

FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS

FORDINGBRIDGE AND RINGWOOD PARISH MAGAZINE

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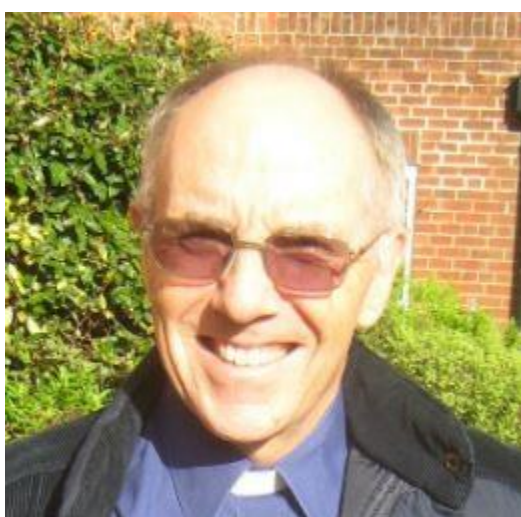
Fr Paul Says.....



Please remember in your prayer Felicity Allegri and David Price who are preparing to become Catholics at the Easter Vigil in Fordingbridge. They will attend the 'Rite of Election' at the beginning of Lent in the Cathedral. They will meet Bishop Philip who will call them forward for selection as candidates for reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church.

During Lent, Felicity and David will join us in that time of conversion and renewal which prepares us for the celebration of Easter. They will join us for the celebration of the Easter Triduum of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil. The Easter Vigil begins with the blessing of the Easter fire and the lighting of the Paschal Candle. In the light of that candle, the Resurrection is proclaimed with the singing of the Exultet. Then we listen to a series of readings from the Old Testament which take us through the story of salvation, beginning with creation and ending with Paul's proclamation of the Resurrection in his letter to the Romans. After the Gospel and

"The Shape of Things to Come"?



During January, Fr. David Adams called a meeting for representatives of the local pastoral councils, or their equivalent, to discuss the issues and challenges which are emerging for us from the Bishop's Plan which is called "You are my witnesses". I am grateful to Larry Bartell, Helen Eales and Helen and John Rawlins for joining me at the meeting.

Fr. David Adams is the Parish Priest of Lymington, Brockenhurst and Milford. He is also the Dean of Bournemouth and the New Forest and is the Coordinating Pastor of the New Forest Pastoral Area, of which our two parishes are part.

The plan has the basic aim of developing mission and evangelisation which is, and always has been, the essential mission of the Church. The question hovering in the air is this: How do we introduce our society to the message of Jesus?

The Bishop's Plan is set to run for ten years. Our Pastoral Area of the New Forest (including the parishes of Ringwood, Fordingbridge, Lymington, Brockenhurst, Milford, New Milton, Hythe and Holbury) will become a single parish with a single parish priest. There will probably be other priests, but these will be assistants and not parish priests as such.

The meeting, which represented all the parishes, aimed at beginning to identify the issues which need to be addressed in the transition to a single parish. There was a sense of urgency because Fr. David must send our aspirations for the New Forest Parish by the end of March to the Bishop. At the meeting we discussed the implications for catechesis, a new and single website, liturgy including Sunday Mass and how Masses will be distributed across the new parish.

There was a lively conversation at the meeting about catechesis. This would include catechetical provision for all sacramental preparation, the welcoming and preparation of new Catholics and ongoing catechesis for us all from womb to tomb. Guidance from Rome envisages a team for each parish (in this case the New Forest) with a director. The meeting came to see catechesis as a priority of such importance that financial resources would need to be allocated to it.

The meeting acknowledged the need for proper communication, which again, would require financial investment. A website would need to be built professionally and there would need to be a facility for 'socials' which would embrace the use of interactive social media platforms.

Liturgy was another concern and was seen as an essential area for careful consideration. This was not only about the crucial provision of Sunday Mass. It also concerned the development of liturgies and ways of worship that would not require the presence of an ordained minister. Lay leaders of liturgy need to be selected and formed for each worshipping community, eg Fordingbridge or Ringwood. This would mean that when Sunday Mass, or weekday Mass, could not be celebrated by a priest, a lay leader would preside. This would raise the question of lay leadership and presiding at weddings and funerals and even baptisms.

Also touched upon was the future of worshipping communities (the present parishes) as the Bishop's plan unfolds. Clearly this would be influenced by whether a worshipping community was financially viable. But there were more important questions: Is the worshipping community (eg Fordingbridge, Brockenhurst or Ringwood), sufficiently vibrant and committed in order to sustain its own life without a resident priest? Are

the homily, Felicity and David will be invited to renew their baptismal promises with us all as we are sprinkled with the water of baptism. They will then declare that “they believe and profess everything that the Catholic Church believes, teaches and proclaims to be revealed by God”. They will then be Confirmed, join us for the Eucharistic prayer and then receive Holy Communion for the first time. Please come and make them welcome.

there people willing to lead and coordinate? Are there musicians and singers to provide the music that is required by the liturgical books and guidelines? Are there readers, eucharistic ministers and altar servers? Is there a parish administrator? Is there a hospitality and welcoming team? Is there a team to develop social events? Is there a team to welcome and form those who wish to become Catholics? Is there an outreach team with a concern about the poor and inviting others to join the Church? If the answer to these questions is ‘no’ the future of that worshipping community (present parish) will be under the Bishop’s microscope!

As Catholics we are living in a time of significant change. When I was ordained 40 years ago, I spent each evening in Reading visiting everyone’s home night after night. During the day I would work in the schools and visit the wards in the Royal Berks Hospital. All that is no longer as easy to do for a host of reasons. For example, in those days there was one priest in Ringwood and one in Fordingbridge.

The diocesan plan is an attempt to optimise the use of our resources for the sake of the Gospel. Along with that, other changes are afoot in the wider Church. There is the ‘Synodal Process’ which has as its aim the inclusion of all the people in forming policies and even pastoral practice. There is the discussion about the ordination of Catholic married men for service within communities. And the recent document from Rome ‘Fiducia Supplicans’ on the nature of blessings has caused much heated debate. It is perhaps the most radical and pastorally sensitive document to have emerged from the Dicastery of the Doctrine of the Faith for years, or perhaps ever.

The onus is on us all to make our church communities vibrant places of welcome and witness to Christ’s love for all.

(Fr Paul)

Reading Recommendations



When I was living in Chicago, I read a novel by Upton Sinclair describing the conditions in the Chicago meat stockyards. Although it nearly put me off sausages for life, I found it so fascinating that I could not resist this title by the same author when I discovered it at Waterstones. It is described as a ‘petro-novel’, but before your eyes slide over to the more interesting article in the next column of this wonderful publication, do not dismiss this amazing novel.

It is set in the oilfields of Southern California, and the story begins in 1911. J. Arnold Ross (‘Dad’) is the owner of a productive oil field and is very rich. He is keen to find more oil deposits where he can drill wells and become richer. He is accompanied everywhere by his son (‘Bunny’) aged 13. Bunny does not go to school. He must learn about the oil industry, and he is a keen student.

But Bunny struggles with his conscience (he is a tender-hearted soul) when his father buys the land of a poorly educated family of goat farmers, without offering a share in the rich spoils of the land which was their home. A couple of years later when the First World War begins, Bunny is troubled by the shameless way Dad becomes richer by selling oil on his terms to the suffering peoples of Europe. But things change when the oil-workers strike.....

This is a many-layered and complex novel. It is a family saga, with many interesting characters - Bunny lives with his grandmother and aunt; his mother lives elsewhere, and ‘entertains gentlemen visitors’. It is about California, and the

A Ringer’s Tale



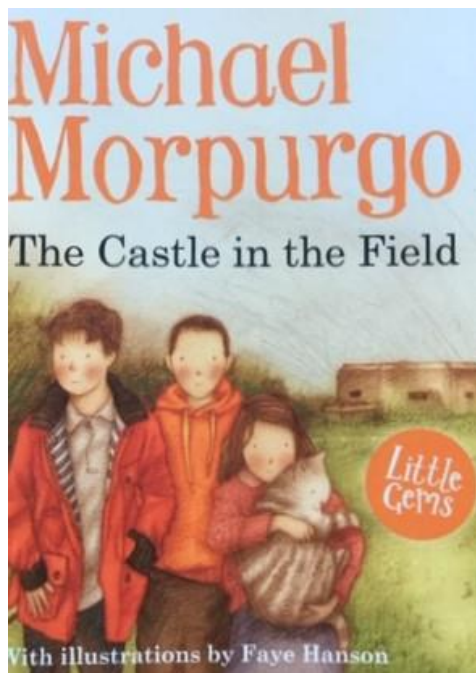
Bells in Winchester Cathedral

Everyone knows the image of the bell ringers in the Mars Bar advert, swinging up into the air on the end of a bell rope. But does this really happen? The answer is yes, very occasionally, but only if the ringer forgets to let go of the fluffy bit (called the Sally) and allows the weight of the bell to pull them off their feet! Fortunately, this is a rare occurrence in bell ringing and only really encountered if there is a malfunction in the equipment or mishandling by the ringer.

The term ‘campanologist’ is defined as a person who studies the subject of bells but we who engage in the more active side of the hobby prefer to call ourselves ‘bell ringers’. Church bell ringing in Britain is particularly distinctive because the majority of bells are hung on fully rotating wheels, which allows for full circle ringing where the bell can swing 360 degrees. This has enabled the development of ‘change-ringing’ where, rather than just being chimed in a random fashion, the bells are rung in particular and precise orders and patterns, called methods. Rather like a piece of music, these have names such as Plain Bob, Grandsire and Stedman, and always follow a specific format.

Throughout Britain, church bells vary in number and size with the smallest bell in a peal called the ‘treble’ and the largest being the ‘tenor’. The heaviest peal of bells in the world hung for full circle ringing is the twelve bells of Liverpool Cathedral where the tenor weighs in at a massive 82cwt (about 4,165kg).

scraggy desert terrain on which families try to eke out a living. It is about greed, and morality, the super-rich and the super-poor, and class division, and the suffering and destruction of people in Europe and America in a world where the 'hills are green and the fruit trees in blossom'. It is probably one of the first novels that warns of the perils of exploiting the earth's resources. It has much technical detail about the oil operations (more interesting than it sounds), but it is written with a light touch and I am quite immersed in it. Please read it.



This is a lovely story by one of our favourite children's author. Set as many of his novels are in the West Country and featuring its WW2 history, three children find an old Pill-Box in a local farmer's field. Inside they find an old Second World War helmet, complete with bullet hole. The children clean out the Pill-Box and make a secret den (as all children do at some time in their childhood). Inevitably the adult world intrudes and their refuge is discovered.....

But the main thing about this book is that it is part of a lovely new collection called Little Gems published by Barrington Stokes, who normally publish titles for older struggling readers. They use the same lovely cream paper, and there are many wonderful titles by famous children's authors, all beautifully illustrated, and are perfect for children just beginning to read to themselves. I have bought several of them for the children in my life, and they are an excellent bridge between picture and chapter books.

(Penny Sharp)

Poetry Please!

(From "Little Gidding")

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, unremembered
gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning;
At the source of the longest river

Winchester Cathedral has fourteen bells and Portsmouth Cathedral has twelve. There are literally thousands of towers throughout the country with varying numbers and weights of bells in a peal. Fordingbridge, for example, has a pleasant ring of eight bells with the tenor weighing in at a mere 13cwt (660kg).

When possible, most towers have a practice night once a week where their loyal band can try out new methods and hone their striking skills so they can produce a quality sound on Sundays for service. Ringers also meet regularly at different towers to practise and sometimes go on group outings or 'grabs' for a chance to ring in other locations and experience new towers. All bells ring differently according to weight, rope length, location and fixings, and it is fascinating to discover these anomalies when visiting other towers.



Ringing Chamber Winchester

handle a bell but then you can progress as fast or as slowly as you wish. Although many towers have ground floor rings, a certain amount of fitness is required because some can have uneven spiral staircases, gangways, passageways and even ladders in order to get to the ringing chamber. However, this adds to the fascination and makes for an exciting experience.

The prime aim of the bell ringer is to keep our church bells ringing and to call people to Sunday service, but it is also great fun, keeps you fit, is sociable and provides a lifetime of learning and discovery.

(Moira Hough)

Bell ringers are always on the lookout for new recruits. Recently there was a drive to teach new people to 'Ring For The King', where many towers received an influx of new learners eager to try out this ancient hobby with the aim of being able to ring for the Coronation of His Majesty Charles II.

If you are interested in having a go, please contact your local church who should be able to put you in touch with the tower captain. It takes a few weeks to be able to

Choristers Call

The following press release came to me through Salisbury Cathedral who are auditioning for the Choir (boys and girls). Choristers have to attend Salisbury Cathedral School to which they are awarded a bursary. (Ed)



A New Year – and new choristers needed.

It is that time of year again when I reach out to all of you to get the word out about our Chorister Voice Trials, or auditions taking place this year on the 20 and 27 January.

Salisbury Cathedral choristerships are open to candidates from anywhere, and our choristers come from all over the region and country – not just Wiltshire or Salisbury – so a mention in your publication would be gratefully received. Who knows, your article could be the start of an amazing

musical journey for a child (or parents who know their child loves singing and has musical potential).

We aren't looking for polished performers just enthusiastic kids with potential. Details can be found in the press release attached and pictures can be downloaded via this dropbox link: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/rzemoxjilboj4g1v8z972/h?rlkey=22a8cb78weq5vth80ad9xagg8&dl=0>

(Salisbury Cathedral Press Office)

The voice of the hidden waterfall
 And the children in the apple-tree
 Not known, because not looked for
 But heard, half-heard, in the stillness
 Between two waves of the sea.
 Quick now, here, now, always—
 A condition of complete simplicity
 (Costing not less than everything)
 And all shall be well and
 All manner of thing shall be well
 When the tongues of flame are in-folded
 Into the crowned knot of fire
 And the fire and the rose are one.

(T. S. Eliot)

Gardeners' Corner

Early in January I bought first early seed potatoes and put them to chit in the garage. For many years I have planted Rocket with excellent results but for the last 2 years they have been very scabby. This year, besides Charlotte, I bought Lady Christl as the information with them stated that they show good all-round disease resistance, in particular to common scab. I am hopeful!

The two weeks of arctic weather discouraged any form of gardening but now I have sown pots of broad bean and pea seeds in the cold greenhouse

I have also sown a few tomato seeds - Stillo, a cherry tomato which will grow indoors or out and Tumbling Tom Red, which I hope will have a long season in the conservatory. These seeds are on a heated tray in the conservatory.



Some of the more sheltered daffodils are in bud which is a very welcome sign and the first clump of snowdrops are in flower. Cyclamen are also a very welcome spot of colour.



(Barbara Geatrell)

Parish Plant Sales

Before we know it, Spring will be here, the birds will be singing, and Sue and I will be growing plants for the now traditional late spring plant sales at Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Lourdes in Ringwood and Fordingbridge.

Sue has already selected the seeds, bare root stock and bulbs she wants to grow on and here is her list: Baby cucumbers, gherkins, small watermelon, Emir melon, tomato, pepper, courgette, French marigold, Nicotiana, Coreopsis, Gazania, Cosmos, Gaillardia, Rudbeckia, Heliotrope, Lobelia, Petunia, mixed hardy perennials (flower first year), bedding geraniums, dahlias and begonias. In addition (and because she now has a new and larger greenhouse) she is growing fuchsia, hydrangea, ribes and geraniums from cuttings. I think we will also have some of our harvested wildflower seed available from the wild garden.



So, lots for you to select from in May when we will be outside the churches after Mass with our plants. All profits go to the parishes. We haven't decided on the Sunday yet as it depends a little on how cold early spring proves to be, but we will let you know as soon as we know.

In the meantime, if you would like us to grow anything in particular for you, please drop a note into church one Sunday soon and we will do our best.

End Bits

Thanks as always to all our contributors. Thank you, particularly, Fr Paul for your glimpse of the future which many will find daunting but which could, I think, become an inspiration, lead to a fuller form of participation and, possibly something closer to the original church in which everyone took an active part; a return to our beginning, which is why I put in 'Poetry Please' the concluding part of Elliot's "Little Gidding" which I often find helpful.

Perhaps people might like to express their questions and concerns, which we all will have, on these pages and, collectively, we might be able to find some answers and reassurance as we go.

My apologies to Penny for, last month, omitting her introduction, and, if you sent in something that hasn't appeared, I just might be keeping my powder dry.

Chris

The Bells of St Mary's

Would you like to learn about church bells? The bells in St. Mary's Church, Fordingbridge are rather special. To start with there are eight of them and that is pretty unusual. The oldest bell dates from 1655 which is the year that Cromwell dissolved the 1st Protectorate Parliament. There was also a Royalist rebellion which started in Wiltshire but was quickly, and brutally, put down. As if to restore domestic confidence and assert our maritime power Admiral Blake destroyed a pirate fleet in the Bay of Tunis.

The bells are tuned to the key signature of F, just like the scale that you might play on a piano. So the 8 bells are individually tuned to F, E, D, C, B flat, A and G and when they are played they start out upside down.

Would you like to know more? If so we have arranged a session for members of the Catholic church to visit St. Mary's church on the evening of Thursday 7 March 2024. If you join us you will learn about church bells and bell ringing, watch the bells being rung if you can manage the stairs to the ringing chamber, but wherever you are in the church listen to the bell ringers at work.

If you would like to attend please let John Elliott know via jpelliot@btinternet.com as soon as possible as places are limited. This is a free event: there is no charge.

(John Elliott)

Fabulous Forest

A few weeks ago I took Jester to the Forest but it was not a pleasant visit as they have been grubbing up a lot of the gorse. I agree that this probably needed to be done as it opens up the area for new growth. If the gorse is too dense it will shade out other heathland plants. However, the heavy machinery they used has gouged out the established paths and small bits of gorse branches are widely scattered making it difficult to see the land one is treading on. No doubt in a few months it will all settle.



(Barbara Geatrell)

