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FREE

Catholic East Anglia

Newspaper of the Diocese of East Anglia

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Diocese celebration marks 40th anniversary



The Thanksgiving Mass at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich.

An historic day for East Anglia

Around 1,500 people, many of whom came from the 50 parishes of the Diocese of East Anglia, marked its 40th anniversary in the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich on Friday, June 3, with the celebration of a Mass of Thanksgiving. Keith Morris reports.

The preacher was Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster and the chief celebrant was the Bishop of East Anglia, the Rt Rev Alan Hopes.

Cardinal Nichols said: "The Cathedral houses the images of three East Anglian saints of the first millennium: St Felix, St Etheldreda and St Edmund: a bishop, an abbess and a king. They remind us that faith in these parts is as old as the hills. And they offer us a challenge to

be diligent in our mission to live out the faith, playing our part in the continuing story of Christianity in East Anglia now and into the future."

The Solemn Diocesan Mass was presided over by the Bishop of East Anglia, the Rt Rev Alan Hopes, who said: "In the 2,000 year history of our Church, our 40 years may seem rather small and insignificant but, of course, these few years mark not only a beginning but also a fruition of a long period of evangelisation and Christian witness in this part of England.

"Over the past 40 years, the Diocese has made its mark in the life of the whole Christian community, in its involvement with and outreach to the neediest and most vulnerable in our society. The Catholic community has played its full part in working together and co-operating with other Christians, especially in seeking the common good of all."

Other guests at the Mass included the Papal Nuncio (the Pope's representative in the UK), the Archbishop of Southwark (a former bishop of East Anglia), together with six other bishops, as well as local civic and religious leaders representing each area of the diocese which covers Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambs and Peterborough.

The Diocese came into existence 40 years ago, when Pope Paul VI approved the creation of the Diocese of East Anglia, and, on June 2, 1976, Bishop Alan Clark was installed as its first bishop. At the same time the church of St John the Baptist in Norwich became a Cathedral church, one of the largest in the country.

The congregation enjoyed a reception after the Mass and a special piece of anniversary birthday cake.

■ More pictures and thoughts from Bishop Alan - page 16.



Pope Francis offers prayers

■ Pope Francis has offered his prayers and support for the Diocese of East Anglia, as it celebrates its 40th anniversary.

Apostolic Nuncio to the UK, Archbishop Antonio Mennini, pictured above (on left) with Bishop Alan and Cardinal Nichols, brought Pope Francis' message of support and prayers to the Thanksgiving Mass, and it was then read out at Masses across the Diocese.

The Nuncio also presented a Year of Mercy medal from Pope Francis, which will be displayed at the Cathedral.

The Pope's message reads: "His Holiness prays that you may all be renewed in your love of Christ and, in turn, revitalize your parishes, so that all may be 'a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey and a centre of constant missionary outreach' (Evangelii Gaudium 28). In this way, you will manifest God's love and mercy to the broader community and share the richness of our faith in Christ Jesus. Commending the Diocese of East Anglia to the loving protection of Our Lady of Walsingham, Pope Francis willingly imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of peace and joy in the Lord."

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news in brief

Thousands due at Clare Craft Fair

■ Thousands of visitors are expected at this year's fund-raising Clare Priory Craft Fair in Suffolk, on July 9 and 10, when more than 130 exhibitors will be demonstrating and displaying a wide range of traditional and contemporary arts and crafts, as well as flowers and plants, and artisan food and drink.

Organiser Bernard Rushton, said: "For the children there will be Punch and Judy, a magician, face-painting and a daily children's raffle. Plus all-day breakfasts and hot food, a licensed bar, refreshment tent, live music, and barbershop singers and Morris dancers on both days."

This is the Clare Priory Craft Fair's 24th year, Bernard adds: "Over the past ten years we have donated around £100,000 to a range of charities."

Visitors to the Fair will be offered free guided tours of Clare Priory's newly extended and award-winning church.

www.clarepriory.org.uk

£1500 for charity

■ Over £1500 has been raised to help Colombian street children through charity Let the Children Live at a musical extravaganza at the Holy Family Catholic church in Gaywood, King's Lynn on May 14.

Let the Children Live was founded in 1982 by Norfolk priest Fr Peter Walters. It has its roots in Colombia in South America and its aim is to safeguard the lives of children in the country's city streets and shanty towns.

Touched by the plight of these vulnerable children a fundraising event was organised by a parishioner Mary Purslove and a great gathering of local musicians and generous folk at Holy Family church in Gaywood.

The concert was compered by a fine double act "Little and Large" - better known as Canon Peter Rollings and Fr Henry Whisanent. St Martha's School Choir, Rock Choir, vocalist Louise Smith accompanied by Phil Mansell on the guitar, Flukes Ukulele Band and Springwood High School Big Band all gave accomplished performances.

www.letthechildrenlive.org

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Articles and photographs for the next edition are very welcome and should be sent to the editor, ideally via email, by the deadline of August 1.

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Training the priests of tomorrow

The Catholic Church in East Anglia is living in very exciting times. The number of men considering the call to the priesthood is growing. This is a blessing, following many years of dedicated and faithful prayer.

Fr Henry Whisanent, who was ordained in 2013, answers some key questions about the formation process. He also highlights how the collective support of parishes through Alive in Faith is helping to ensure our seminarians will receive the best possible preparation.

■ Tell us about the students in formation for our Diocese.

■ We currently have eight seminarians and two more have been accepted to start their studies. These men come from a variety of backgrounds but they all have a sense that Jesus Christ is calling them to be his priests here in East Anglia.

There are also around ten men discerning whether they might be called to priesthood. The vocations team meets them regularly to assist them on their



journey before they apply for a place at seminary.

■ What happens at the seminary?

■ The seminary is a time for us to be formed for the apostolic life to which Christ calls us. This involves many different dimensions. Most importantly, we have the time to be formed in prayer, so that when we speak of God's love to others we speak of that "which we have seen and heard", as St John says.

We study philosophy and theology so that we can know who God is and his divine plan for our world, and share this good news with others. We focus on our human development - how we relate to others in the community, take on leadership roles, and live in a positive way to the gift of celibacy to which we are called.



Paul Spellman receives the Holy Scriptures at the Pontifical Bede College in Rome.

Rome trio are now Lectors

Three first year seminary students from the Diocese of East Anglia were instituted as Lectors at the Pontifical Bede College in Rome on Wednesday May 11.

Michael Brookes, Alan Hodgson and Paul Spellman received the first of the Lay Ministries, which are part of the path towards ordination as priests, at a Mass celebrated by Canon Philip Gillespie, the Rector of the College.

At their institution they knelt to receive a copy of the Holy Scriptures, entrusted with the mission of handing on the Word of God with the words: "Take this book of Holy Scriptures and be faithful in handing on the Word of

God, so that it may grow strong in the hearts of His people."

Fr Gerry Quigley and Canon Mark Hackeson from Bury St Edmunds were present for the occasion along with East Anglia's fourth seminary student in Rome, Piotr Wygnanski, who is just completing his second year at the Venerable English College.

The joy of the Mass spilled over into an excellent celebratory dinner in the College Refectory. Both Fr Gerry and Fr Mark were impressed by the joyful commitment of the new Lectors as they move to the end of their first year of formal studies for the priesthood.

Finally, we have pastoral experiences in parishes, schools, prisons and hospitals, so that we have a rounded understanding of the daily life of a priest.

■ How is Alive in Faith strengthening this vital part of the life of our Church?

■ Because the seminary process is a long and integral one, training is expensive. The priesthood is a commitment for life, so the training needs to match the seriousness of such the calling, just as doctors would spend five or six years training for their vocation.

There is clear support for our seminarians through Alive in Faith. Thanks to the commitments of almost 1,500 parishioners we know that we can already train our current students for the next three years. The generosity of people through this campaign allows us to properly address the formation of future priests and therefore the future vitality of our Diocese.

■ *Alive in Faith is a special initiative that is being shared with all parishioners. Fifteen parishes have led the way and ten more are playing their part now. The campaign is making great progress, but there is still some way to go. To find out more, please visit*

www.rcdea.org.uk/alive-in-faith

Media workshop produces results

■ A workshop in Beccles gave a group of Diocese of East Anglia parishioners from the Lowestoft deanery some tips on getting their parish events featured in the local press and the chance to discuss the opportunities working with the media can give.

During the evening, Keith Morris, the diocesan director of communications, explained what makes a good news story; how to write one and then get it published.

The group of parish reps for New Evangelisation and parish press officers discussed how to make best use of parish websites and how to share information with other Catholics across East Anglia using the diocesan newspaper and social media.

Brigid Rawlinson, a parishioner from Beccles, said: "The evening shone a light into the world of journalists and it will help me communicate with them."

Laurette Burton, from Southwold, agreed: "It was very helpful and will help my parish get the widest possible publicity for our 100th anniversary events this year," she said.

The Beccles workshop has produced results already. A story about Bungay parishioner Mary Kirk's 2,000-km pilgrimage on foot to Rome was featured in local newspapers and the national Catholic press. An article about Kittiwakes nesting at Lowestoft church produced a great centre spread in the EDP and Lowestoft Journal.

The April evening was the first deanery media workshop coordinated by the Diocesan Commission for New Evangelisation. Commission coordinator, Rebecca Bretherton, said: "Having a presence in our local papers and online creates an opportunity to share stories of our Catholic life and mission with others. We will be arranging more workshop evenings across the diocese."

Fire of Holy Spirit paints church red

■ It was a case of painting the church red at Our Lady Star of the Sea in Lowestoft on Pentecost Sunday, May 15.

The church has recently started a tradition of everyone wearing something red for Pentecost, to signify the coming of the fire of the Holy Spirit, according to Deacon Revd Stephen Pomeroy.

“St Mary’s school singers and the First Communion class came together to celebrate Pentecost with prayers in six different languages, sharing the gifts of the Spirit and a celebratory shared lunch with traditional foods from around the world.

“There were red balloons and, of course, a specially-made Pentecost cake was enjoyed by everyone.”



Bishops mark St Walstan’s 1000th

By Keith Morris

The 1000th anniversary of the death of Norfolk saint, Walstan, has been marked by a weekend of celebrations at Bawburgh near Norwich, culminating in an open-air service led by the Anglican Bishop of Norwich and the Catholic Bishop of East Anglia on May 29.

The celebration of the life of St Walstan, the patron saint of food and farming, was held in his believed birthplace, Bawburgh. It also included a medieval pilgrimage and a three-day flower festival.

Around 150 people gathered for the open-air service on Sunday evening, near to Bawburgh’s St Mary and St Walstan church and St Walstan’s Well.

Bishop of Norwich, Rt Rev Graham James, spoke about pilgrimage: “Bawburgh was a place of pilgrimage in Medieval England, along with Walsingham and Canterbury - a place where people came to be near to someone who had lived a life of great devotion to God. The waters which sprang up at the time of Walstan’s death were said to have healing properties.

“In the New Testament, the image of pilgrimage is used to describe the Christian life itself. Like Christians in Bawburgh 1000 years ago, we are still here on the pilgrim journey, inspired by a holy life lived in this locality. We come on life’s journey and reflect on the greater pilgrimage to what we hope and pray will be our home in heaven,” said Bishop Graham.

Bishop of East Anglia, Rt Rev Alan Hopes, said Walstan was born into a wealthy family but renounced all the rights to that wealth so that he might work as a farm labourer.

“Walstan was a man in love with Jesus Christ. His example of holiness was lived not in any dramatic or extraordinary way but in the simple realities of life – that is what holiness is all about. He lived a simple life close



Bishop Alan Hopes and Bishop Graham James lead the procession to Walstan’s Well (pictured inset).

to the land and realised that this was the way he must serve God.

“Walstan was also known for his generosity to the poor, offering them food and clothing, even his own shoes, to those in need – often going without himself. We are all called to holiness and we can fulfil this by being a people of sacrificial service – for in that one person we meet who is in need, we will find the person of Jesus Christ himself.

“As we celebrate the 1000th anniversary

of St Walstan’s death, let us go away from here today learning from his example that even in the simple realities of life he was deeply immersed in the things of God. Let us follow his example, so that all of us in our different circumstances may meet Jesus Christ and grow in our relationship with him. Because then, through our lives, he will touch the lives of all those whom we meet,” said Bishop Alan.

news in brief

Clergy study day on The Joy of Love

■ Nearly 50 clergy members, serving or retired, religious or diocesan, gathered together at St John the Baptist Cathedral in Norwich on Wednesday May 25 to study the post-synodal apostolic exhortation ‘Amoris Laetitia’.

Fr Alban McCoy OFM Conv, Dean of St Edmund’s College in Cambridge, summarised the 160-page document, giving very good food for thought and discussion. He said the exhortation is an invitation to value marriage, preserve love, and be a sign of mercy where family life is imperfect.

The conversation was smoothly facilitated by Deacon John Bell. A lot of participants voiced their personal views or asked various questions. Canon Simon Blakesley and Canon Mgr Eugene Harkness helped to answer those cases concerning the Canon Law.

Bishop Alan added that, though the law of the Church is universal, various interpretations of the Church’s teaching, differently suited to different cultures are possible. It is quite important with our Diocese because we have so many peoples from different nations and ethnic backgrounds.

The Bishop also reminded the priests and deacons that each of them has been given a copy of the document. It is essential that they read it slowly, especially chapter 1-4, rather than jump straight to Chapter 8 which is a challenge to everyone.

First for Walsingham

■ A first-ever National Marriage & Family Life Pilgrimage weekend will be hosted at the Basilica of Our Lady of Walsingham from August 12 to 14.

Organiser Sam Lidgley said: “The event aims to celebrate, support and promote marriage and the family. It will be a fun-packed weekend with an opportunity to deepen our understanding of marriage and family life in the world today.

“It will be a relaxed weekend for the whole family. The Shrine will provide a place to camp and a general schedule for activities, workshops and liturgical celebration. There is no charge for the weekend and all welcome.”

There will be a special blessing for all married couples by Mgr John Armitage on Saturday August 13.

For further details, please email family@walsingham.org.uk

Marian pilgrims

■ Almost 200 people attended the annual Marian Pilgrimage to Clare Priory in honour of Mary Mother of Good Counsel on Sunday May 8. Pilgrims came from Birmingham, Hoxton in London, Hythe and from places closer to Clare.

They joined parishioners at the Priory on a beautiful, warm, sunny day. The spiritual events were Rosary and Procession to the Shrine of our Lady of Good Counsel. There was then an opportunity to take part in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This was followed by a picnic in the grounds of the Priory. Finally, there was the Mass of the Ascension, in the new church. The principal celebrant was a Nigerian Augustinian, Fr Gabriel Tumba osa who is working in the Parish in Hoxton.

Fr Ian Wilson, Prior, of Clare Priory: “All who were there for the pilgrimage had a spiritually uplifting day as well as enjoying friendship and fun on a social level. God blessed all our efforts with endless sunshine and all returned to their homes safely.”



NEW EVANGELISATION

Marmalade helps spread the word

When Rebecca Bretherton met some members of the Cafod Group at St George's, Norwich, a chat about fundraising and marmalade-making became a conversation about living our lives as Christians and witnessing to our faith in the world.

■ **Carol Hipperson:** I'll start: I support Cafod because it's a Catholic charity and I'm confident that the money we raise gets to the people who need it through local partner agencies, rather than being spent on administration.

■ **Gloria Irons:** At the moment we are working for a community called Sebeya in Ethiopia. We have helped to build a school and are supporting Cafod to buy pipes to give people reliable water. Sebeya is suffering from climate change - the vegetation is disappearing and the wells are drying up. I was very moved to hear an Ethiopian priest say that in the UK the miracle is not so much that water comes out of our taps but that it flows every time we turn them on. We like to adopt a project so we can have a sense that the money is going to a particular community.

Cafod also supports communities to train their young people to have a sustainable future. Helping people is not just about emergency aid but giving something that can carry on helping. It restores people's self-respect. It must be devastating not to be able to feed your family.

■ **Gill Bannon:** We want things - they need things and that's such a big difference.

■ **What difference does it make to be part of a parish group?**

■ **Gill:** We have fun. We share the work between us and different people have a variety of skills and ideas to help. We are an informal group - no committees. We decide at the beginning of the year what we will do and then we do it!

■ **Carol:** I like the group because it is not all about giving money. I haven't got all the money that I would like to give to some of these projects but, as part of the



The Cafod Marmalade Ladies, from the left, Jenny Campling, Carol Hipperson, Gloria Irons and Gill Bannon.



group, I can give my time to make things happen.

■ **Jenny Campling:** Our group is successful because the parish supports us. We get the message out that we are called as Christians to help our brothers and sisters. This is our way to do that and help others do the same. Our fundraising is easy for everyone to join in. We have coffee after Mass. We have cake raffles, sell crafts and do all sorts of activities to raise money. Every year we have a coin trail on the paving outside church and people add small change. Children and people with very little money can have fun and support our project. Our message is that, even if you can only give a few pence - if everyone gives a few pence

- it makes a difference. Over about 30 years our parish has raised £75,000. That's a lot of pennies!

Our non-Catholic friends and family and local businesses get roped in to help too. People without faith can understand Cafod. We can show others that Catholics care about the world and people in difficulty. Any fundraising event is a chance to have an informal chat about the work Cafod does.

■ **Carol:** It is sometimes difficult for busy people to do fundraising and voluntary work. I couldn't do much before I retired. Once you start you get so much out of it. You are more aware and in tune with the world.

It's not just about fundraising either. In November we collected signatures after Mass as part of the Cafod lobby for the United Nations Climate Change summit in Paris. Our parishioners were able to be part of something much bigger.

■ **What part does your faith have with all this work for Cafod?**

■ **Gill:** It's at the core of being a Christian - caring for the world and other people. We take so much for granted. So many people are suffering while we grumble about the smallest things. It's scandalous really when you think how much people throw away here. Just imagine only having a single bowl of rice every day.

It breaks my heart to see starving children on the television. I want to pick them up and feed them but I can't. At least this way I can help someone else to feed them.

■ **So, what about the famous marmalade?**

■ **Gloria:** Well, it was something that happened by chance as I didn't have anything for a cake stall and took some marmalade instead. People loved it and I kept making it. Over 5,000 jars of marmalade have made about £10,000. The group does a lot more than marmalade but the success of the marmalade has been in the national papers and all publicity for Cafod is good news.

HOW TO...

A pop-up bookshop can help people deepen their faith.

In the latest of her series of How to... articles, Rebecca Bretherton has some tips for running a Pop Up Bookshop as an evangelising project for your parish.

Reading Christian books helps people deepen their relationship with Christ. We can encourage each other to learn more about our faith. Few parishes can afford to hold and manage the books people would like so a Pop Up Bookshop might be the answer.

■ **Decide when to hold the event.** People think about reading something for themselves or buying presents in Advent. Lent works too. Any Sunday is an opportunity.

■ **Approach your local Christian bookshop.** Many are already familiar with the idea. You are evangelising rather than profit making. Selling books for them to new customers

should appeal. About £300 worth of books is manageable.

■ **Advertise in your newsletter** for a fortnight so people know to bring their cash to church. Offer to order particular books.

■ **Set up before Mass** so people can browse and return to buy afterwards. Sell it as an exciting opportunity to buy books. Have at least two people with the stall to talk to potential customers. Make sure there is space for people to talk and the lighting is good.

■ **Don't be tempted to sell rosaries, cards etc.** That confuses the message that this a chance

to buy Christian books and to share our experiences as Catholics.

■ **People want to buy:** New missals, anything about Pope Francis, little prayer books to give as small presents. People want to share their faith; the bookshop gives them a practical way.

■ **People want to talk:** This isn't just about selling books; it's about starting conversations. Make sure you have enough helpers to chat to people about books they are reading. The bookshop gives a rare opportunity to talk informally about our faith to other parishioners.

Syro-Malabar style Marian celebration

Nearly 500 members of Syro-Malabar communities, Fr Philip John, clergy and friends, gathered together at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Peterborough, to celebrate the Marian month on Saturday May 14.

The celebration started at 10am with flag hosting in the church grounds, followed by the solemn Holy Qurbana and a procession along the roads in the Dogsthorpe area.

Canon John Minh, said: "The organisation of the festivities was fabulous. There were chosen men in high visibility vests to guide the participants, including many children, along the roads through the residential areas and the traffic along the main roads.

"Though the procession was about two miles long, there was no disruption to traffic or movement of local people. Actually, some residents came out of their houses to have a look at the procession; some of them even made the sign of the cross when they saw the statues of Our Lady of Lourdes and St Sebastian being carried across their houses.

"The participants of the procession sang religious hymns and said their prayers in the Malayalam language. From time to time a dozen of drummers, in traditional costumes, added their liturgical performance to the solemnity of the feast.

"It was very orderly and impressive, replete with Malayali banners, flags, and umbrellas," said Canon John

After the procession, people re-entered



Part of the Syro-Malabar procession in Peterborough.

Our Lady of Lourdes Church for the final prayers and blessing with the relics. Fr Adam Sowa, the Parish Priest of All Souls & Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, was

also present. He said he whole-heartedly enjoyed the Sneha Virunnu and had a long chat with people in the newly-refurbished hall.

A unique and much-loved Sr

■ Sister Wendy Renate SOLR from Walsingham died on March 23, aged 64, at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn, after a very short illness.

Sister Wendy Renate was born on January 13, 1952, into an army family. After leaving school and settling into Staine Cross in South Yorkshire, Sister Wendy worked in a rubber factory where she spent about 12 years making hot water bottles.

Throughout, her faith was growing and she began looking at the Church Army to see if this was where the Lord was leading her.

One day her parish priest suggested that she might have a vocation to the religious life and pointed her in the direction of The Society of St Margaret, an Anglican Order and she became a Sister, serving at the Anglican Shrine of Our Lady in Walsingham in the Sacristy and in the village community.

Six years ago she became a Catholic in Westminster Cathedral.

She spent two years in London after this, serving in the Parish of Our Lady, Limehouse, but she didn't really settle there and was thrilled to return to Walsingham to serve in the National Catholic Shrine in Walsingham as a member of the Sacristy team and praying with pilgrims and making people laugh or cry with her jokes and funny take on life.

She was unique and much loved by all she came into contact with her.

Mary's 2,000km trek

■ A 2,000 km pilgrimage from Canterbury to Rome is the epic challenge facing 69-year-old Mary Kirk, from Suffolk, who is walking in support of refugees "who are travelling in the opposite direction to escape war and horror", and for the homeless in the UK.

Mary, from the Parish of St Edmunds (Bungay) is an experienced pilgrim, although she has never undertaken anything quite so challenging as the walk through France, Switzerland and Italy. She started on Sunday May 1 and by June 13 had crossed into Italy.

The walk from Canterbury to Rome is a recognized route known as the Via Francigena.

"As a Catholic, Rome is one of the cradles of my faith, and the seat of the Church in which I have chosen to remain a worshipper, despite its failings," said Mary. "My Camino experience has taught me that walking through a country is an excellent way to meet



'real' people, taste life there without the trappings of tourism."

Mary said: "A pilgrimage is a journey to a place of spiritual importance and many who have done them will affirm that it is the process of travelling many hundreds, even

thousands, of kilometres that has the most profound and transformative effect on them – rather than the achievement of arrival. The journey is within ourselves."

You can follow Mary's progress at <http://quovadis-walkingtorome.uk>



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Church transformed

■ Bishop Alan visited Hunstanton Parish on May 9 to conduct a Blessing Mass at the refurbished parish church, during which he blessed all parts of the church. Ian Steel reports.

■ The Bishop was joined by other members of clergy including Very Rev Canon Peter Rollings (Parish Priest), Fr Henry MacCarthy, Fr Henry Whisenant, Fr Michael Ryan and former parish priest Fr James Fyfe.

The refurbishment included the creation of a much-needed new meeting/function room for parish use. This has a fully fitted kitchen adjoining the main room, and also includes toilets suitable for use by disabled members of the congregation and visitors. Bishop Alan was very impressed with the results of the refurbishment works.

The quality and overall appearance of the refurbishment work has been widely praised as reported by journalist John Maiden, writing in the Lynn News, he said: “It gives me enormous pleasure to say that the recent changes and refurbishment at the church have restored its character and appearance, so that it truly reflects its origins as a delightful example of



Arts & Crafts design and architecture..”

The parish is holding an open day on Saturday July 9, and will be inviting local residents and visitors to have a look around the church, see ‘before and after’ photographs, and enjoy some refreshments and a chat.

■ Pictured above is Bishop Alan with the team responsible for the transformation

of Our Lady and Saint Edmund’s, Hunstanton. Left to right: The Very Rev Canon Peter Rollins, Parish Priest, Gordon Gillick, (who designed the sanctuary and carried out the restoration and refurbishment of the High Altar and the church’s artworks), Bishop Alan, and John Fitt (who was responsible for the building work).

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Celebration of diversity

■ St Felix’ parish, Haverhill, has held a procession around the church grounds to celebrate the diversity of the parish and those who have recently received their first Holy Communion.

Held on the Feast of Corpus Christi, Sunday May 29, altars were set up at four stations by representatives of some of the communities within the

greater parish community. These were the Polish community, the Keralan community, the Filipino community and the African community.

Deacon Huw Williams, said: “Beautiful weather on the day and a large turnout by parishioners made for a wonderful expression of faith visible to the local community.”

Maria's journey of faith

On July 7, Maria Luis, from St Philip Howard in Cambridge, will begin her journey as a Postulant at Minster Abbey in Kent. Here is her vocation story.

I was born in Malaysia in 1969, where I spent my childhood and finished my primary and secondary education at the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus School.

There was a grotto with a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary near the entrance gates of the school and all through my days at the school, thoughts of becoming a religious would occasionally pop in and out of my head.

It was there in the background but I had a lot of growing up to do, both in terms of experiencing life and growing in my faith. My interest and desire for the religious life stayed quietly in the background. It was not something that I would speak about in my family.

My family are 'Sunday Catholics' and we did not spend much time on family prayer. On Sundays and Feast days, we would go to our local parish, The Church of The Visitation, where I went to Sunday classes, was baptized, prepared and received First Holy Communion and was confirmed. My faith was very weak, but somehow I held on to it.

Upon completion of my studies, I decided on nursing as my profession, and continued it for almost 24 years. I realise now that this was God's will for me at that time, as I was able to do as Christ said and to serve others, and to see Christ in the people around me (believe me, when I say that is not an easy thing to do without the Grace of God).

I worked as a nurse first in Sin-



itually empty. It felt like I was reaching rock-bottom - I felt like there was no God.

I made a promise to God there and then, that I would search for Him and asked that if He really did exist, then please at some point in my life to show me that He is with me. What I did not realise was that He was with me from the beginning.

Thus, my search began with me trying to go for daily mass and to receive Holy Eucharist as often as I can and attending frequent Bible studies. I also went for regular day and live-in retreats, Charismatic Renewal meetings, Life in the Spirit seminars, praise and worship and wearing the Brown Scapular.

I know that Our Blessed Mother has been guiding me and leading me to her Divine Son all my life and that she will never let me go

astray too far from her. She has and always will be there for me.

By God's grace, I was able to come over to the UK as I continued my work as a nurse. In doing so, God gave me the opportunity to continue my search for Him, opening new doors in my life.

In 2005, I went to spend a week at the Poor Clare's Convent guest house, in Arundel, East Sussex. It was brilliant; I enjoyed it very much, savouring the peaceful and prayerful atmosphere of the surrounding countryside.

I really liked the Franciscans for their vow of poverty. It was at Arundel that I asked one of the nuns to teach me how to use the Roman Liturgy of the Hours book - I now love it immensely.

I went on pilgrimages to Lourdes, Medugorje and to the Holy Land and during the last year or so, I have been thinking more and

more about my vocation to the religious life.

First though, I had to overcome the feeling of unworthiness and thoughts that seemed to constantly remind me that I had no right to even consider a vocation to the religious life, being the wretched sinner that I am. Spending time in front of the Blessed Sacrament was a blessing. Many tears flowed there in the presence of the Lord and also great healing.

For some unknown reason, I seem to have an attraction towards sacred liturgy and music of the Benedictines; even though for the life of me, I definitely cannot sing! St Benedict seems to have popped into my life from time to time, in forms of prayer cards and crucifixes and visits to Tyburn Convent.

Knowing that my parish priest, The Rt Revd Mgr Eugene Canon Harkness is a Benedictine Oblate, I decide that I would explore and discern if being an Oblate is God's Will for me (obviously, without telling him, I am such a coward!).

I found the Prinknash Abbey website and, after reading about their Oblates, I sent an e-mail to Fr Mark Hargreaves, OSB, about discerning my vocation as a Benedictine Oblate. However, by God's will, Fr Mark directed me towards Minster Abbey in Thanet, Kent which was much closer distance wise to Cambridge.

I made contact with the community at Minster Abbey, but never even got close to discussing my vocation as a Benedictine Oblate. Instead, the good Sisters felt that I should discern my vocation to the Enclosed Order.

For the past few months, I have gone to stay with the community for several weeks at a time, participating fully in community life. With the help of the Holy Spirit, I feel that this is where I belong and wish to explore further.

It does not matter if we take the straight road that God planned for each one of us or the road that is full of curves, bends and twist. If we listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit with the ears of our heart, then we will be led to the place where God desires for each one of us.



Above, Minster Abbey and, top right, Maria Luis.

gapore from 1994 onwards and then here in England from 2003 until now.

At some point during my time working in Singapore as a Mental Health Nurse, I started to feel spir-

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news in brief

Fr David was bon viveur and scholar

■ Fr David Skeoch died peacefully in the West Suffolk Hospital at Bury St. Edmunds during the late evening of Thursday March 10 and his Funeral Mass was celebrated in St Mary's Church on April 8.

Fr David, aged 78, was a renowned liturgist, a scholar and a bon viveur. As an Anglican, his most notable ministry was as Vicar of St Gabriel's, Pimlico, from 1983 until his retirement in 2007.

He had also served as chaplain to Bishop Graham Leonard, both in Truro and in London. In 2011 he responded to Pope Benedict's invitation and was received into the Catholic Church as part of the newly forming Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

He was ordained priest by Bishop Alan Hopes on June 15, 2011 and helped out in the churches around Ipswich. His many friends in the Catholic Church, the Church of England and beyond will mourn his passing from us.



Fountain turns red

■ A Cambridgeshire father and daughter have witnessed the famous Trevi Fountain in Rome turn red to symbolise the suffering of persecuted Christians throughout the world. On April 29, the iconic fountain was lit up in red by the charity Aid to the Church in Need and March parishioner Wilfrid Lockwood and his daughter Rebecca experienced the event while on holiday in Rome.

"It was very moving to hear the testimony of witnesses of deaths and persecutions in Kenya, Turkey and Pakistan," said Wilfrid.

"A sister from the Missionaries of Charity, the sisters of Mother Teresa, spoke about the four nuns of her congregation murdered in Yemen on March 4 this year. The Chaldean Catholic bishop of Aleppo in Syria, Antoine Audo, spoke movingly of the situation in Syria. While they spoke, we saw projected images of destroyed churches and images of some of the thousands of modern martyrs.

"The square in front of the fountain was packed as the dramatic red light turned the fountains blood red. It was spectacular."

Parish hall re-design

■ The long-awaited refurbished parish hall at Our Lady's Catholic Church in March will be handed back to the parish on Sunday May 15.

Redesigned by local architect Ted Brand, the hall now features a modern fully equipped kitchen, meeting rooms, toilets, office space and a fully upgraded large hall. The facility is fully accessible and connects directly with the church.

Parish Priest, Fr Paul Maddison, said: "As a parish we are delighted that the hall is shortly to be back in use and that we will have a modern, warm and inviting space for use not only by ourselves but by the wider community."

Classical concert

■ Award-winning soprano singer Emma Nuule, will be performing at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist on August 7. Emma, who sung in tribute of the Queen's birthday at City Hall in April will be performing a range of classical songs with pianist Will Fergusson supporting. The event starts at 6.30pm and tickets are priced at £10. The Narthex bar will be open for drinks in the garden.

www.sjbcathedral.org.uk

Annual Diocesan pilgrimage starts

People of pil

Celebrations to mark the 40th anniversary of the Diocese of East Anglia got off on the right foot when over 1,000 people joined the annual Diocesan Pilgrimage to the National Catholic Shrine at Walsingham on Bank Holiday Monday, May 2. Keith Morris reports.

The Pilgrimage began with the crowning with flowers of the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham by Bishop Alan Hopes in the Friday Market Place at the village of Walsingham, watched by pilgrims from right across the Diocese.

They were joined by a group of 150 plus young people who had spent the weekend at the Ignite Youth Festival in Swaffham. Around 60 of them had, that morning, walked six miles to Walsingham.

The procession set off along the Holy Mile to the Basilica and Catholic Shrine, accompanied by singing and reciting the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary.

Pilgrims then gathered outside the Sanctuary at Walsingham where Bishop Alan led a penitential service, followed by the sacrament of reconciliation and the opportunity for individual confession.

There was a lunch break and the opportunity to pass through the Holy Door at the Slipper Chapel before Bishop Alan led a Solemn Mass of Mary, Queen and Mother of Mercy with pilgrims both inside and braving some showery weather outside.

During his homily, Bishop Alan said: "The desire to share one's life with others and to share communion is at the heart of every individual life and in every generation. It is also at the heart of our Christian life. We are made for communion, for friendship. None of us should be alone in living the Christian life. Christian friendship is a grace of God we cannot afford to do without.

"Through the love and support of others we learn how to love and be loved by God. Mary knew this and the first disciples knew this, which is why they chose to live life in common and hold all things in common.

"This pilgrimage today is a wonderful opportunity to strengthen and encourage one another because on pilgrimage our faith is always buoyed up by the joy and faith and prayers of each one of us.

"This is even more so at World Youth Day, which takes place in Krakow at the end of July. Our young people will discover the beauty of their Catholic faith in a whole new way in communion with Pope Francis and millions of other young people from around the world," said Bishop Alan.

He then commissioned many of the young people and adults who will be attending the World Youth Day, before the concluding rites.

■ **For a full picture gallery of the pilgrimage visit www.rcdea.org.uk**



Moments from the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham.

What is the point of all

Fr Henry Whisenant looks at what it is to be a pilgrim.

■ "When England comes back to Walsingham, Mary will come back to England." Every year in May, our diocese pays heed to this century-old prophecy of Pope Leo XIII by embarking on a pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady at the Slipper Chapel.

In its heyday, Walsingham was one of the major shrines in Europe, along with Rome, the Holy Land, Santiago and Canterbury, so when we walk the Holy Mile from the village to the restored shrine we are walking a well-trod path.

Of course, Walsingham was not the only shrine in this diocese – pilgrims were spoilt for choice! There was the lavish Benedictine abbey of Bury St Edmunds, with the relics of St Edmund, king and martyr. There was the towering abbey church (now cathedral) at Ely, with the relics of its formidable foundress, St Etheldreda. Among the many Marian shrines in the area, there was that of Our Lady of Grace in Ipswich, which during the hapless events of the Reformation found a permanent refuge in Nettuno, Italy, hometown of St Maria Goretti.

So much of this was unfortunately lost, but some things survived, or were reinstated, and new shrines have arisen. The aforementioned Leo XIII restored the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in King's Lynn in

anniversary celebrations

grimage



these pilgrimage places?

REFLECTION

1897, and a guard of votive candles and sanctuary lamps burn before the pontifical statue to this day.

The hand of St Etheldreda can still be venerated in the Catholic parish church of Ely. Visitors to Clare's medieval priory can pray at the shrine of Our Lady of Good Counsel, established in the mid-20th century by the returning Augustinians. And of course, in this Year of Mercy, Bishop Alan has added two Holy Doors to the mix: one at our cathedral in Norwich, and one at the Slipper Chapel.

Some might ask: What is the point of all these pilgrimage places? Cannot God hear our prayers without them? Is his mercy confined to certain locations?

Of course God can hear and answer our

prayers anywhere – he is omnipotent and omnipresent. Shrines are not for his sake, but for ours. The desire to go to a shrine, the effort it takes to get there, the prayers that we say on the way... all of this disposes our hearts to receive the grace for which we are asking, just as our preparation for certain feasts in the Christian calendar (like the Lenten anticipation of Easter) prepares us to receive all the possible graces of that feast.

Feastdays and jubilee years help us open up to grace anew when we have started to flag in our day-to-day relationship with Christ. Shrines do the same... we could say that they are geographical jubilees!

So this year in particular, why not get out and start exploring the grace-studded backyard of East Anglia? There is mercy for the asking!



Children were still singing in the rain

■ **Torrential rain meant the traditional walk down the holy mile to the Catholic Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, which is an integral part of the annual East Anglia's Children's Pilgrimage on May 31, had to be cancelled for the first time ever, except for one brave group. But an indoor pilgrimage and Mass did go ahead. Organiser Chris Storman reports.**

■ We journeyed to Walsingham for our annual children's pilgrimage but, because of torrential and relentless rain, for the first time ever in our many years, the procession from the village to the shrine had to be cancelled.

One brave group from Costessey parish chose to walk the mile anyway and arrived very wet but very cheerful!

Fr Pat Cleary led an indoor procession around the Chapel of Reconciliation before the planned 12 noon Mass.

He invited the children to pray and sing, pausing at the altar and tabernacle for some extra interest and instruction and they thanked God for the rain as a real gift from God, even if we would have preferred it a different day.

The chapel was filled with happy people for the Mass, despite the weather.

Shrine Rector, Mgr John Armitage spoke to us about Mercy and how we are to practise it in our lives with small acts

performed with great Love, to make our world a better place.

He also mentioned our colourful altar front artwork declaring Mary Mother of Mercy, the shrine theme this year.

Bishop Alan then introduced the Holy Door theme and Pope Francis' wish for them to be used during the year.

We had our own Holy Door erected in the sanctuary, created by Jo Graham from the Cathedral parish and including beautiful stained windows by her daughter Emily (11).

Four large hearts were attached, bearing messages of Mercy (Hope, Love, Comfort and Forgiveness) and each child was given a smaller heart to hold, corresponding with the larger hearts.

Bishop Alan invited the children to bring their hearts to the altar, to walk through the Holy Door and place them into waiting baskets as their gifts of hope, love, forgiveness and comfort.

He encouraged them to practise these things on their return home, saying: "Do something good for God and something good for someone else today."

Children read our first reading and the Prayers of the Faithful and also brought up the offertory gifts during Mass.

We remained in the chapel to enjoy lunch and some visited the Slipper Chapel and the actual Holy door before returning home.

■ **See a full picture gallery of the event at: www.rcdea.org.uk**



Diocesan Schools in Focus



Chance to help school to mark its 50th birthday

St Benedict's Catholic School in Bury St Edmunds is preparing to celebrate its Golden Jubilee in January 2017.

The fiftieth anniversary of the school's opening falls in its first year as a full 11-19 school of some 900 students - more than 10 times the size of the school when it opened in January 1967.

Many of those first students have maintained their links with St Benedict's. Some have sent their own children to the school they went to themselves. Some have seen their grandchildren follow in their footsteps.

St Benedict's is keen to gather together memories of the school throughout its life, and also looking to put together a group of former students who will help current governors, staff and students plan the celebrations next January.

Some plans are already being made, but now, the school is seeking

help from its former members.

As headteacher Hugh O'Neill put it: "A Golden Jubilee is a very special moment, in a marriage, in a queen's reign, or in the life of a school. St Benedict's has come a long way, and many thousands of boys and girls have come here over those 50 years. We would like to gather memories, and make plans together."

If you were a former student of St Benedict's, or in some way connected to the school, St Benedict's is keen to hear from you.

You can get in touch via a special email address: enquiries@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk, or you can telephone or write.

"Over 50 years, St Benedict's Catholic School has gone from small beginnings to being one of the most successful schools in Suffolk. If you have travelled with us at any point on that journey, we'd love to hear from you," said Hugh.

Building bridges to engineering

■ St Mary's, Lowestoft is proud to be a part of a major project led by Lowestoft 6th Form College and the Royal Academy of Engineers to bring STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) into local schools.

The school recently had a visit from engineer Steve Smith who quickly transformed Year 3 and 4's classrooms into engineering workshops.

Headmaster Alex Savage, said: "Steve showed us how to build a variety of working models including electronic cars and cantilever bridges. It was a really inspirational experience that developed our teamwork and independent learning skills. One child summed it up by saying: 'I can believe that we can actually make this by ourselves.'"

"The next stage of the project is to purchase a class set of Lego Wedo so that we can create computer programs to run our own models," said Alex. "Perhaps we should bid to help build Lowestoft's third bridge!"

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Diocesan Schools in Focus

■ Norwich Lord Mayor, Brenda Arthur, visited St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School in Norwich at the end of April to present a trophy and a certificate to the Gardening Club for winning the Norwich in Bloom Daffodil Competition.

Mrs Reynolds, who runs the Gardening Club, showed them around the Growing Garden and thanked Andy Burton, Tim Hume and Anna Walker for all their help during the year, and Notcutts for donations of compost and seeds.

The Lord Mayor thanked the school for inviting her to open the garden and was amazed at how the garden had developed over the year. Then, with Cathy Gray, from Norfolk Plant Heritage, she officially opened it. The visitors were treated to afternoon tea and given a plant.



School team pilot Catholic Studies

The staff at St Laurence Catholic Primary School are very proud to have been part of the pilot scheme for The Diocesan Certificate in Catholic Studies (DCCS).

This is a Diocesan initiative, being offered through the Margaret Beaufort Institute, to introduce the national Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies to those who might be interested in completing the full two-year course, as well as an opportunity to refresh the knowledge of those who have already received the national award.

In the same way as staff get regular additional training in maths, English, and science etc, the Diocese hopes this scheme will support the teaching of Religious Education in Catholic schools in East Anglia.

There were three training sessions which covered Catholic morality, the Sacraments and the Old & New Testament with opportunities to discuss issues and ask questions. Both teachers and assistant staff took part, everyone who attended received a Certificate of Attendance from the Bishop. Eight

staff chose to complete the assignment, and received the Accreditation Certificate.

"It was a wonderful course to be involved with and to present," said course presenter, Sue Price.

The Diocesan Certificate of Catholic Studies will be available to all Catholic teachers in East Anglia. The Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies is also available to parishioners, catechists as well as teachers.

For more details about both courses ring 01223 741039 or mbitadm@hermes.cam.ac.uk

Students swap exams for Cambodia

■ A group of girls from Suffolk, armed with hundreds of toothbrushes and combs, will be swapping A level exams and work to help teach English to Cambodians for a month this summer, as part of a Diocese of East Anglia twinning link.

Alana Hart (18), Chloe Isles (17) and Eloise Burrows (18) are all sitting A level exams at St Benedict's Catholic Upper School in Bury St Edmunds.

The group set out on June 25, together with Anne Jackson, retired head of RE at Notre Dame High School in Norwich, flying to Cambodia to help deliver education to those who struggle to access it, whilst developing links for future diocese trips.

The interest of the students was sparked by a religious week at St Benedict's as Alana, who said: "We were asked 'What do you want to change in the world, what do you find unjust?' We put down education and inequality – people don't get education because of their wealth, gender, their social status or religion and it is not



From the left, Chloe Isles, Alana Hart and Eloise Burrows.

right. The majority of us here in England take it for granted. As part of St Edmunds parish, I have heard a lot about Siem Reap in Cambodia as we are twinned with it and so I jumped at the chance to go."

Leading the trip is Philippa Sutton (22), who runs First Communion classes at St Mary's in Thetford, and is hoping to soon

qualify as a primary school teacher. She said: "We will help deliver education to those whom struggle to access it as we travel through the different communities, aided by Diocesan links. We will spend our final two-and-a-half weeks in Siem Reap, twinned with St Edmunds parish, teaching English in kindergartens, student and youth hostels and orphanages."

news in brief

Boost for charities

■ St Louis Middle School pupils managed to raise a staggering £1,103.18 this year in their Lenten fundraising which was shared equally between two chosen charities: CAFOD and EACH, the CAFOD part of the donation being matched by the government.

Pupils and staff from across all year groups at the Bury St Edmunds school worked tirelessly to organise and promote events throughout Lent ranging from the sale of hot chocolate and pancakes to donations for silly socks; half school uniform; onesie days; the ever popular cake sales; the collection of loose change for the Widow's Mite pots and the impressive "St Louis' Got Talent" show.

Throughout the 40 days of Lent, the pupils were able to keep an eye on their efforts and achievements as a "Desert Display" in the gym gradually filled up with footsteps each worth at least £5 each.

Travel superheroes

■ St Thomas More Catholic Primary School's superheroes flew through the school gates in record numbers to win first place in the Big Pedal challenge in Peterborough and claim tenth place for the East of England.

The whole school made a record-breaking effort to cycle, scoot and even rollerskate to school for two weeks to win the Big Pedal challenge.

It was a fortnight of biking celebration with assemblies and cycle skills from multi-champion pro BMX rider Keelan Philips, a Bling-it bike decorating competition and a superheroes celebration. The Sustrans team kindly serviced over 80 of the children's bikes in one day.

Headteacher Mrs McElhinney said: "It was lovely to see families cycling and on scooters to and from school, talking and laughing together."

Emmaus lunch groups

■ Easter celebrations at St Louis Middle School in Bury St Edmunds continued this half term with "Emmaus Lunches".

Having explored the story of "The Road to Emmaus" in Luke's Gospel, where two disciples heading out of Jerusalem failed to recognise Jesus until the breaking of bread, pupils were then challenged to recognise the very best qualities in each other.

Throughout the 50 days of Easter, friendship groups of five or six pupils at a time were able to enjoy lunch together in our Prayer Courtyard, and then reflect on their relationships with each other. They were asked to really 'think' about what it was in each person that they most valued. Then, whilst listening to some meditative music, they were asked to record their thoughts in their Emmaus journal.

Sporting achievements

■ St Mary's School, Cambridge, hosted its annual Sports Award Dinner on April 29, welcoming 190 students, staff and parents to celebrate the sporting achievements of individuals and teams across the school. Special guests were Clare Cunningham, international paratriathlete; Serita Solomon, British track and field hurdler; and Amy Smith, British freestyle swimmer who competed at the 2012 London Olympics.

Charlotte to be president

■ Charlotte Avery, headmistress at the independent all-girls' St Mary's School, Cambridge, which is run in the Catholic tradition, has been appointed President of the national Girls' Schools Association (GSA) for 2017. Ms Avery assumes the position of President Elect and will take over as President in January.



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Krakow here we come



World Youth Day pilgrims are commissioned by Bishop Alan Hopes at Walsingham.

A group of 80 from the Diocese of East Anglia will set off for World Youth Day Poland in Krakow on July 20, joining an estimated two million people, along with Pope Francis.

"There have been 18 months of preparation, both practical and spiritual and now we're almost there," said Hamish MacQueen, Director of the Diocesan Youth Service.

"They are a fantastic group – many have

worked really hard doing different fundraising initiatives so they could go to World Youth Day.

"I would like to thank all the people and parishes who have so generously supported our young people which has made it possible," said Hamish.

Although World Youth Day implies it's just one day, in reality it's almost two weeks culminating in a special Mass with the Pope.

have been held in Rio, Madrid and Sydney.

■ WYD is far bigger than any sporting event or rock concert and holds the record for the largest number of people gathered in one place for an event. It is estimated that more than two million people will come to the closing Mass of WYD 2016.

■ Many priests throughout the world (including some in East Anglia) refer to going on World Youth Day as an important part of discovering their vocation to the priesthood.

World Youth Day factfile

■ World Youth Day was established in 1984 by Pope John Paul II as an event to reach out to young Catholics; to celebrate their faith; and to gather young people from around the world to build bridges of friendship and hope between continents, peoples and cultures.

■ It is celebrated every 2-3 years in a different city each time. The last three

WYD Itinerary

■ Wednesday July 20 – Fly Luton to Poprad Tatry and coach to Zakopane

■ Thursday July 21 – Sunday July 24 Days in the Diocese, at La Salette retreat centre, Zakopane

'Days in the Diocese' gives pilgrims an opportunity to get to know the culture and life of the Polish Church. During this time we will also be learning more about the life of the St Pope John Paul II who grew up close to Zakopane. Many thanks to the La Salette order who have sponsored this part of the pilgrimage.

■ Monday July 25 – Coach to Krakow

■ Tuesday July 26 – Catechesis and Opening Mass in Krakow

■ Wednesday July 27 – Catechesis and Youth Festival

■ Thursday July 28 – Catechesis and Youth Festival, Welcome of Pope Francis

■ Friday July 29 – Catechesis and Youth Festival, Stations of the Cross

■ Saturday July 30 – Vigil with Pope Francis

■ Sunday July 31 – Mass with Pope Francis

■ Monday August 1 – Fly Katowice back to Luton

■ While the group are away, a team of special youth communications officers will be sending back regular updates online. Please keep an eye on www.rcdea.org.uk for news.

East Anglian group joins Lourdes visit

■ A large group of children from the Diocese of East Anglia travelled to Lourdes for a pilgrimage with HCPT during Easter week, joined by over 1,000 disabled and disadvantaged children from around the world reports Alex Savage.

■ This year HCPT celebrated its Diamond Jubilee of taking children to Lourdes and their theme was 'Thanks be to God'. The colourful celebrations took over the town for the week and included a torchlight procession of over 5,000 pilgrims, a firework display over the Domaine and the Trust Mass in the underground Basilica led by Cardinal Vincent Nichols.

Groups from within our Diocese came together for a special regional Mass concelebrated by Canon David Bagstaff and Fathers Sean Connolly, John Warrington, Martin Gowman, and Simon. At the offertory, paper chains representing everyone in the groups were joined together as a symbol of our living and supporting each other as one community.



Brother Michael Strode, who took the very first HCPT group to Lourdes in 1956, gave a special video message at the Trust Mass. He explained that the wonderful experience of being together on pilgrimage is the power of God's love working through us to support and

care for each other.

The East Anglia groups were supported by volunteer helpers including students and staff from the St John the Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust. www.hcpt.org.uk/2016-diamond-jubilee



Fun, faith and sumo

Over 120 young people gathered for a weekend of fun, faith and football at the Ignite Festival at Swaffham Sacred Heart School over the first May bank holiday. Keith Morris reports.

Organised by the Diocese of East Anglia Youth Service, the weekend also included sumo wrestling, dancing nuns, and Mass with Bishop Alan Hopes, who said: "I pray the weekend will indeed ignite your faith and passion in the risen Lord. Enjoy the weekend and expect the Lord to bless you in a new and exciting way."

Young people from across East Anglia camped for two nights at the school and had a wide variety of activities to choose from.

Musical entertainment came from Christian DJ Galactus Jack, Nick Lowe, The Squares, Matt Dean and the YMT worship band, while thought-provoking

drama was provided by Rise theatre company, who also ran a workshop.

Fr Christopher Jamieson, Director of the National Office of Vocations, and a regular on TV and radio, spoke on "What am I doing with my life". Meg Hunter-Kilmer spoke on 'Saints and living your life radically for Christ' and later in a workshop addressed 'The Differences between Men and Women: Tips for Love and Life'.

There was also a rosary-making workshop and the chance to let off some energy playing basketball, football or sumo wrestling as well as a graffiti wall.

There was plenty of time for personal reflection and prayer, opportunities for people to be prayed with and go to confession, as well as a time of Adoration.

Diocese Youth Director, Hamish MacQueen, said: "The weekend was amazing - enjoyable and wonderful to see so many young people engaging and growing in their faith."

Those who still had some energy left at the end of the weekend also completed a six-mile pilgrimage walk to Walsingham to join the Diocesan Pilgrimage on bank holiday Monday.

Team Leader and Team Members



■ Building on the success of the first year of running the Ignite Mission Team, the Diocesan Youth Service wishes to appoint a Team Leader and Team Members to be part of The Ignite Team 2016/17.

■ If you are interested in spreading the Gospel message in our schools and parishes, and looking for a new challenge from September, this could be it!

■ For further information please see www.rcdea.org/youth or contact Hamish on 07812004934.

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CALLING ALL HEADTEACHERS

If you are planning an open day in the Spring term or have any staff vacancies please remember to advertise these in the paper. Advert rates are very reasonable and all that is needed to book is an email to alicej@catcom.org or a phone call to 01440 730399

As the paper is reliant on advertising to fund this free publication and only ever promotes adverts from Catholic Schools, it does heavily rely on support from schools in the diocese.

Purchasing a support advert for £39 in the 'Celebrating our Schools' Section is also a great way of supporting the paper. Please do contact Alice if you require more information.



Pope blesses diamond couple

■ An Ipswich couple have celebrated their Diamond wedding anniversary with the presentation of an Apostolic Blessing from Pope Francis at St Mary Magdalene church in the town.

Henry and June Teuma (pictured above with Fr Russell Frost) were married in June's home city of Liverpool on April 2, 1956. Henry was 26 years old and June was 23 and both were living in London at the time. Henry was born in Malta and came to England in 1937.

The couple have four sons and one daughter.

The anniversary was on April 2 and the celebration was conducted by Fr Russell Frost, parish priest at St Mary Magdalene in Ipswich at the 10am Mass on Sunday April 3. The couple then went with some of their children and grandchildren for a celebration lunch.

The Blessing from Pope Francis reads: "His Holiness Pope Francis unites himself in thanksgiving with Henry Paul Teuma and June Marie Teuma and imparts the requested Apostolic Blessing on the occasion of their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on April 2, 2016, praying that God will confirm them in love and happiness."

"The Blessing was a really unexpected surprise," said Henry. "Our eldest son had requested it secretly. We were over the moon to receive it and as far as I am concerned it was like receiving an MBE."

50 years of service

An Italian Catholic Sister, who came to England 45 years ago, has celebrated 50 years of service in grand style including two special masses near Peterborough and a special blessing from Pope Francis, reports Fr Adam Sowa.

Thousands of children have reason to be thankful that Sr Letizia, which means joy, came to England 45 years ago as her main role was to run kindergartens, together with many other pastoral duties.

Some 32 years were spent in Peterborough, during which Sr Letizia has looked after thousands of children, generations of them from the same families, and who consider her a beloved 'granny'.

After making her final vows in Brescia, Italy in the Working Sisters of the Holy House of Nazareth, Sr Letizia came to England with no English at all and learnt to speak the language 'by hand' as she said.

With only a small group of companions, she worked hard to build up everything from scratch, first in Bedford and then in Peterborough.

In thanksgiving to God for her charism, many of her former pupils and friends from far and wide, especially those in Peterborough, Bedford and Cambridge, gathered together at the Fleet Community Centre in Fletton, Peterborough, on Sunday May 8 to

celebrate her Golden Anniversary in style.

Many members of her Congregation came over from Italy, bringing with them a special blessing from Pope Francis.

Fr Giorgio Grigioni and Fr Adam Sowa MS, the Parish Priest of St Peter & All Souls, said Mass in Italian in the morning, and came to the party in the afternoon with great excitement. All really enjoyed

great Italian cuisine and almost burned up the dance floor.

There was also a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by Fr Giorgio for Sr Letizia at St Luke's Church in Orton Malborne, Peterborough, on Friday May 20. Many people shared Sr Letizia's joy and had a photo taken with her after Mass. They thanked God for her faithfulness, and wished her ad multos annos!



Sr Letizia with members of her Congregation who came from Italy to join the celebrations.

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BUILDING BRIDGES

Celebrating New Year Cambodian style

■ Chaul Chanam Th'mey [literally 'Enter New Year'], the Cambodian festival that marks the end of the harvesting season, was marked in style in North Walsham Parish on Friday April 15.

The Cambodian-style Mass was celebrated by Canon Mark Hackeson and Father James Walsh at St John of the Cross, Aylsham and attended by nearly 50 people from the parish and various parts of the Diocese. Most of the Mass was in Khmer and the specially recorded 'Gloria' from the Choir at Battambang gave a real sense of 'being there'. This was enhanced by a number of (mainly) ladies who arrived resplendent in Cambodian dress!

At Khmer New Year, people clean themselves and their houses with water, offer incense, give to the poor, enjoy special food and play games so we did the same: blessing with Easter water, gifts for the Foodbank and the offering of incense for our departed relatives and friends.

Afterwards everyone enjoyed a delicious spread prepared by members of St John of the Cross community. The



young people (who, as always, led the Offertory Procession with grace and reverence) would have happily taken up Canon Mark's suggestion of a game to play but since it involved flour and water their parents seemed less keen!

The next Cambodia-style Mass is for Bon Pchum Ben (Feast of the Ancestors) at North Walsham on Friday October 15 at 7pm. All are welcome.

Medal recognition for Holy Land work

The humanitarian work of Diocese of East Anglia backed Cambridge charitable travel company Pilgrimage People has been recognised by the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Bishop William Shomali, Patriarchal Vicar for Jerusalem, presented Pilgrimage People CEO Fr Paul Maddison, with an honorary medal during a recent visit to Jerusalem by a group from the charity.

The Diocese of East Anglia, which helped set up Pilgrimage People, is twinned with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and the charity has worked with the Patriarchate to help fund a number of social action and humanitarian projects across Palestine over the past few years.

Bishop William, said: "We are optimistic that people are still visiting Jerusalem even with the increase in violence we have seen in the region. If people come, they are courageous and will hear of the reality of our situation."

Fr Paul, who is parish priest in March, said: "When our pilgrims go home after visiting the Holy Land and some of the Patriarchate's projects, they are able to tell the real stories of the country and people hear a different narrative than the one they often hear on the news.

The Pilgrimage People group of trustees and supporters were also able to meet



Fr Paul Maddison, left, receives the honorary medal from Bishop William Shomali, Patriarchal Vicar for Jerusalem.

Henrique Abreu – Head of the Project Development Office – and hear about projects the Patriarchate supports and future ones in the pipeline.

During their visit to the Holy Land, the group visited projects the charity had already supported which included refitting a kitchen at an old people's home in Taybeh, a community playground and garden project in Jifna and funding to refurbish the project development office at the Patriarchate itself.

"We were delighted to be able to meet Bishop William and Henrique," said Fr Paul, "and humbled to receive the medal in recognition of the help we have been able to give to the Patriarchate projects. <http://en.lpi.org/>

Can you help build bridges?

The two current Diocese of East Anglia Building Bridges projects are a youth basketball project in Beit Sahour in the Holy Land and a new formation centre for children, youth groups and adults at Battambang in Cambodia.

If you would you like to support these projects, cheques should be made payable to the "RC Diocese of East Anglia".

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40th Anniversary Mass pictures and thoughts from Bishop Alan



Moments from the Anniversary Mass in Norwich Cathedral, including, left, Bishop Alan celebrating Mass, above, the procession, below, Cardinal Nichols preaching, Syro Malabar participants and the anniversary cakes.

Past, present and future of our Diocese



To mark the 40th anniversary of the Diocese of East Anglia, Bishop Alan Hopes, gives his thoughts on its past, present and future.

Q Do you see the diocese as 40 years old or 1400 years old?

A Although the Diocese is 40 years old, in fact the Catholic Church in East Anglia was established much earlier - 1,400 years ago - by St Felix. I believe the bishops of East Anglia to be his successors.

Q What are your hopes for the future of the Diocese?

A Our work is the same as that carried out by St Felix and the first Christians here - to proclaim the Gospel and to bring people to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ. I would hope that our work would be a mission of compassion, mercy and love.

Since we are still quite young, as a new diocese I would hope that we will continue to grow in unity and stability. My prayer and hope is that God will grant us more vocations to the priesthood and the Religious life, so that our people may receive the necessary sacramental and pastoral care needed to strengthen them as, together, we carry out our mission. That gift is already being seen in the ten seminarians who are preparing for the priesthood and the growing number of young men who are discerning the way forward.

Q What would you say are the main achievements of the Diocese over the past 40 years?

A Over the last 40 years, the Diocese has engaged with developing new parishes for those cities and towns that have grown and developed, for instance in Peterborough, Ipswich, Cambridge, Norwich and the coastal towns. New Catholic communities have developed, especially over the last decade or so as migrant communities have been welcomed.

Over these past 40 years, the Diocese has made its mark in the life of the whole Christian community, in its involvement with and outreach to the neediest and most vulnerable in our society.

It has also been a period where the Catholic community has played its full part in working together and co-operating with the other Christian communities, and especially in seeking the common good of all.

Q What do you love most about the role?

A For me, the greatest thing for a bishop is travelling around the Diocese, visiting parishes, schools, prisons, hospitals, etc and meeting the people of the Diocese. It is a huge privilege to see the commitment and dedication of these local communities and to hope that I am able to encourage and support them in their Christian pilgrimage and witness.

Q What is the most challenging part of your role?

A One of the biggest challenges is facing the huge shift that has taken place in the role of Christianity in this country and

religious belief in the life of the people. How do we help people to re-connect with faith and with the Church. Relativism and secularism have taken hold of many people's lives and so they no longer acknowledge any objective truth that might guide their lives from outside of themselves and what they feel to be right. I do not just see this as a challenge but as an opportunity - helping people to reconnect themselves to the truth, which is God.

Q Are there any East Anglian Catholics from the past (or present) whom you find particularly inspiring?

A St Felix, St Edmund and St Etheldreda of course - the great patron saints of our Diocese. Julian of Norwich has always fascinated me and her very clear message of God's overwhelming love for us in all things will be well, all manner of things will be well. Catherine of Aragon also stands out as a witness to the importance of marriage and family life. The martyrs of the Reformation period also stand out as those who were willing to die for their faith and witness to what they believed to be the truth - St Philip Howard, St Alban Roe, St Robert Southwell, St Henry Morse and St Henry Walpole - and Blessed Thomas Tanstall who was martyred here in Norwich 400 years ago this July.

But also I find incredibly impressive the many ordinary people of God across the Diocese who have and are trying to live their lives in accord with the Gospel and who witness to their faith in so many different ways.

