

Year of Faith: Reflections in East Anglia by Fr David Bagstaff

After Bishop Michael's death in July 2011, I was asked to become 'Diocesan Administrator' and to look after the Diocese of East Anglia until the appointment of our new bishop. I was aware that the process of consultation and appointment, which is managed by the Vatican, would take some time, but I had expected that by now – I write this at the end of January – it would have reached its conclusion.

During this time, the Diocese has not stood still; clergy, religious and laity have continued their work of building up communion and proclaiming the gospel. As we wait to hear from Rome, it is an opportunity to reflect on where we are, as the Diocese of East Anglia, in this Year of Faith, and how we enter through the 'door of faith' and open it for others, as Pope Benedict's Apostolic Letter 'Porta Fidei' challenges us.

It has been a privilege over the last 18 months to see a new perspective on a Diocese which I have loved and served for 36 years. I have been welcomed to many communities for a range of celebrations, and have encountered the inevitable challenges which come with the leadership of a pastoral area which embraces all aspects of humanity. My overall view of the Diocese is that there is a positive spirit and a sense of hope and joy, sustained by good relationships and welcoming parish communities. Many of the elements of Bishop Michael's pastoral plan are in place and bearing fruit.



Pope Benedict XVI launched the Year of Faith

The number of events planned by parishes as part of the Year of Faith show how vibrant the life of the Diocese is. There are celebrations, pilgrimages and discussions, and the Diocesan adult formation programme offers the opportunity to hear recognised scholars speaking on the major documents of the Second Vatican Council, as we commemorate its anniversary.

There is much to celebrate. Our parish communities include some which are now multi-ethnic, where much effort has been made to ensure integration and to celebrate the diversity of people's cultures. As the Council document 'Lumen Gentium' makes clear, 'the one People of God is present in all the nations of the earth since its citizens, who are taken from all nations, are of a kingdom whose nature is not earthly but heavenly' (para 13).

There are also parishes which have worked hard to create new identities as a result of 'sharing' a parish priest. This shows how it is possible that the parish 'offers an outstanding example of community apostolate, for it gathers into a unity all the human diversities that are found there and inserts them into the universality of the church' (Apostolicam Actuositatem, 10).



Parishes and diocesan events have multi-ethnic dimensions



Many parishes now have twinning links with Holy Land

We have seen two new churches completed recently, at Diss and Haverhill, and work is continuing at Clare Priory. This reflects both the energy of the communities which have given these developments their support, and the focus on good celebration of liturgy which Bishop Michael emphasised. 'It is through the liturgy that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church' (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 2).

The availability of the Narthex at the cathedral has made a big difference not only to the cathedral parish, but to the whole diocese. There is a much stronger sense now of the diocese as a whole, with the cathedral at its heart as a welcoming venue for diocesan celebrations. Another centre for the diocese, of a different kind, is Walsingham, and it is a great privilege to have this National Shrine of Our Lady in East Anglia.

The Vatican Council document 'Gaudium et Spes' says, 'Today there is an inescapable duty to make ourselves the neighbour of every person and ... to come to that person's aid in a positive way' (27). Many of our parishes are involved in working, often with those of other Christian traditions, to support those in need in their local areas with initiatives such as night shelters and food banks.

There is also a growing awareness of issues in the wider and global communities. As the Vatican Council noted, 'the Church is by its very nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit' (Ad Gentes Divinitus, 2). The outreach beyond our Diocese has flourished in the links between some of our parishes and communities in the Holy Land and Cambodia.

Bishop Michael's concern for young people has been maintained. A number of young people will be travelling to Rio for World Youth Day, and many others are actively involved in more local events. We hope that 'this enthusiasm will be penetrated with the spirit of Christ ...' so that 'a very rich harvest can be expected from it' (Apostolicam Actuositatem, 12).

Then there are our schools! At the celebration for the opening of the Year of Faith, many people remarked on how lovely it was to see representatives of our schools present, and what a contribution they make to the life of the Diocese.

The Catholic school is characterised by 'an atmosphere animated by the gospel spirit of freedom and charity; it helps the young to combine personal development with growth as the new creatures that baptism made them; in the end, it makes the message of salvation the principle of order for the whole of human culture, so that the knowledge which pupils gradually acquire of the world, of life, and of human nature, is enlightened by faith' (Gravissimum educationis, 8). It has been a joy to visit our schools to share their celebrations. And many will remember the beautiful singing at Fr Ben Grist's funeral by some of our pupils.



The Narthex at St John the Baptist Cathedral

Present at Fr Ben's funeral were, of course, most of the priests of the diocese, and it is they who, with the deacons, have ensured that the work of building up our communities and extending their outreach has continued. The religious communities, with their distinctive charisms, are also much appreciated for what they bring to the diocese. Lay people are increasingly sharing in its work, and this is something which can be further developed.

During the long wait for our new bishop, the clergy have remained in good heart and continue to be open to new ideas and initiatives. They have lived out the council's statement that 'they all contribute to the same purpose, namely the building up of the body of Christ, and this, especially in our times, demands many kinds of duties and fresh adaptations' (Presbyterorum Ordinis, 8).

The deans and other consultors have worked closely with me to make sure that all the aspects of the work of the diocese are not only maintained but developed, as far as this is possible. The work of the diocesan commissions and of the staff at the White House has also been much appreciated during this time.

We have decided to publish a small booklet to celebrate the good things that are happening in our diocese. We have lots of ideas about what we might include, but we do not want to overlook anything that would be an example or inspiration to others. This will not necessarily be news of one-off events, of the kind you would send in for the newspaper, but could be something which appears very simple and obvious but it may be only your parish which is doing it!

Please have a look at the questions below and, if there is something you would like to share with us, send us information about it. We cannot promise to include everything in the booklet, but we would be very interested to hear about what is happening.

In your view, what does your parish do really well?

What makes you proud of your parish community?

What new things have started in your parish over the last two years?

What would you like to share with others about your parish?



Please send your responses to Dr Dilys Wadman, c/o The White House, 21 Ugate, Poringland, Norwich, NR14 7SH or email them to dco@east-angliadiocese.org.uk

Bishops defend marriage and urge Catholics to do the same

The passing of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill in the House of Commons on 5 February does not mark the end of the struggle to uphold the traditional full definition and understanding of marriage.

It is just the beginning of another stage and the Bishops of England and Wales want Catholics to keep up the pressure.

Archbishop Peter Smith, the second Bishop of East Anglia, commented after the debate: "It became clear that the Government has not thought through a number of profound problems in the Bill raised by members of Parliament during the debate.

"It will be extremely important that the many concerns we and others have expressed will be fully and carefully considered during the next stages of the Bill's passage through Parliament."

Before the debate on 5 February, the Catholic Bishops issued a briefing to MPs detailing the concerns of Catholics about the legislation that seeks to re-define marriage.

They made clear that these concerns were not just those of Catholics but were shared with many other people.

The Bishops maintain that "Marriage has, over the centuries, been the enduring public recognition of this commitment to provide a stable institution for the care and protection of children, and it has rightly been recognised as unique and worthy of legal protection for this reason.

Marriage furthers the common good of society because it promotes a unique relationship within which children are conceived, born and reared, an institution that we believe benefits children.

"But we believe that marriage is not only the institutional recognition of love and commitment. Marriage, as legally recognised in this country, is also the institutional recognition of a unique kind of relationship in which children are raised by their birth-parents.

Even if this is not always possible in practice, the law, by recognising this core understanding of marriage, sends a vital signal to society of an ideal.

Treating people differently

In response to the charge that limiting marriage to heterosexual couples is an infringement of the principle of equality, the Bishops point to the erroneous nature of such an argument.

"The basic argument that is advanced in favour of same sex marriage is one of equality and fairness. But we suggest that this intuitively appealing argument is fundamentally flawed.

"Those who argue for same sex marriage do so on the basis that it is unjust to treat same sex and heterosexual relationships differently in allowing only heterosexual couples access to marriage.

"Our principal argument against this is that it is not unequal or unfair to treat those in different circumstances differently. Indeed, to treat them the same would itself be unjust."

They go on to illustrate how the proposed legislation itself makes distinctions between heterosexual and homosexual couples for example the clause that states that sexual infidelity by one of the parties in a same sex marriage with another same sex partner will not constitute adultery. (Schedule 4, para. 3)

"The Government itself recognises, therefore, that it is not necessarily unfair discrimination or a breach of the principle of equality to treat different people differently, if they are different in a relevant way."

The introduction in 2004 of Civil Partnerships for same-sex couples effectively ensured that they enjoy equivalent legal rights to married couples.

This cannot therefore be an argument for the legislation currently before Parliament. Rather than establishing equal rights, its purpose and result will be to "alter the meaning of marriage over time for everyone."

The Bishops emphasise, "Our opposition to same sex marriage is not based in discrimination or prejudice; it is based in a positive effort to ensure that the unique social values currently served by marriage carry on being served by that institution in the future."

The Bishops also expressed grave concerns about the manner in which such a major constitutional change is being rushed through Parliament without an adequate consideration of the



Fr David Bagstaff and Archbishop Peter Smith issue and of its consequences.

"The British public, as a whole, did not seek this change; none of the mainstream political parties promised it in their last election manifestos; there has been no referendum; there was no Green or White Paper; and when the Government launched its consultation it did not ask whether the law should be changed, but how the law should be changed. There is no clear mandate for this change."

In pursuing this legislation, it is argued, the government has simply swept aside the serious concerns and opposition of thousands of people.

Given the effect that it will have, in changing the definition of an institution that is at the heart of most people's experience of life, such an approach cannot be right.

"We have made it clear that there are major arguments in principle against this change, but even leaving these to one side, any such changes should await considerably more evidence about child bearing and child rearing in the context of same sex unions.

"Fundamentally changing the definition of marriage is a major constitutional change and Parliament should not be rushed into making a decision that will have far reaching long-term consequences, many of them unintended."

Freedom of conscience

A major concern is the possible effects that the legislation may have in the area of Education.

"A change in the definition of marriage will have an adverse impact on schools because the Secretary of State is under a statutory duty to issue guidance on 'the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children' under s.403 of the Education Act 1996.

"A statutory change may therefore result in religious schools being compelled to teach a definition of marriage contrary to their own understanding and thus impact on previously accepted and protected religious freedoms. There is also a danger that teachers will be limited in their freedom of expression both inside and outside school as far as same sex marriage is concerned. The Bill fails to give protection.

"It is imperative that freedom of expression and the freedom of thought, conscience and religion, are protected."

The Bishops express concern about the inadequacy of protection for individuals and religious organizations who in conscience cannot support the purpose of the legislation; the effect that it will have upon the use of the Equality Act (2007); the interference in the internal affairs of religious organizations; and the possibility of a gulf between religious and civil marriage.

The Bishops in their briefing urge members of Parliament to oppose the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill. As it progresses through Parliament, it is important that the urgency of their appeal is not lost not only on MPs, but also on the public and in particular upon us as Catholics. They urge people to:

- Read the full text of the Briefing (www.catholic-ew.org and follow the links).
- If your MP voted against the Bill then write and thank him/her for doing so.
- If your MP voted for the Bill, then challenge them to answer your concerns and those of the bishops.
- If you have not already joined the Coalition for Marriage campaign, which is supported by the Catholic Bishops

amongst others, then do so. (www.c4m.org.uk)

- You can write to your MP either by post (addressed to your MP at House of Commons, London. SW1A 0AA) or by e-mail (firstname.surname@parliament.uk)

"Marriage is rooted in the complementarity of man and woman. For these reasons the Church opposes the Government's Bill to re-define marriage. Despite claims by supporters of the Bill that the central issue is one of equality, the Bill actually seeks to re-define marriage and will have consequences for society at large."

Briefing by Archbishop Peter Smith

Stand up for marriage

Continued from Front Page

Fr David Bagstaff, Diocesan Administrator urged Catholics in East Anglia to continue to express opposition to the Bill.

"There is still time to oppose this legislation" he said.

"I would encourage everyone to read at least the précis of the Bishops' Briefing, if not the whole text, and write to MPs and to Peers expressing opposition to this change in the definition of marriage.

"Another way of registering your opposition is to join the Coalition for Marriage campaign. (www.c4m.org.uk)"

"Why not come along to the Cathedral on 22 June to celebrate and stand up for marriage as more and more people from around the Diocese have done in recent years in the Diocesan Celebration of Marriage & Family Life?

Look out for details in your parishes.

To contact your MP write addressing the envelope to him/her by name at The House of Commons, London. SW1A 0AA, or by e-mail at firstname.surname@parliament.uk

Latest on Rome pilgrimage

Fr David Jennings, the Diocesan Rome Pilgrimage co-ordinator, gives an update on preparations for the September pilgrimage.


Preparations are well underway for Diocesan Pilgrimage to Rome this coming September. September is a wonderful month to visit Rome; warm during the day and cooler in the evenings.

We have 77 confirmed pilgrims (our optimum number) and have started a waiting list which, hopefully, will materialise into a second coach and hotel.

If you are still interested in the pilgrimage you need to contact Pax Travel as soon as possible (details below).

Our programme is inevitably open to change due to the activities of the Pope and within the constraints of a busy Year of Faith schedule in Rome itself but everything is being done to ensure a smooth and spiritual pilgrimage.


Hopefully, we will have our new bishop by then and use this special time to get to know him as he leads us through Rome's great pilgrimage places.




DIocese of EAST ANGLIA
'Year of Faith'
 Pilgrimage to
ROME
 16th - 20th September 2013

£699 PER PERSON

For further details and a full itinerary please contact Pax Travel Ltd



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News from Around the Diocese

Help for Holy Land schools

A donation of £3,000 made by the parish of St Philip Howard at Cherry Hinton is an example of how people around the diocese are working with the Cambridge Nazareth Trust.

St John Fisher School in Peterborough is also hoping to enter into a twinning arrangement with the Al Ahliyyah High School in Ramallah through the Trust.

It was set up in 1984 by three Knights of the Holy Sepulchre living in Cambridge and is working with parishes, schools and individuals to build up more links with the Latin Patriarchate of the Holy Land which is twinned with the diocese.

It is a national charity and raises funds to aid the education of young Christians in the Holy Land.

The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (LPJ) is responsible for Christian schools and the Cambridge Nazareth Trust is a partner, providing more than £500,000 since its foundation.

This has been made possible through the commitment and dedication of many partners, supporters and individual benefactors. Donations are received from parish fundraising events, Catholic schools and individuals from East Anglia and the rest of the country.

"In the increasingly desperate circumstance of daily life in the Holy Land, the LPJ schools are places of refuge, safety and protection, encouraging personal and spiritual growth," Bernard Whyte, Trust chairman, said.

"Most of the LPJ schools are in semi-urban environments and in some cases, remote villages. These communities have been economically and socially distressed through many years of repeated isolation and underdeveloped infrastructure.

"Despite this it is pleasing to note that the LPJ schools continually perform at the highest levels of academic achievement.

"As well as providing funds, we are involved in a number of other initiatives in support of education.

"Teacher training has a high priority and we are supporting an ambitious project to improve the level of English Language teaching by providing training for 20 teachers from Jordan.

"We have provided computer facilities and better structural accommodation in a number of schools.

"We support summer camps in the Holy Land during the summer vacations. Students from UK universities help run these and they are enormously successful in both providing extra-curricular activities for children and giving the students a lifetime's experience of conditions in the occupied lands of Palestine.

"The assistance of Fr Paul Maddison and Palestine Pilgrimage in facilitating these visits is much appreciated.

"This is a touching extract from the report of Carla Horgan who went to Summer Camp this year."

She writes: "During the last Mass we attended, I recall a little Nun who sat next to me suddenly turning round to me and smiling and nodding enthusiastically. For a few seconds I wasn't sure what was going on as the Priest was speaking in Arabic.

"Then Fr Faizel spoke in English to thank Colleen and I for our generosity and everything we had done during our stay. He called us to the front of the Church to present us with gifts.

"I felt touched and surprised as this was unexpected. Fr Faizel said that we had given so much during our stay. We went to Palestine to help but due to the magnitude of the generosity of the Palestinian people we felt that despite having given our best, we had gained far more from the experience than we had given."

Bernard Whyte said so much has been achieved through the generosity of donors, but there is still a great need for support to the Christians of the Holy Land. If you would like to help or discover more about the Cambridge Nazareth Trust, please visit the website at www.cambridgenazarethtrust.org or contact the chairman.



The Trust helps to fund education in the Holy Land where it is held in the highest possible regard by all

Civic Mass for parish extension

The mayor of King's Lynn Geoffrey Wareham officially opened the new extension at Our Lady of the Annunciation in December.

He cut a ribbon to open the new skype connecting the church with the new room after a Civic Mass, probably the first for over 40 years in the church.

The Mayor, who is a parishioner at St Dominic's in Downham Market, was welcomed alongside an entourage of mace and sword bearers. The Knights of St Columba provided a guard of honour as the procession entered the church.

The new Wigglesworth Room was named in memory of the priest who built our church in 1897. It consists of a room for up to 50 people, a small kitchen and disabled WC.

The parish purchased Walsingham House, a Grade 2 Listed Georgian

building, with shop, adjacent to the church at the end of 2010 and here we are two years later with a lovely new facility.

Tributes were paid to the parishioners who organised and supported fundraising efforts and the support of our parish priest, Fr Peter Rollings.

The new entrance to the church is now through a newly constructed door joining the church and new building with a ramp for disabled access.

Since the opening, the room has been in use for refreshments after Mass and other parish gatherings. It is hoped that the local community will be able to use the building.

During the past two years the church roof has been retiled and the sacristy reordered. The next project is the redecoration of the church.

Groups discuss faith and business issues

Delegates from the churches and groups in Wisbech gathered to hear local speakers on the topic Faith and Business - *No entry or Open for Business?*, and to discuss the issues they raised.

The event in November was the contribution to the annual National Interfaith Week from the market town of Wisbech.

The delegates, who numbered nearly 50, were welcomed by the Mayor of Wisbech, Viv MacRae and then listened to presentations from Alan Melton - leader of Fenland District Council, local entrepreneurs Vin and Neeraj Ganger, sisters Christina Purcell and Jacqui Wadsley and Starr Farr from Wisbech Friends Meeting House.

Vin Ganger who, with his wife is a member of the Sikh Faith, described how he came to Wisbech as a young man with his family who ran a corner shop in the town. He attended the local schools and trained as a carpenter initially. But when the recession began to bite he went into the taxi business and has grown to enjoy Wisbech.

"We intend to continue to live here as our kids are settled in the local schools and we like living in Fenland," Neeraj said.

Jacqui Wadsley recalled the terror which filled

her on the night of the terrible fire which destroyed the Phoenix Hotel next door to her premises.

"It took eight months to refurnish the premises but we persevered with help from various quarters and came through," Jacqui said.

Sister Christina related how she has built up her business, employing eight staff in two shops, one in Wisbech the other in March.

"I look after my staff and they in turn look after my business," she told the group.

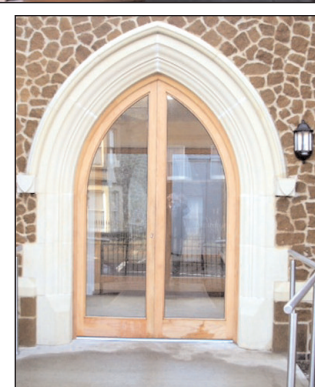
The other speaker was Starr Farr who talked about the example of Quaker business people nationally, notably the Cadburys, Frys, Rowntrees, among others and highlighted the Peckover family, successive generations of whom ran a successful banking business but also played a prominent social role in Wisbech.

Delegates have been furnished with details of the points which emerged from the talks and small group discussions with an invitation to take these back to their own communities and come up with action plans within six months.

If readers are interested in receiving a report on the conference please phone 01945 584737



The mayor of King's Lynn addresses the congregation, above. The room layout, below and the new entrance doorway, right



DIOCESAN SCHOOLS IN FOCUS

A Level joy at St Benedict's

St Benedict's Catholic School in Bury St Edmunds proved to be a top school in Suffolk despite the bad publicity the county had when the league tables were announced.

The school's staff had mixed emotions in the days leading up to the publication of Government League Tables in January.

Headteacher Hugh O'Neill said: "We knew that our GCSE results had taken a big hit as a result of the English fiasco in the summer.

"We definitely knew we weren't going to be at the top of the GCSE results for Suffolk as we had been in

2011. However, we knew that we had again done exceptionally well at A Level, and we hoped that this would balance things out."

As it turned out, the A Level results more than made up for the GCSE ones.

St Benedict's was number one in Suffolk for A Levels, out of all state and independent schools.

"Next, the school looked to see whether it was in the best A/AS results table on the BBC website. Sure enough, St Benedict's was there.

"However, that wasn't the end of the story. When we looked at the schools above us, drawn from all the independent and state schools in the country, it quickly became clear that nearly every school with better results was either an independent or a selective grammar school.

"There were just two non-selective state schools above us in the table. St Benedict's was the third best non-selective state school in the country!"

St Benedict's score of 1091 points per candidate was higher than Harrow School (1056) and Eton College (992).

It was comfortably higher than some very notable schools in neighbouring counties such as Cambridgeshire and Norfolk.

As Hugh said: "There was a lot of negative publicity, particularly in Suffolk, about the GCSE results this year.

"We were afraid that an amazing success story, of a small Catholic Voluntary Aided school achieving results that put it at the very top of the tables- that this story would be lost."

St Albans celebrates gold award for RE

St Alban's Catholic High School in Ipswich has achieved a Gold Award for the Religious Education Quality Mark.

The scheme is an accreditation system in place to recognise and celebrate good practice in teaching in Religious Education.

Head of RE Fenella Matthew said: "We always hoped to achieve the Gold level in this award.

"Even so, we wanted to make sure we demonstrated effectively to the assessor all the excellent work that goes on in our school."

Stephanie Crossley, RE teacher, also said: "The process involved a very thorough audit of all that we do in RE, covering 5 areas; Learning, Teaching, Curriculum Subject Leadership, and Continuing Professional Development. It was time-consuming but at the end of the process, to see five folders full of evidence of the wonderful things we offer in RE at St Albans was very satisfying. The assessor had a half hour meeting with some of our students and it was gratifying to hear them speak very highly of their RE lessons and to know that the assessor was impressed with their comments and attitude.

To have achieved Gold in the RE Quality Mark is an external recognition of the fact that we know we provide high quality RE at St Albans, and so we are very proud of what we have achieved!"

The awards are monitored by the Religious Education Council and offer three levels of accreditation – Gold, Silver and Bronze. Just over 40 schools nationwide have now



Putting together a display as part of the school's RE work achieved the award at different levels and schools are able to simply complete a self-evaluation to use as an improvement tool if they do not wish to apply for the quality mark.

The school said it recognised that the assessment process was immensely valuable. It helped all to consider what was done and where improvements might need to be made.

The feedback from students was an integral part of the process and left the school feeling inspired and proud.

Artist returns to St Mary's with sculpture

Local artist, Lucy Unwin, unveiled a specially commissioned sculpture this week to mark the successful relocation of St Mary's Junior School to its new home in Chaucer Road, Cambridge.

The sculpture, made of metal rods, shows an adult and two children playing and symbolises the supportive relationships between St Mary's teachers and their pupils.

Lucy completed her A-levels at St Mary's in Cambridge in 2002 before studying Fine Art Sculpture at Winchester School of Art.

She said: "I was absolutely delighted to be approached by my old school to design a one off piece in celebration of the Junior School's new home.

"I have such fond memories of St Mary's and they have been very supportive of my career."



Headmistress Charlotte Avery, Head of Juniors Christopher Hald and pupils with Lucy Unwin and her sculpture

St Felix head teacher retires



The whole community at St Felix School, Haverhill, made sure that the last few days of Wendy Lashmar's headship of their school were ones that she would never forget.

Staff, past and present, gathered for an evening's entertainment by her favourite local musicians, "Smith and Weston" at which Fr Michael Teader gave a "This is your Life presentation" of her teaching career. On the last morning of term the present staff entertained her and the whole school to a lively pantomime presentation of "Alice in Wonderland" before a special Mass with the theme "Courage" was celebrated by Fr Michael in the afternoon, attended by the children, Wendy's family and invited guests.

The day ended with carol singing and mince pies around the Christmas tree and a presentation of gifts from the parents. As Wendy said in her letter of thanks - "Thank you so much for making the final day of my career so wonderful. Although I was sad to leave you all it felt a very joyous occasion and a memory I will always treasure."

She is pictured above with some of the pupils.

20mph triumph at Lowestoft



For many years there have been concerns about road safety outside St Mary's School gates on a busy main road in Lowestoft.

Requests by the school over many years for the speed limit to be lowered to 20 mph had been refused.

Earlier this year the school council along with the governors and PTA mounted a campaign to get the county council to listen and agree to put in a 20 mph speed limit and traffic calming measures outside the school.

A county councillor came to a school council meeting and listened well to the road safety points put by the pupil representatives from every class.

He agreed that St Mary's was the only school locally without a 20mph zone "20 is Plenty!" and felt that this was needed along with a Lollipop person.

Above, school pupils celebrating victory in front of their treasured 20 mph sign.



Diary dates 2013

**February Half-term
Deanery Events**
We hope many deaneries will organise events for their young people, with practical support from the Diocesan Youth Service.

**March 17
A Taste of Taizé**
Brother Paolo from the Taizé Community is coming to our Cathedral in Norwich to lead and evening of discussion and prayer around the cross.
All young people welcome.

**April 13 - 14
Celebrate Family Conference**

**May 6
Walk to Walsingham**
A sponsored walk to Walsingham joining with the Diocesan Pilgrimage

**June 29 - 30
Ignite Youth Festival**

**July 5 - 7
Invocation**
A weekend for those age 16 – 35 looking to deepen their relationship with Christ and develop their understanding and discernment of God’s will for their lives.
Held in Staffordshire but a minibus will be going from East Anglia.

**July 16 – 30
World Youth Day Pilgrimage**
Joining millions of other young people in Rio for Mass with the Holy Father.

**July 26 – 29
World Youth Day at Home**
With guest speakers, catechesis, live bands and a satellite link up to Rio. For those who can’t make it to Rio, this is the next best thing.
At Aylesford Priory, Kent but transport will be arranged from East Anglia.

**August 3 - 12
Young Adults Pilgrimage to Taizé.**
Our annual pilgrimage to Taizé. For those aged 17+.

**August 23 - 30
Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes**
Young People aged 17+ welcome.

**August 22 - 26
Youth 2000 Prayer Festival**
Joining Youth 2000 for their annual prayer festival in Walsingham.
For those age 16+.

**August 23 - 26
Diocesan Summer Camp**
Faith, Fun and Food in the heart of the Norfolk countryside.
For those age 8 – 14.

Ways to contact youth service

To contact the Diocesan Youth Office the addresses and telephone numbers are set out here.
The White House, 21 Upgate, Poringland, Norwich, Norfolk NR14 7SH
Tel: (01508) 494833 Mobile: (0781) 2004934
Email: dys@east-angliadiocese.org.uk
Leave a message if no answer.

Celebrating Epiphany

Young people from all over the diocese gathered in Poringland for the now annual Candlelight Mass on the eve of the Epiphany.
This special Mass had been established by the Youth Council and Bishop Michael six years ago and has now grown into an event for all the family. Fr David Bagstaff, Diocesan Administrator, welcomed everyone and celebrated Mass.
Music was provided by the cathedral music group. As in previous years, people were invited to come and put a fragment of Frankincense into a burner and light a candle to place around the cross – both symbols of offering our lives to Christ.
After Mass, glow sticks, and presents were given out and people made their way down to the bottom of the White House garden for refreshments. Hot dogs, jacket potatoes, hot chocolate, and fruit punch had been prepared by the members of the Poringland conformation group and Diocesan Youth Council.
Meanwhile the bonfire was being lit and the firework display set up which considerably ‘topped’ the year before.



Members of the Diocesan Youth Group gathered around the bonfire at the Epiphany Mass

Pilgrims’ call to carry Pope Benedict’s peace message

A t the end of every year the Taizé community embarks on a Pilgrimage of Trust on Earth, where young people from every country are invited to become pilgrims of peace and bearers of reconciliation in the Church.

From the 28 December 2012 - 2 January 2013, four people from the Diocese of East Anglia - Fr Luke Goymour, Abigail Goymour, Agata Wygnanska, Zofia Bajorek - joined over 40,000 young adults from around the world to gather in Rome for the 35th Taizé European Meeting.

Hamish MacQueen said: “It was perfectly timed especially as we have been called to enter the Year of Faith to rediscover, reawaken and re-invigorate our faith journeys.”

The four pilgrims from East Anglia shared their experience and said: “During the meeting Taizé Morning Prayer was sung in our host parish, and mid-day and evening prayers were held in seven Basilicas around Rome.

“Throughout the meeting we were encouraged to reflect upon how we could uncover the wellsprings of trust in God personally and in our communities.

“In our discussions we were encouraged to be bolder in talking together and sharing with others about our personal faith journey.

“Through the proposals given by Br Alois and the Taizé community we were led to reflect our own journey with Christ and what that meant both personally and in our own communities.”

One of the highlights of this year’s pilgrimage for the four came on the 29 December, when St Peter’s Square was filled with over 40,000 Taizé pilgrims for a prayer vigil with Pope Benedict.

“The pilgrims erupted with joy at the arrival of the Holy Father, and the square was filled with candlelight and the sound of Taizé chants, followed by an eerie silence as the 40,000 pilgrims prayed in solidarity with each other.

“In his address to the pilgrims Pope Benedict welcomed us to Rome and encouraged us to continue to answer ‘Yes’ to Christ reminding us that ‘God never leaves you alone and isolated. He gives us all the joy and comfort of the communion of the Church...Do not be afraid to precede the dawn in praise of God, you will not be disappointed’.

“European Meetings are an opportunity to pray for peace in the world and in inner-peace in our own hearts.

“For the last hour of 2012, pilgrims met in their host parishes, and across Rome partook in a prayer vigil for peace – 40,000 pilgrims praying in solidarity for those whose lives are disrupted by war and inner turmoil.

“Thus, the four of us from East Anglia began 2013 in the Eternal City praying for peace and conversion,” they added.



Pope Benedict welcomes visitors invited to carry his message to the world



Fr Luke and his group seeing the sights in Rome during their visit



Take part in WYD at home on web

“For those who can’t make it to Rio for World Youth Day this summer, why not go to ‘WYD@Home’, held in Aylesford, Kent?,” Hamish MacQueen said.

This national event is held at the same time as the concluding weekend of the WYD pilgrimage when the Holy Father will be joined by millions in a prayer vigil and Mass the following morning.

“WYD@Home will capture the atmosphere with large screen link up to Rio, live bands, catechisis, guest speakers and more. This carnival atmosphere will be the next best thing to being in Rio this summer,” Hamish said.

“Preparations are now well underway for the 20 young people from East Anglia making the journey to Rio.

“Thank you to everyone who has supported them so generously.

“Their next fundraiser is the sponsored walk to Walsingham to join up with the Diocesan Pilgrimage on 6 May.

“The walk will start early in the morning on Holkham Beach with morning prayer and arrive in Walsingham in good time for Mass.

“But the walk isn’t just for those going on WYD and isn’t just to raise money - all young people of secondary school age are welcome.”

If you are interested in joining the group from East Anglia going to ‘WYD@Home’ or joining the walk, contact the Diocesan Youth Office.

Evening of Taizé music and chant

East Anglia has enjoyed a long association with Taizé since Bishop Michael started taking a group of young people on pilgrimage there every year.
This year the pilgrimage is from August 3 – 12. If you are age 17 – 29, why not come along.
Contact the Diocesan Youth Office for more information.
On 17 March we are particularly pleased to welcome Br Paolo, one of the Taizé brothers, to Norwich to lead an evening of music and reflection.
It starts at 6pm with a special session for young people (age 14+), then at 7pm, everyone is welcome.
It’s at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich.
Hope to see you there!

Lent reflection by Fr Michael Collis
This is my body which will be given for you

The Diocese of East Anglia has, in recent months, unfortunately had to experience not only the long illness and then death of Bishop Michael but then soon after the illness and death of one of its young priests, Fr Ben Grist. These sad events, like similar situations which so many of us experience in our lives when loved ones are taken from us far earlier than we could have imagined, often lead us to ask questions.

We might ask ourselves: Why does God allow suffering? Why do lives sometimes come to an end so early? In the case of Bishop Michael we might have asked why God would bring his talent filled and energetic ministry among us to an end so quickly, or in the case of Fr Ben some might question the purpose of his ordination as priest when he was already physically unable to carry out much of what we might expect a priest to be able to do.

In the middle of all our questions we have to always keep before our minds that God says “my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways” (Isaiah 55:8). God does not act according to human criteria, He is not interested in “success” according to human terms.

We see this most clearly in the events we enter into at Easter when, far from “succeeding” in His ministry Jesus is rejected by the people that He so dearly loved and whom He had spent his efforts trying to serve. Eventually He was put to death on the Cross as the most despised of criminals.



and again at the Holy Mass.

Each and every time we attend Mass we come into the presence of Christ’s total gift of himself to the Father on our behalf. More than this (if there could possibly be more), we are not just permitted to experience again this outpouring of the Lord in His Body broken for us and His Blood poured out for us, but we are also invited to take part in the Sacrifice.

At the Mass, our deepest participation does not consist in what words we say or what ministry we perform but in the generosity with which we unite our lives to the Sacrifice being offered on the Altar. In this way everything in our life becomes of enormous value: all our joys and sufferings, all our achievements and all our failures, all of it becomes absolutely vital and intrinsic to that one Sacrifice of Christ which has won salvation for the whole world. If we place all the areas of our life on the altar at Mass then, united with the Sacrifice, they are transformed and made holy.

We are still left of course with unanswered questions about why there is suffering in the world and why God allows things to work out the way they do. We might not know the answers to these questions until we can look at things in eternity. What we do know however is that everything in our life is of value and its value increases in accordance with the love and generosity with which we give ourselves to God.

When we realise this our criteria for judging worth and success becomes more in tune with that of God who gives the places of most importance in his Kingdom not necessarily to those who have financially flourished or who have achieved great fame but to those who have given of themselves, to those who have loved.

So, let us, the community of the Church hold as our greatest treasure those who suffer and those who are in need, those who in their own lives live perhaps in a far more perceptible way the Sacrifice of the Cross which is so necessary for the salvation of the world. And let us all know with confidence and joy the tremendously important role that each one of us plays in the mission of the Church.

The “usefulness” or fruitfulness of our lives cannot be judged by outward appearances but by the love and generosity with which the Christian unites himself or herself to the Sacrifice of Christ, made present for us at the Mass and lived out by each one of us every day upon the altar of our hearts.

NEWS

from

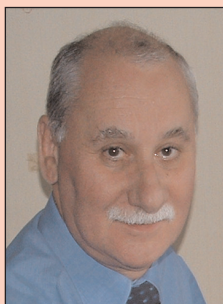
THE
CATHEDRAL
OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

Wenlock, the official mascot of the 2012 London Olympics Games, was a guest at the Narthex in February. The figure is now part of a fundraising campaign to support athletes going to the Rio Olympic Games in Brazil in 2016. The mythology of the figure is that it was carved out of the steel that made up the Olympic Stadium and was born when the last girder was fitted. The name is taken from the Shropshire town Much Wenlock who held an Olympics in 1850 from which the modern movement grew. Its eye is a camera and the unit on its head is based on the design for a London taxi. The figure is owned by investment and financial advisers Almary Green who have offices across East Anglia.

Ways to contact the editor

Thanks to everyone who sends in material most of which is used but please send pictures as files and do not include them inside documents.

Please give documents a descriptive name rather than just labelled diocesan article or news.



The current newspaper can be read online now at <http://www.bellcourtld.co.uk/>

Send material to Patrick Byrne
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Material this time must arrive by 28 March for the MAY 2013 issue.



The new lighting reveals much more of the detail in the cathedral at ground level and in the vault over the nave

Lights reveal character

The first phase of the project to renew and update the lighting in St John the Baptist Cathedral has been completed.

Different types and sizes of light bulbs have been installed to bring out the architectural character of the building and to highlight its many varied features.

Deacon Pat Limacher who oversaw the project said the amount of light inside the building when the system was fully on had increased by over a third.

This had been calculated using the

technical definitions of light.

"Light is measured in lumens and the original system gave out about 80 to 85 but now it is up to about 100 to 110.

"It is also a better type of light because it has been adapted to suit the environment."

Light is also defined in temperatures on the Kelvin scale with 3,000 degrees being neutral and 8,500 degrees as almost daylight.

Light is also directed upwards on to the vault over the nave from where it is reflected downwards.

Spotlights also point downwards towards the pews and this has increased the overall amount in the cathedral.

In the Walsingham Chapel the lights

directed towards the altar are almost vertical and this has brought out many of the colours previously lost in shadows.

The rood arch above the high altar has also been lifted with lights bringing out the shapes of the figures much better.

Patrick said lower temperature light is given out by bulbs directed at features which have a lot of colour and this makes the details stand out.

Overall the project has reduced the consumption of electricity by two thirds in kilowatt hours but with the price of energy increasing so much recently it has had less of an impact on the budget and financial cost.

Monthly prayer for vocations

The Cathedral is to mark the first Friday of the month with a special Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

People will be invited to pray for vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life and for the needs of the diocese.

The period of Adoration will begin after the 10am Mass and conclude at 4pm.

Antonia Moffat from the Walsingham parish first discussed this idea with both Fr James Walsh and Fr David Bagstaff after the Mass for the Opening of the Year of Faith.

"In order for this grace of intercessory prayer to become a reality we need to ensure that at least two adorers are present before the Blessed Sacrament at all times," she said.

"The length of the Adoration will depend on this.

"Initially I am prepared to find people for the rota through inviting individuals and prayer groups throughout the diocese to consider an occasional or monthly Pilgrimage to our Mother Church in Norwich.

"Long term, based on the example of Carfin, the National Shrine of Our Lady in Scotland, I hope that individual parishes or deaneries would take on the privilege of ensuring the rota was covered.

"If all Parishes became involved then it would mean one day every few years which makes it possible and not too heavy a responsibility on any one Parish or Group.

"My email contact address is: antonia4161@gmail.com."

Talk on importance of Romero relics

The third annual Romero lecture will focus on *Oscar Romero - the Witness and his Relics* and is to be held at the Narthex on Tuesday 19 March at 7.30pm with free admission and refreshments.

The speaker will be Jan Graffius, Curator of Collections at Stonyhurst College.

Since 2007 Jan has also been involved with The Romero Trust preserving the vestments and possessions of the late Archbishop murdered in his cathedral in San Salvador in 1978.

She will be considering the life and importance of the late Archbishop Romero through the medium of his possessions, also drawing parallels with The English Martyrs.

Craftsmanship in carvings of stations



Many visitors to the cathedral admire the carvings for the Stations of the Cross on the pillars each side of the nave.

The Cathedral Guide reveals they were carved by the Ferdinand Stuflessner company of Ortesei in Italy and were installed along the aisles in 1971.

A number of the statues in the cathedral - St John the Baptist, Our Lady, the Sacred Heart and St Joseph were also carved by the company's craftsmen at the instigation of Canon McBride.

Patrick Limacher's son mounted the carvings on the wooden plaques when they were moved to the pillars in April 2006.

Praying or following the Stations of the Cross is a common Lent devotion. Perhaps this year people could visit the Cathedral not only to admire the quality of craftsmanship but the remember the Lord's last journey carrying the His Cross.

BUILDING BRIDGES in the Holy Land

Plea for help to renovate an Old People's Centre in Taybeh

Every year the Diocese has taken on a project to support the work of the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem as part of the Building Bridges twinning with the Holy Land. Last year over £7,000 was donated to enable the parish in Kerak, Jordan, to repair their cemetery.

Fr Humam, the General Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem has written this article to ask for support and help this year, for the renovation of the Old People's Centre in Taybeh.

Taybeh is a Palestinian village located 30 kilometers north-east of Jerusalem, inside the occupied territories of the West Bank, and 60 kilometers from Amman in Jordan. The village has an overall population of around 1300, all Christian, with Latin, Orthodox and Greek Catholic rites. Located on one of the highest places of the country above the Jordan valley, at the boundary between Samaria and Judea, you can spot from distance its square houses, its three church towers and the ruins of the Boniface de Montferrat's crusader castle. The site is mentioned in the Bible and recent research identifies Taybeh as biblical Ofrah (Efron or Ephraim).

There are 192 families in the parish and the church has many spiritual and social activities which enable every member of the society to participate and share the faith and experience. The young are represented in scouts groups for both boys and girls and Christian Youth of varying ages. Taybeh Parish runs a secondary school as well as a Kindergarten it has a Parish Synod Committees and the Christian Ladies Associations.

All these activities include more than 900 people. The Latin parish in Taybeh is considered one of the most active parishes in voluntary work as well as in initiating several projects and programs that target the elderly, the youth as well as in creating and supporting small industries and crafts.



Emigration has left many older people without support

Taybeh has three churches (Latin, Greek Catholic and Orthodox). It has been estimated that 7000 of the original population of Taybeh now lives overseas. The largest Diaspora is in the United States of America. There is also a large group of Taybeh indigenous in Amman Jordan, and small communities in Canada, Australia, and the Arab Gulf States. This is similar to the history of emigration among Christians throughout the Holy Land and has negatively affected the Christian community of Taybeh which endeavors endlessly to maintain its diminishing number of parishioners at the all church levels.

The local church, being socially and spiritually responsible for the wellbeing of its community, has increased its pastoral responsibility to create programs for the community at different age levels including seniors to decrease the poverty level among families who are unemployed and ultimately providing a decent living condition.

As a result of the emigration of the younger generation and other factors, the demography is rapidly changing where the number of seniors is increasing and are left without support

for the basic needs for various reasons including the low income generation by family members, insufficient income surplus by migrants who live and work in different cities and countries to transfer money to their senior parents, no retirement payments and pension allowance systems are existed for seniors in Palestine to ensure they are taken care of similar to systems in other countries.



The residents make good use of a garden at the centre

A few years ago the St Ephraim Centre for the Elderly was opened in Taybeh composing of two floors comprising of 13 rooms with two beds along with auxiliary facilities such as dining area, living area, bathrooms as well as TV and leisure room in each floor. The centre is equipped with one kitchen with limited space and equipment and has a small kitchenette at the basement.

The pharmacy is part of a multi-function small room that caters for the storage of medicine, examinations, as well as additional stage for food since the kitchen is not well equipped and does not have high storage capacity. The Chapel is at the centre of the ground floor and overlooks the heights of Taybeh. The basement has direct access to the back garden a place that is frequently used by the senior citizens even though mobility to and from the ground floor to the basement is not suitable and safe for them to use.

Three nuns of the "Daughters of Our Lady of Sorrows" congregation came to take care of the home and its pensioners. Their experience in assisting seniors is an invaluable asset.

The objective is to support the social outreach work of the centre in cooperation with the local churches and outreach to all senior citizens in the town regardless of income, gender, or social status; and help bring a spirit of care for others. The project would offer healthier living conditions and day care services including nutrition, medical care, and other social and cultural support services that are presently only offered eight hours per day, three days per week for the 30 residents of the centre. It would also offer an additional 13 permanent jobs created in the local community, 80% of which would be filled by women.

The existing activities of the centre include a daily hot meal, monitored by a nutritionist; the meals are cooked according to a nutrition plan developed by Volunteers as well as local cooks to cater for the individual needs and diets of the residents. A medical check-up is being performed once a month for each resident; this includes a general check-up, blood pressure screening, ear examinations, Nutrition sessions, Weight Monitoring, Diabetes, and mental health counselling.



Financial help is needed

While maintaining the existing services and activities above the Latin Patriarchate is proposing the following to undertake the necessary upgrading of the centre in three phases, over a one year timescale. This will provide the residents with more space and better resources. Specifically the plans include the provision of social services including recreational, health and social activities that renders the daily life at the centre more inclusive and supportive.

An upgrade of the clinic area to provide personalised medical care and attention, along with a refurbishment of the main kitchen and laundry area. The project also includes the remodelling of part of the ground floor to allow easier access and better use of space as well as providing safety and ease of access equipment in all areas of the centre.

The total project cost is £166,600 and any help or assistance which from our friends in the Diocese of East Anglia will be greatly appreciated. The work will be undertaken by local labour and materials will be sought from the locality to ensure that the project not only benefits the residents, but also the people and workers of Taybeh and the region."

Gifts towards this project can be sent to the Finance Office at the White House. For more information, please contact Fr Paul Maddison: pm@palestinepilgrimage.org.uk

CAN YOU HELP?

Our two 'Building Bridges' projects this year are supporting Fr Manoj's work to rebuild the church of St Andrew in Nikum, and renovating the Taybeh Old People's Centre.

Would you like to support these projects? Cheques should be made payable to the 'RC Diocese of East Anglia'.

First Name.....

Surname.....

Title (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, etc)

Address.....

.....

.....

Postcode..... Amount enclosed.....

Anything you give will be divided equally between Cambodia and the Holy Land, unless you indicate below by ticking one or other that all your money should go to that project:

CAMBODIA (Nikum church)

HOLY LAND (Taybeh Centre)

GIFT AID DECLARATION (if appropriate)

I wish the RC Diocese of East Anglia to reclaim tax on this donation. I have paid an amount of UK Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the tax amount claimed by all the Charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) to whom I have donated in that tax year.

Only tax arising from Income or Capital Gains applies to Gift Aid. Other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify.

Signed.....

Date.....

Please send to:

'Building Bridges', 21 Ugate, Poringland,
Norwich, NR14 7SH
Registered charity no. 278742

Come to celebrate Year of Faith

A 'Celebrate Weekend' is to be held in Bury St Edmunds on 13 and 14 April, one of many organised in various locations across England and Wales over the past five years.

For the first time one is being held in East Anglia and it will offer inspirational teaching, worship before the Blessed Sacrament, good music, a variety of workshops, confession and Holy Mass on both days.

"Celebrate Weekends are a "faith-filled and fun family event" because every age group is catered for, with age appropriate groups, called streams, organised by those experienced in leading children. (All helpers are CRB checked)," Philip Walters who is helping organise the event with his wife Rosemary said.

Christian Mahony, who took his family to a Weekend in Wales last year reports: "It was heart warming to see so many families present, as well as

people of every age.

"Any formality was quickly dispelled by some really good music. This was a great way of joining the community of all those present by together praising God."

"Our own weekend will be held in the lovely venue of St Benedict's High School that allows space and facilities to cater for our different needs, Philip said. "While the children are at their streams, inspirational speakers inform and encourage those in the hall.

The speakers include David Payne, who is well known in many parishes for his appearances on CaFE resources which are used for faith exploration.

Families and friends come together for mealtimes (hot evening meal is included in the price of the weekend) and for celebration of Mass, when children from many of the streams play a special part.

Fr David Bagstaff is main celebrant at Mass on Saturday and Mgr Tony Rogers on Sunday.

On Saturday afternoon there will be a choice of workshops by the main speakers and others.

These are an opportunity for extra teaching where you have a choice of

which one to attend. They are normally quite informal and are open to questions.

The Westminster Diocese Year of Faith booklet recommends attending a Celebrate Weekend as one of four special events to take part in for the Year of Faith.

"We are delighted to be able to offer the experience of a Celebrate Weekend to our diocese as a way of deepening our faith and celebrating the riches of the Catholic Church," Philip said.

"But is advisable to book early as places are limited."

Commenting on what he gained from the weekend, Christian Mahony said, "The mixture of colourful music over the course of the two days, coupled with inspirational talks, gave us all a real and tangible experience of the Holy Spirit."

For more details or to book: www.celebrateconference.org where you may download a booking form or contact Philip on 07910157584.

The weekend is non residential, but if you want information about overnight accommodation in Bury, tick the box on the booking form.



Ian Boast and Fr David Jennings from Great Yarmouth parish with tooth brushes taken to Cambodia where there is a lack of dental care and everyone has a sweet tooth.

Scouts mark 50th anniversary

The 7th Norwich St George's Scout Group is celebrating its 50th Anniversary. Founded on 19 February 1963 by Fr Anthony Roberts the troop aimed to mark the occasion with a special Mass and parade. On Saturday 15 June they are holding a party and reunion to which past and present members are invited. Information from Gillian Hanley (Chairperson) 01603 401850 or Diane Newson (GSL)



Dorothy Rose, Marguerite Wayling, Una McWeeny, Janet Hatton, Margaret Rose and Josephine Sillett from the Costessey Union of Catholic Mothers after receiving their 40 years service certificates.

Book marks 250 years of history at Bury

A special book of the history of St Edmunds Parish in Bury St Edmunds has been produced to mark its 250th anniversary.

In 1755 a Jesuits priest Fr John Gage first came to Bury St Edmunds where he celebrated Mass in secret in a local house. It was illegal for Catholics to openly profess their faith.

His mother, Elizabeth Gage died in 1759 but bequeathed a house in Westgate Street in which was created a Chapel to the rear, out of sight of the road, the first Mass being celebrated there on 8 December 1762.

Fr Gage and successive Jesuit priests continued the ministry in the Chapel and it became legally licensed by magistrates in 1791.

With the population growing, the large adjoining Church was built in 1837 and the Jesuits continued their Ministry in the town until 1929.

Meanwhile the Chapel reverted to the house until the late 1970s.

The feast of the Immaculate Conception on Saturday 8 December again held great significance for local parishioners because it marked the completion of restoration of the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Fr David Bagstaff, Diocesan Administrator, presided at the Mass which was concelebrated by past and present clergy of the parish including a representative of the Society of Jesus.

During the Mass the Chapel was blessed.

A congregation of around 200 people included invited guests and those from the many groups within the parish.

Fr Philip Shryane acknowledged the craftsmanship which had preserved the beauty of the chapel whilst making it more accessible to those with disability.

Fr Philip said: "Over the years when the Chapel had not been used, it had served as a storeroom, a kitchen and a sitting room.

"It is now used for weekday Mass and is a place of adoration and quiet prayer for parishioners and visitors with the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle."

Music for the occasion was provided by the traditional choir and young musicians.

Following Mass, a reception was held in the Crypt, itself a community venue that has been part of the programme of restoration that aims to raise an overall sum of £500,000.

The history of St Edmund's and a description of the chapel and its artefacts is covered in a booklet 'The Present from Our Past' by its history group and obtainable at £4.50 (postage and packing extra) on 01284 767894.



Sarah Ebelewicz and Jo Anderton, above and below some of the activities in Tambogrande



Life with sisters in Peru

Jo Anderton and Sarah Ebelewicz went to Peru in September on a fact finding trip to Tambogrande, a parish that has been twinned with St John the Baptist Cathedral parish for many years.

They met the people sponsored by the parish and saw firsthand how money was spent, whilst spending time with hosts The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.

Jo said: "Our home was in a village about 30 minutes drive from Tambogrande, the principal town in the district of the same name situated in the Piura province four degrees south of the equator and 68 metres above sea level."

Jo and Sarah were escorted around the district of Tambogrande, about the size of Norfolk with about 100 villages, by Srs Marleny and Marie-Laure.

"We were made very welcome and they were grateful for the longevity of the support from our parish and for the efforts we made to visit them," Jo said.

"The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur have had a convent in Tambogrande town since the late 1970's and we've been supporting them for all of that time."

The sisters run a family faith programme assisted by a team of lay catechists.

Sr Marie-Laura from Belgium is a director in the Fe Y Alegria school network in Malingas, Tambogrande where 2433 children are currently receiving education in 37 schools.

"They range from a tiny nursery established in someone's house to a large agricultural secondary school with a newly built reservoir, bee hive, vegetable beds, mango and lime trees.

The two gained an insight into life in Peru and of how the money was spent to help the people.

Yearbook full of interest

The Diocesan Yearbook is now on sale in parishes providing information on Catholic life in East Anglia.

The book looks forward to the celebrations and events that will take place in this Year of Faith and it looks back to record some of the achievements of last year.

These include ordinations or priests, pilgrimages, the Chrism Mass and other diocesan events.

It also records some sad occasions like the death of Bishop Michael and the loss of priests who had served the diocese so well over many years.

In the foreword Diocesan Administrator Fr David Bagstaff sets the scene.

"From conversations with other people it would appear that the Year of Faith has captured the minds and imagination of many Catholics.

"It was certainly heartening at the meeting of our own Diocesan Council of Laity meeting last November to see that parishes across the diocese have drawn plans for a whole variety of celebrations, events, pilgrimages and discussions during the coming year."

The yearbook also contains a lot of useful information about diocesan commissions, the parishes, groups that are active across East Anglia, schools, hospitals and chaplains, organisations for which extra collections are made and details of the pastoral plan.

The yearbook combines a realistic picture of Catholic life in East Anglia with a reference book and source of information.