

# BEMA

*The Parish Magazine of St Bernardine with St Martin*

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No: 40

Eastertide

2016



**Brackley**

**Buckingham**

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## LENT LUNCH SPEECH

*As is customary, here is a transcript of my Churches in Brackley Lent Lunch Talk, for those unable to be there. The speech was based on the theme:*

### *A Favourite Hymn*

Music is amazing – where would we be without it? What else reaches into a person to change the mood and stir the emotions like music does? Music seems capable of reaching all levels of our being too. A snatch of a lively tune can set us tapping our feet in time to the beat within seconds, while a few familiar notes can instantly provoke memories of a long forgotten event from the past. As I speak, I think of the time when my poor late wife in her dementia induced, befuddled state, would suddenly brighten up and a cheeky smile come to her face as she jiggled away on suddenly recognising a tune – such is the power of music!

But music does not only affect us at the superficial level. There is good profound music, which within seconds of our hearing it, reaches deep into our very being and stirs the depths of our soul, grasping our full attention, regardless of what we are doing. This is not the 'here today and gone tomorrow' style of music, but music that endures and reaches us across generations. I refer to pieces like Mozart's Requiem, Bach's St Matthew Passion, 'He shall feed his sheep' from Handel's Messiah and Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor, to which many couples have walked down the aisle at their wedding. This is the kind of music that can reach into our depths and sooth deep seated grief. Of course, music tastes differ and the lists are long, but to me, the definition of good music should include the words: 'popular', 'enduring', 'mood changing' and maybe even descriptions like 'it gives me goose bumps on goose bumps.'

Perhaps, importantly though, there is another aspect to good music – and that is: it can help us to pray. Most will think instantly this means hymns, but it is not necessarily so. Traditionally there are other forms of church music, like motets and chanted parts of liturgy. There are, also, pieces of music that have been considered so inspiring that they have been used as hymn tunes, such as Katarina von Schlegel's hymn 'Be still my soul...' set to the music of Sibelius' Finlandia and even 'God is our help...' has been set to the tune of Coates' music for the Dam Busters, of all things! So now, I suppose I have kept you in suspense long enough. What is to be the hymn I have chosen as a favourite? The choice is vast and it is difficult for reasons already mentioned, to decide on one hymn at the expense of another, but a particular favourite of mine for many years has been: Graham Kendrick's 'From heaven you came, helpless babe'.

Why have I selected this hymn? For me personally, it does satisfy many of the criteria already mentioned. Yes, when I hear it played, it gives me 'goose bumps' and its tune sensitively played is excellent in its own right, but it has

associations for me – an important one being that it was used at my ordination. However, it is a good hymn viewed from all aspects. The words and the melody can make us very reflective and prayerful, but viewing the hymn in its entirety, it so succinctly describes Christ and outlines what Christianity is all about.

'From heaven you came, helpless babe, entered our world, your glory veiled...'  
The love, selflessness and compassion of Christ is summed up straight away in the first line. He comes to us to serve rather than be served, the hymn continues and what a sobering example that is to us. All we have is dependent upon God and his generosity and yet when we make such a mess of everything he lowers himself, sacrificing himself, to come and serve us. This is beyond words or description on our part, but 2000 years after he came, how many are are paying any attention? This exemplary message has still to be absorbed. Who am I to think myself better than anyone else – my brothers and sisters – to be upset if I disagree with their actions – or to be anything but selfless in the face of their need?

Despite all our airs and presumptions – Christ sacrifices everything that we might live, the hymn elaborates. In the garden of tears, my heavy load he chose to bear – why? I have done and never could do anything to deserve that. Yet he chooses to look upon me with unconditional love just as he does with everyone else – even those who scoff at him, treat him so brutally and put him to death. Despite all that, am I truly listening? Do I think I am hard done by? Do I think anything that has happened to me compares with what happens to him? The words 'ungrateful' and 'selfish' come to mind but they do not come close to describing the reality of my behaviour. Am I listening now and taking all this in?

The hymn finishes (perhaps appropriately in line with his example) with a gentle advocacy to follow his example of service, putting others needs before our own for in serving each other we also serve him. Yes, it is easy to mouth the words – but what are they really saying to me? Am I being completely honest in what I am agreeing to take on? Those are very sobering words, because no matter how many times I have said them before – what has been the result?

Lord may your will not mine be done.

Lord may I be both stirred and shaken.

Lord thank you for all you have blessed me with and the merciful love you show me.

Thank you too for your great gift of such uplifting music accompanied by such inspiration words.

May they be instrumental in helping me to change my ways and guiding me on the way ahead of my journey to reach you.

**Amen.**

*Deacon John*

# JOINT PASTORAL COUNCIL

## *St Bernardine's & St Martin's*

As we entered another year the Pastoral Council continued its work in supporting Fr Dan and Deacon John in an array of activities. As well as the day to day activities of ensuring that the roof doesn't leak and our churches are neither too hot nor too cold, members of the PC coordinate CAFOD, Children's Liturgy, social events and many of the other key activities in support of the spiritual and fundraising aspects of our church's life. Each member often writes in BEMA to keep everyone up to date with latest events in their area. This is "Confirmation Year" and classes in preparation for this are in progress. A big thank you to everyone involved in preparing our young people for this sacrament.

If there are any parishioners, who think they could spare a little time helping to support our Parish, don't be shy. Do make yourself known to one of the committee or Fr Dan/Deacon John and you will be most welcome to join us.

For those of you, who attended our Sunday Lunch earlier this year, you will know what a sociable lot we are and always looking for a reason to get together. For that occasion, we couldn't think of any special reason for having it, but had the lunch anyway!

We have our Frugal Lunch soon, the BBQ in the diary for July and Barn Dance on September 10<sup>th</sup>, which is always a great success. There will no doubt be other events throughout the Spring and Summer and if you feel inspired by an idea for an event, we are always open to suggestions.

In the last couple of months, we have replaced two of the fans in St Bernardine's and started the process of changing all the lighting over to LED, which is cost effective, greener and means we don't have to climb ladders so frequently. Our next plan is to upgrade the sound system – which will include a hearing loop – in St Martin's, so that more people can hear every word spoken at Mass with greater clarity. The Garden at St Bernardine's is now beginning to mature nicely and we hope you will be able to take time to spend a few moments in this tranquil spot. As the weather warms up, we hope – weather permitting – to have our regular after Mass tea and biscuits in the garden, which we hope will make it more attractive for you to stay for a chat. We are so lucky to have such talented people to look after all aspects of our church's life; the list is really too long to mention any one person, but we all appreciate what you do for us week after week.

Although, I think not commonly known, there is another committee, which sits between the Diocesan area and our Pastoral Council; this being the Pastoral Area Council attended by Fr Dan, Deacon John and lay representatives from each Parish. This group looks at how we can work closely together between Parishes to make best use of the resources we have. More of this group in future BEMAs.

I hope you all managed to keep your Lenten promises, better than I did, and I hope you enjoyed a happy and uplifting Easter. It is always difficult to know how to end these short pieces for BEMA, so if it is not too late, what better than with a few topical jokes!

How does the Easter Bunny Stay Fit?

– *Egg-xercise and Hare-robics*

What happened when the Easter Bunny met the Rabbit of his dreams?

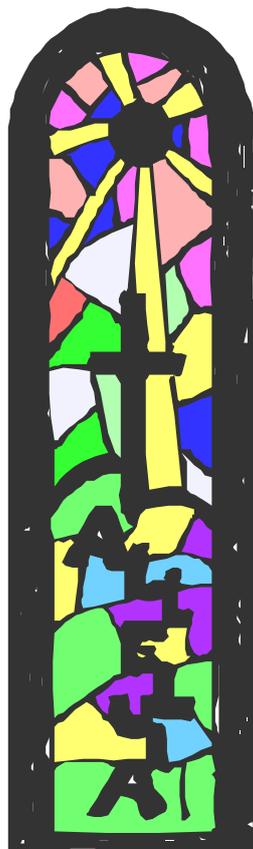
– *They lived Hoppily ever after.*

And finally ...

How do you get a letter from the Easter Bunny?

– *Hare Mail.*

*Peter Gannaway*



# CAFOD

## ***LENT FAST DAY***

Lent Fast Day was held on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February. Appeals on behalf of CAFOD were made at all Masses on the weekend of 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> February.

All donations made to CAFOD's Lent Fast Day appeal will be matched by the Government under the UK Aid Match scheme. To date £1,205 has been raised, which will be doubled by the government.

The theme for this year's Lenten Fast Day was: ***“The impact of water shortage on people's lives”***. It is so easy to forget that people are hungry too. Many are so hungry that an hour's effort can be exhausting for them. Hunger affects the ability to learn, to grow and to achieve anything. If you are short of water and food, just finding them each day is the maximum attainable.

The issue of water access is endemic. In Uganda, water is such a huge issue that the Ugandan government made investments in water supply in the late nineties. Water pumps were installed across many dry regions. In Karamoja (where Proscovia lives), the problem is not that there aren't any pumps, but that many have broken down.

Why did no one in Proscovia's village know or, find out, how to mend their broken water pump? In the 14 years the water pump was broken, the people did want to know how to mend it, but most people there live hand-to-mouth – day-to-day. Every day is about getting enough food and water to get themselves and their families, through to the next day. They are unable to afford to go to school or college, so understanding how to mend a pump is beyond them. Poverty means barely having enough time, even for essentials. During those 14 years, drought came every other year – so most people's time was spent walking miles for water every day, herding their animals to pasture and farming their land.

*David Pugh*

## THE YEAR OF MERCY

Why does Pope Francis have instant appeal to people across such a wide spectrum of humanity, do you suppose? From the very start of his papacy, he managed to impress not only Catholics but also people of many religious followings and of none. Huge numbers have greeted his words and actions with avid enthusiasm. This has been noticeably true of his proclamation of this current year as a “Year of Mercy” which could yet prove to be one of the most remembered actions of his papacy. So, what makes him so engaging and popular? Surely it must be because he simply practises what he preaches!

In 2013, he published the first major document of his papacy entitled: “The Joy of the Gospel” which was the subject of an article in BEMA [*Christmas 2013*]. In it he said his vision for the Church was: “...one that should be bruised, hurting and dirty because of its work on the streets ... the Roman Catholic Church and the papacy must be reformed to create a more missionary and merciful Church.” This, naturally, does not suit some, who would rather not step outside their comfort zone, preferring to be unchallenged by their faith, but instead kept it to oneself and a matter of 'sticking to the rules.' But, that is not Christ's way and, since Christ says he only follows the way of the Father, who loves him, it is God's way too. Christ is consistently criticised, by the religious leaders of his time on earth, for seeking the company of the wretched and sinners. Pope Francis follows Christ's lead and expects the same criticism as Christ received, but that will not stop him from doing what he believes is right and controversial – following the example of Christ.

In the recently published book: “The Name of God is Mercy” – a dialogue with Pope Francis, he refers to numerous examples of God's mercy, both in scripture and by the example of the manner in which fellow Christians conduct their lives. “Mercy is the first attribute of God,” he says. “There are no situations we cannot get out of – we are not condemned to sink into the quicksand.” God accepts we are a fallen race and tainted by the faults and failings of the nature into which we have been born. That is why out of love, out of compassion, out of God's mercy, Christ humbled himself and came into the world to save us from our wretched state and lead us back to God. Christ loves the righteous but seeks out the fallen and those without hope. He comes showing that he places God's will first, the need to help others second and his own needs last. What greater proof of the Mercy of God could there be?

The year of Mercy is a challenge to everyone to step back and take a fresh, open and honest look at themselves – asking: how do I measure up to the challenge of the example shown by Christ? It makes me think often of the priest, who had such a huge influence on my life, spending his life gently and selflessly pointing towards God, tirelessly helping others, completely neglecting any needs he may have had – always unjudgemental and merciful.

*Deacon John*

## *For all the Saints...*

Thus far we have looked at Saints across the year but have missed out some saints in late summer and autumn. And so some of these are provided for you in this Easter BEMA.

### **July 11 – St Benedict**

Benedict was born into a distinguished family in central Italy. He studied at Rome and was soon drawn to the monastic life. At first he became a hermit, leaving war torn world and a divided church. Later he withdrew even further to a cave high in the mountains for three years. Some monks chose him as their leader but found his strictness too harsh. This marked a shift from hermit to community life. He had an idea of gathering various families of monks into one "Grand Monastery" to give them the benefit of unity, fraternity and permanent worship in one place. Finally he began to build what was to become one of the most famous monasteries in the world—Monte Cassino, overlooking three valleys running toward the mountains north of Naples. The Rule that gradually developed prescribed a life of liturgical prayer, study, manual labour and living together in community, headed by the Abbot. Benedictine asceticism is known for its moderation. Benedictine charity shows concern for the people in the surrounding countryside. Today the Benedictine family is represented by two branches: the Benedictine Federation and the Cistercians.

### **17 August – St Clare of Montefalco**

Clare, born at Montefalco in Italy around 1268, joined a Franciscan convent, which later established Holy Cross Convent at Montefalco, adopting the Rule of St. Augustine. Clare succeeded her sister as abbess of this community. She led an austere life and was devoted to the Passion of Christ and His Cross. When she died in 1308, an image of the Cross was found imprinted on her heart, while her body remained incorruptible. She was canonized in 1881 by Pope Leo XIII.

### **21 September – St Matthew**

St. Matthew's birth and death dates are unknown, but he is believed to have been born in Galilee and is the son of Alpheus. He was a tax collector, and is therefore the patron saint of bankers. Matthew was collecting taxes in Capernaum when he was called to be an apostle of Christ. The Bible states that Jesus simply saw Matthew sitting in a tax collector's booth and said, "Follow me." That is all it took for Matthew to discard his previous life and follow Christ. It is thought that he spread the Gospel in Palestine, Ethiopia, Parthia and Persia. It is uncertain whether he died a natural death or received the crown of martyrdom.

St. Matthew's Gospel was written for his countrymen of Palestine, St. Matthew composed his Gospel in his native Aramaic, the "Hebrew tongue" mentioned in the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.

## **St. Matthew Prayer**

*O Glorious St. Matthew, in your Gospel you portray Jesus as the longed-for Messiah who fulfilled the Prophets of the Old Covenant and as the new Lawgiver who founded a Church of the New Covenant.*

Obtain for us the grace to see Jesus living in his Church and to follow his teachings in our lives on earth so that we may live forever with him in heaven.

*Veronica Barnes*

*...Who from their labours rest*



## 200 CLUB

### *December 2015*

<b>DRAWN No.</b>	<b>WINNER</b>	<b>PRIZE</b>
79	Bet Dobson	£45
46	Edward Cox	£15
19	Jackie Van Cauwelaert	£10

### *January 2016*

<b>DRAWN No.</b>	<b>WINNER</b>	<b>PRIZE</b>
35	Pauline Kneafsey	£45
17	Ian Henshaw	£15
80	Margaret Rogers	£10

### *February 2016*

<b>DRAWN No.</b>	<b>WINNER</b>	<b>PRIZE</b>
47	Betty Vidler	£45
85	Fiona Crowther	£15
66	Edward Cox	£10

*Gill Craik*

## Dates for your Diary

There are various happenings planned in the parish this summer, which you might like to make a note of in your diary. [*Oh! Alright then on your smartphone if you prefer! :-)*]. Hopefully there is at least one event to interest you. Details will be published in the newsletter.

- **Friday 13 May** - Beetle Drive 8pm in the Parish Room  
*Fun evening for the family raising money for CAFOD*
- **Wednesday 8 June** – Confirmation for some of our younger parishioners.
- **Sunday 19 June** – First Communion Day at the 11.00 Mass
- **Sunday 3 July** – Summer Barbecue 12.00 noon in the Garden  
*Hope and pray for a sunny day!!*
- **Saturday 10 September** – Barn Dance at Akeley Village Hall  
*Another family evening.*
- **Weekend 24/25 September** – Parish Gift Day, Cake and Produce sale.

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## HANDY FOOD MANAGEMENT HINTS

Some handy tips to keep in mind ...

- 1) When baking cakes – *always use eggs at room temperature to avoid curdling when mixing eggs with flour.*
- 2) Healthy option – *as much as possible use a microwave for steaming vegetables and fish.*
- 3) Fresh fruit – *is best kept out of the fridge.*
- 4) Need to squeeze a lemon – *warm halves in the microwave for 1 minute then squeeze.*

*I am sure I can come up with more after a lifetime of cooking including not liking to think how many times I have burnt food as I cannot do without a timer!*

*Louise Evans*

## WORD SEARCH

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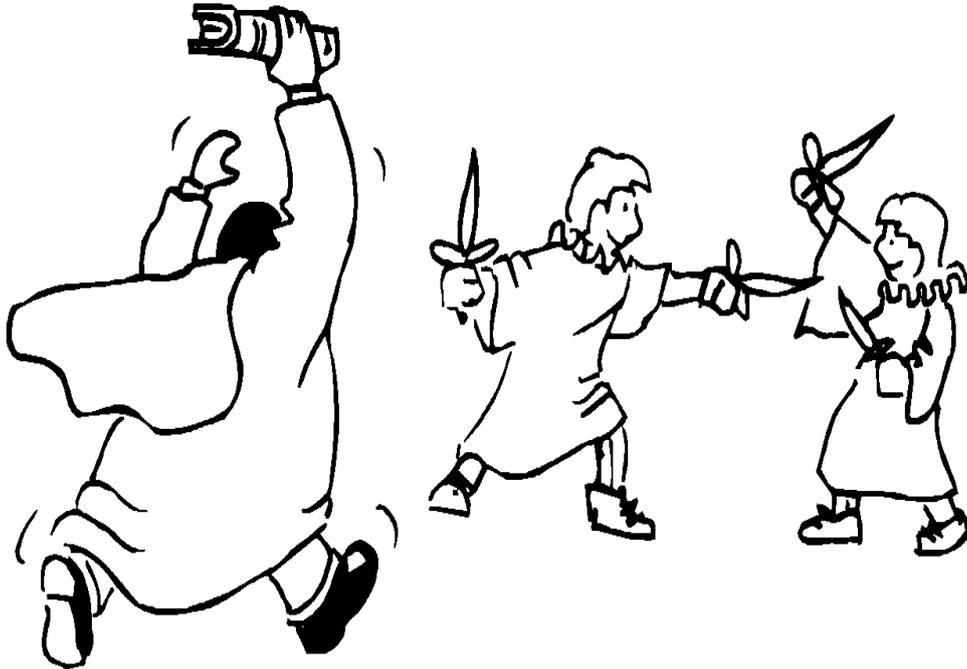
# Paul's Journeys

A B E R E A C L P E H A R M D P  
N G P P I N Y S Q D K I E B E F  
U C H E H F A M Y J E R L R R E  
J A E K D I C O N I U M G H B I  
E L S I S E L E U C I A N A E P  
S O U M T A S I B F C T E T M S  
I N S E R F R J P I O T A G T R  
H U E T G N A D N P E A O I L T  
O B S H E A C O T M I L E T U S  
R Y E K T J L O F A R I C H G A  
L O M E L A S U R E J A O A B L  
S H A I S N Q G M I O S L N U A  
E K O S U H C O I T N A D P L M  
N T E M C L A B J R T T I E C I  
E H F O H P D A S I E G H T E S  
T Y R E S O H P A P L I N A K M

ANTIOCH  
ATHENS  
ATTALIA  
BEREA  
CORINTH  
DERBE  
EPHESUS  
GALATIA  
ICONIUM  
JERUSALEM

LYSTRA  
MILETUS  
PAPHOS  
PERGA  
PHILIPPI  
SALAMIS  
SELEUCIA  
THESSALONICA  
TYRE

## CHUCKLE TIME



### **Father Flynn wouldn't tolerate sword play with the Palm crosses**

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*Members of several religious Orders were together in a room when suddenly the lights went out leaving them in darkness. The Benedictine simply went on saying his Office, which he knew by heart anyway. The Franciscan knelt down and started praying for light. A Dominican suggested to his companions that they might inquire into the nature of light and consider the sequence of causes that might have led to its failure. Meanwhile, the Jesuit had left the room to look for the fuse box and mend the fuse.*

*Douglas Woodruff*

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### **SUMMER EDITION *of* BEMA**

Please submit your entries for the summer edition of BEMA by  
**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2015**, at the very latest.

*Deacon John*

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