a month we hold a lunch gathering for elderly guests from the parish and the local area. There is a wonderful freshly cooked meal of two courses lovingly prepared by our teams of volunteer parishioners.

The lunches are held at the Becket Centre 12.30pm until approximately 2.30pm on the last Friday of every month, except July & August.

The cost of the meal is £4 per person.

Assisi Lunch is a great way to meet new friends and have an afternoon of company filled with chat and laughter.

We can arrange voluntary transport for those who find it difficult to get to the Becket Centre. Our drivers will transport you to the Becket Centre and take you home afterwards.

We presently have a few spaces for new guests to join us. The guests are very friendly and you will always be received with a warm welcome. If you would like to join us please contact Dolly Anderson via the Parish Office to discuss it further. We would love to meet you!

67 people attended the lunch on Friday 23rd February, which was organised by Sheila Charles (left in photo, top right) and her supporting team.

After a welcoming drink to settle them in, for the main meal guests enjoyed salmon, new potatoes and mixed vegetables with hollandaise sauce. Their sweet was apple pie with both cream and ice cream. Tea/coffee and biscuits were provided to finish off.

The team of volunteer drivers who brought a number of guests to the lunch, were on hand again to transport them home. The colder weather proved no obstacle to those attending this popular monthly gathering.



On Friday, 23rd March, 64 guests enjoyed a fish and chip lunch followed by Pavlova served by Nina (pictured centre in photo right) and her team.



Catholic Women's League

The Catholic Women's League (CWL) is a national organisation that promotes educational, religious and social concerns.

For the Woodford section - on a practical level - this means that the group:

- is involved with providing spiritual support for parishioners in preparation for Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation.
- co-ordinates donations to the Catholic Clothing Guild.
- provides refreshments at parish events from tea and coffee after Mass and organising Lenten lunches to catering for large-scale celebrations
- organises fundraising activities, including Ladies' Keep Fit, sponsored events and jumble sales.



The CWL usually meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 8pm. New members are always very welcome.

Keep Fit sessions are held on Monday evenings (Term time) in the Becket Centre at 8pm.

For more details about the remit of the CWL, please visit the website: <http://catholicwomensleaguecio.org.uk>

To join and for more details about the Woodford Section, pictured above at their Christmas team social, please contact the Parish Office.



FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 2018

On Sunday, 4th March in recognition of our support as a parish for Fairtrade, children were invited to the Becket Centre after 10.00am mass to collect a Fairtrade banana. A cup of Fairtrade tea and coffee supplied by Waitrose, Buckhurst Hill was provided for parents.



Fairtrade Fortnight aimed to put a spotlight on trade. When trade is fair it can improve the lives of farmers and workers who grow our food, but don't earn enough to feed their families. When trade is fair, it can make the world a better place.

It's a shocking fact that millions of poor farmers who produce the food we love still don't earn enough to feed their own families. It's time for this injustice to end.

Commit to making your snack Fairtrade today and everyday. When you choose Fairtrade you are helping to ensure that the person who grew the **banana** you are eating, the **coffee** beans used to make your drink, or the **cocoa** in your **chocolate** was paid fairly for their work.

Throughout the year you can buy your Fairtrade bananas at Co-op, Waitrose and Sainsbury's. Do this and tell everyone about it: **"I'm making my snack today Fairtrade in support of the farmers who grow our food."**



Find out more here about Fairtrade here
<https://www.fairtrade.org.uk>

LENTEN LUNCHES

This year's Lenten lunches began on Tuesday 20th February and continued weekly until 27th March, in the Becket Centre 12.15pm to 1.30pm.

People who came along enjoyed a bowl of home-made soup and French bread and meet with other parishioners and friends from other Churches in the area – and all for only £3!

This is the ninth year we have run these lunches and over that time we have raised over £12,000 for **Mary's Meals**, a charity which ensures that children in dire circumstances in various parts of the world, have one good meal a day.

Find out more about Mary's Meals here: <https://www.marysmeals.org.uk/>



“What's important to us is the hungry child. When there are hungry children in front of us today, we're going to feed them, and at the same time we're going to work on the solution to getting them fed in the long term, creating a global movement of people who believe in this vision.”

Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, Mary's Meals Founder and CEO



Our Scripture sharing Group

“ To know the Scriptures is to know Christ”.

Our Group meets regularly on alternate Thursdays to read and ponder the Gospel chosen for the following Sunday. We meet usually for one hour in which we look at the appropriate Gospel, pray through it, then share with the group our reflections. We do this in a prayerful manner, each listening to the others' responses. It is not a discussion group, so each member is free to share his/her reactions or responses to the passage without being questioned.

The group has been in existence over the last three years with various different members.

The prayer is known as “Lectio Divina”. It is a method of prayer which is well used, and fully approved and supported by the Church.

Why not give it a try one evening? Next meeting is in mid-April (date to be confirmed). Keep a look-out!!

Sr. Sandra

Jesus lives today . . .

How can we link the Jesus of our faith with real history – other than by turning to the poor and oppressed which he always did and still does? You always have the poor with you – Mk.14.7. Be clear – the poor are our link with the Gospel. C1 history, which provided the backdrop for the Gospel becomes real when we connect today with people who are oppressed and poor. Jesus lives today in the history of his sisters and brothers who are living in oppressive and impoverished circumstances.

God speaks to us through the whole human story, not just through bible tradition. The Word becomes flesh, and historical – becomes the world as it is; and we know where Jesus was to be found within the world – as often as you did it to the least.... This is why an indispensable condition for preaching the Gospel is action for peace with justice, wherever this absent or withheld.

As the Israelites had to tread through the desert before reaching the Promised Land, the desert facing us is the wilderness of widespread poverty and human suffering.

Pope Francis is trying to draw the Church into the new reality – to be with God happens through being with each other, this is where we are found by God. When our world becomes a desert, our only option is to walk with the people of the desert who have God walking with them.

Fr Austin Linus

Lent Family Fast Appeal

Fiona in Zimbabwe is worried about her son Pardon. He is two years old and is showing signs of malnutrition.

This Lent our donations to CAFOD's Family Fast Appeal will be matched by the UK Government.

This means that our donations will be doubled, up to a total of £5 million. So we can transform twice the number of lives. We can give twice the number of children the opportunity to grow up healthy and strong.

Two-year-old Pardon is hungry and it's making him unwell. Fiona passes a handful of maize to each of her children, then sits down beside her husband to eat her own small portion. She knows there is nothing for dinner.

While Fiona's clothes hang loosely on her body, her two-year-old son Pardon has a swollen stomach – a worrying sign of severe malnutrition. Fiona knows that without more food, Pardon is at risk of falling seriously ill. The lack of food means simple infections are much harder for Pardon to fight off.

She says: "I feel very weak eating this little food, and my children won't play because they're too hungry. I compare my children to others who are the same age. My boys are shorter and thinner. I know something's wrong."

This Lent, our donations will fund an ambitious new project to combat malnutrition and hunger. Fiona and her family will get seeds, tools and training to grow vegetables . . . so Fiona can feed her children.

Donate to the Lent Appeal at <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-CAFOD/Lent>



SHARE THE JOURNEY

War, persecution, natural disaster and poverty force millions of people from their homes. Most come from poor countries, and seek safety in poor countries nearby. We cannot turn away. These are human beings with hopes, fears, desires and stories to share, just like each one of us.

Pope Francis has declared this time a 'unique opportunity' for us to press our governments to make global commitments which place the human dignity of people on the move at their heart. Add your voice to his.

[Sign the petition to the Prime Minister today.](#)



Internet resources

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

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

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](#)

Order of Friars Minor in Great Britain: <http://www.friar.org/home>

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

Parish Facebook: [@STOCWoodford](#)

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