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EDGEWAYS

The Sacred Heart Parish magazine

Vol. 34 No. 3

sacredheartwimbledon.org.uk



The life of St Joseph

Separating the facts from the fiction

Parish receives LiveSimply Award

Scenes from SpringAlongaSingSong

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EDGEWAYS – now in its 34th year – is usually published every month except August, but the ramifications of Covid-19 and lockdowns means we have been coming out bi-monthly. Thanks to the Parish Council, it is now free, although any donations towards our running costs are more than welcome in the box to the right of the inner church doors. Articles from readers are always welcome.

Contact the Editor

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or via our mail basket by the bookshop in the Presbytery, or email editoredgeways@icloud.com

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**Our next edition will be published when Covid-19 allows.
Look for details on the parish website**



President: Rev John Clark

Chairman: Sr Patricia

We are a small group of friends doing a large amount of work to facilitate the social aspects of the Sacred Heart Parish.

We organise and fund a Senior Citizens party in January every year. We organise an annual BBQ for the parishioners. We provide bar facilities to various parish organisations. We donate surplus funds to various Charities. The charities we have donated in the past

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The thaw continues ... slowly

At the time of writing, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has just announced that the long-awaited “Freedom Day” from Covid restrictions on June 21 has been postponed for another four weeks, until July 19.

Along with this bad news there was a welcome shaft of good news: the restrictions on weddings and wakes will be eased to bring them into line with funerals. So gone is the legal cap of 50 at weddings, though the rules on social distancing and masks (at least inside the church) remain. And no dancing or stand-up drinking at the reception either, by the way. Canon John will no doubt spell out the guidelines in a future *News and Views*.

This welcome relaxation joins a host of others we have seen gradually introduced over the past few months. At present, the church is open on weekdays between the 10am and 6.30pm Masses, and between the 10am and 8pm Masses on Sundays. Exposition is back, on Wednesday and Fridays after the 10am Mass until noon and from 5.30 to 6.20pm. As are confessions in the back chapels from 10.30 to 11.30am and 6 to 6.20pm on Saturdays and 6 to 6.20pm Monday to Friday.

Sunday Masses are almost – although not quite – back to normal, occurring at 10am, 12 noon, 5pm and 8pm, not forgetting the Saturday evening Vigil Mass 6.30pm.

On top of this, many of the church's groups are also “defrosting” themselves with the opening up of the halls. For instance, the ever-popular Friendship Group plans a Tennis, Pimms and Strawberry Tea in the Lounge on July 9 (guess what – the Wimbledon Championships are also back!). As you might expect, social distancing means numbers are limited and places have to be booked, so keep a sharp



eye on the *News and Views* newsletter for details: the days of “just turn up and we'll find you a seat” are not back yet. But we can expect many more groups to re-emerge from the “days of Zoom” (though I suspect that Zoom won't go away: it's proved itself mighty useful in the last year-and-a-half, so don't delete your Zoom app yet).

So all in all, the parish has many reasons to be cheerful and to give thanks.

† What, with one thing and another to distracting us all this year, I'm conscious that *Edgeways* has neglected to pay due attention to the fact this is the Year of St Joseph, announced by Pope Francis late last year and running until December 8, 2021.

As the Sacred Heart actually has a chapel devoted to this “father in the shadows” – as Pope Francis described him – I thought it appropriate to make amends and devote space to Joseph in this issue, in particular with an investigation into who he was, what we really know about him, what is said about him but we can't either know or prove, and why the Pope should have plucked out this major (though non-speaking) character in hundreds-of-thousands of nativity plays as worthy of especial acclaim.

The more I researched the twisting byways between fact and fiction, the more I enjoyed researching it. I hope you equally enjoy reading it.

Parish receives CAFOD's LiveSimply award

Sacred Heart has become the 90th parish in the country to receive CAFOD's LiveSimply award for the steps we are taking as a parish to 'live simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor'.

What have we learned from this process? The parish has a long tradition of supporting those in poverty, including working together with the Friends of Omabite in 2017 to bring fresh water from a bore hole to Father Ted's village of Omabite in southeast Nigeria; the ongoing Heart Project to support community sponsorship of a refugee family; the night shelter and soup run.

The LiveSimply scheme has helped us focus on the reality that poverty cannot be tackled successfully without addressing environmental problems of pollution, waste, destruction of habitats and species and climate change.

Underpinning everything has been the important message, coming from *Laudato Si'*, to learn to love the created world as a gift and then to take better care of it.

The active engagement of individuals and groups across the parish has made everything possible.

The impetus came three years ago, when the Upper Hall was full of parishioners taking part in a Lent workshop on Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'*. Perhaps you were there? Parishioners generated lots of ideas for how, as individuals and as a parish, we might live more sustainably. An environment group was established, Canon John and the Parish Council made environmental action a priority and in summer 2019 we applied to join the LiveSimply scheme.

Since then different parish groups have



Father John with the LiveSimply award

taken practical steps to reduce our environmental impact: changing our waste disposal contractor, recycling food waste and increasing overall recycling from a standing start to 60% of all waste, cutting carbon emissions by six tonnes a year.

We have reduced our 'flower miles' by buying local/seasonal flowers where possible and using biodegradable foam for arrangements. A wildflower garden and new apple trees have been planted. The parish continues to promote Fairtrade products and we have switched suppliers of coffee and tea for parish events.

Awareness raising, campaigning and community building have gone hand in hand: informal film and discussion nights;

a climate change quiz and sustainably sourced community supper; nature trails and children's craft events, including a prayer tree and prayers for the Amazonia synod. Around 40 parishioners, including local schools, took part in the Climate Coalition's lobby of Parliament in 2019 and the virtual lobby in 2020.

You can also now receive weekly LiveSimply tips via the parish's twitter account. And during the first lockdown, when we couldn't meet in person, parishioners sent in photos of the wonders of nature on our doorsteps and/or photos of 'little daily actions' to live sustainably and these were displayed on the altar during our streamed masses.

Reflection and prayer have underpinned everything else: Canon John has included prayers for our common home every May during *Laudato Si'* week and throughout the year, including a Mass for Creation involving local primary schools in September 2020 and a pet blessing on the feast of St Francis of Assisi in October 2019.

What next? The CAFOD award is certainly not the end of the process – there's still lots to do and we would love you to get involved! The Sacred Heart Environment Group warmly welcomes new faces. To find out more, please contact sarah.tobin@btconnect.com or Eleanor.bowman@sacred-heartwimbledon.org.uk.



A climate change quiz night was one awareness-raising activity run by the Sacred Heart Environment Group

The environment group would also like parishioners to know about an initiative to make our streets greener run by the Mer-ton Climate Action Group.

Street and front garden planting is encouraged to improve community well-being and to deliver important environmental benefits (increasing wildlife, improving air quality, and helping to prevent flooding). The next community planting dates are scheduled for 19 June and 17 July, with flexibility for street-specific dates.

If you would like to volunteer to co-ordinate planting activities in your street, want to get in touch with your local street co-ordinator or find out more please visit frontgardenfriendly.uk/Mertongardenstreets or contact cag.greeningmerton@gmail.com or Alexandra Thurston from the parish environment group (ama-thurston@hotmail.com)



Mass for Creation, September 2020

There will be a limited supply of donations of peat free compost, pots, seeds and seedlings of bee-friendly plants including fruit and vegetable plants if needed.

Sarah Tobin

Players put a Spring in their step in a singalong show

The Sacred Heart's acclaimed Edge Hill Players once more charged up their camera, phones and tablets and raided their wardrobes for another entertaining tread on the virtual boards with *SpringAlongaSingSong*.

Again produced by Wendy Tansey, Terry Marsh and tech wizard Phil Barnes, the 40-minute show featured the talents of players young, old and in-between performing Spring-themed songs, dances, skits and poems and was streamed live via YouTube on May 1.

Appropriately topped and tailed by Tchaikovsky's *Waltz of the Flowers*, the show kicked off with Louisa Knox taking a *Spring Walk* while dreaming of those exotic, faraway places we have been denied visiting because of Covid-19 restrictions.

Then it was back ground in Wimbledon with Calvin, Livia and Sonny Cornelius and

SpringAlongaSingSong



Dougie Millar for an entertaining recitation of Roger McGough's *The Fight of the Year* (including a ringside commentator), and Eduardo Sanchez and little Sira Sanchez-Jones (with a big guitar) performing *Doh A Deer*.

It wouldn't be an Edge Hill Players production unless there was some panto in the mix, and sure enough, along came Sue Harvey, Nancy Allen, Judy Esterton and Felicity Marshall bedecked for the occasion in *The Witches Return!* In a witty script by Nancy, it turned out all those potions witches brew that previously caused such panto mischief were on this occasion actually anti-Covid vaccines. Well worth a re-wind to catch all the jokes.

Our musical director Rob Rathbone was out to cause some mischief of his own (particularly among lovers of all things feathered) in a witty rewrite of Tom Lehrer, *Poisoning Parakeets in the Park*, which some might have been considered bad taste but I thought good common sense.

Other musical turns were less controversial: *Somewhere Over The Rainbow*, a ballet sequence by Lillie Rodger, Bex Gray, Natasha Sieradzki and Mariona McGarvie; a lovely short piano recital by Esme



It's Roger McGough's *Fight of the Year*, and your ringside commentator is...



Lizzie Burder and Bonnie Rodger perform a virtual duet of *Take Me or Leave Me*, from the musical *Rent*. Anyone who has tried to combine two scenes – taken on different cameras in different locations – into one in a video editing program knows there’s a lot of skill involved to do it as seamlessly as here

Offiong-Edwards; *Little People*, performed by Laurie, Florence and Clemmie (accompanied by Big Person Rob Dalling); *April Showers* by Alan Nicholas; a sepia-tinted Duncan Rodger giving a swinging rendition of the Frank Sinatra classic, *I’ve Got The World on a String*; and in direct contrast to that, a colourful display of Indian classical dance, *Bahrathanatyam*, by Jeba, Jerusha and Jemima Mariadoss.

Interspersed were poems by Eimear Eagle (dressed as a lion), Livia Cornelius and Jairus Mariadoss; entertaining skits from Martha and Celia Harrison (Charlie and the Chocolate Factory) and Teddy Curral and Felicity Marshall (May the 4th Be With You); and some jokes of such groan-worthy corniness that I must recruit Calvin, Livia and Sonny to help me fill the Chuckles column in the *Edgeways Kids’ Stuff* pages.



Above: The lion’s not sleeping tonight! Eimear Eagle



Left: Laurie, Florence and Clemmie (accompanied by Rob Dalling) perform *Little People*. There’s some evidence that maybe Big People’s wardrobes might have been going on...



The Witches Return! Sue Harvey, Nancy Allen, Julie Esterson and Felicity Marshall have still been brewing up their magic potions, but this time to find an anti-Covid vaccine. It might not be a case so much of eye of newt and toe of frog, but as they sang at the end, stirring the potion with *Positive Thinking* helps.

The show ended on a truly spiritual high, with Katy Tansey and Bernadette Heathfield's lovely interwoven *Salve Regina* plain-song and *The Magnificat*. Listening to the former brought home to me just how much

I had missed singing it at the 11.15 Mass.

SpringAlongaSingSong is the third Edge Hill Players online production since the beginning of the UK Covid-19-related lockdowns began, and showed that the produc-



TLillie Rodger, Bex Gray, Natasha Sieradzki and Mariona McGarvie take us *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*

tion team of Wendy, Terry and Phil, as well as the performers, have got better and better at using the digital platform as time has gone on. Like everyone else, I'm very much looking forward to see the players return to performing in the Upper Hall – their true home – but at the same time, I would regret seeing the expertise gained in the last year-and-a-half go to waste.

Perhaps there is a place for these streamed variety shows to continue in the Edge Hill Players' repertoire in future, to fill the gaps between the live performances?

SpringAlongaSingSong is still available to view and download, as are the previous EHP online shows, *ZoomAlonga DingDong* and *Christmas Cracker*. Visit the www.edgehillplayers.com and click on the appropriate button. The show was performed to raise money for Dons



Not really!
No parakeets were harmed in the singing of this song

Bob Rathbone invites us to go *Poisoning Parakeets in the Park*. Great idea! Where do we sign up, Bob?

Local Action Group, a network of local volunteers, in partnership with the AFC Wimbledon Foundation, providing practical support to tackle food, furniture and digital poverty in the Wimbledon and wider south London community. Please consider donating to this worthy local cause and visit donslocalaction.org/donate/

John Symes

NODA gongs for Edge Hill Players

There was excellent news for the Edge Hill Players in the latest awards announced by NODA (the National Operatic and Dramatic Association), the charity that represents amateur theatre societies, which has thousands of members across the UK and Ireland. EHP won two prestigious “gongs”.

The first award, the NODA Nigel Gravette Award for Best Performance in a Pantomime, went to Peter Lindsay for his performance as Donald de Pfeffle McDonald (pictured) in the EHP’s pantomime *Snow White and the Magnificent Seven*, which was performed at the beginning of 2020, just before the coronavirus pandemic hit.

The second award, NODA Flame Award, has been given to the group as a whole ‘For Inspirational Contribution to the Pursuit of Excellence in Theatre’. And while both awards are very well deserved, as Wendy Tansey wrote in a recent parish weekly newsletter, “the NODA Flame Award truly reflects the community ethos of the group; that is to offer affordable entertainment for all the family and community”.



Bereavement support

The Bereavement Support Group is very aware of all the people who usually attend the Drop In and are not able to meet just now. Also of all who have been bereaved recently and of some who have lost loved ones some time ago. We would like to let you know that we are available and we offer you support by telephone or by email. Please feel welcome to email Sadie Smith sadiesmith3@talktalk.net or call 020 8946 5198 at any time to be connected to a Bereavement Support Group member.

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An ecumenical Good Friday via Zoom

“Guilty or not guilty?”

This was the key question asked about Jesus the Nazarene on the morning of the first Good Friday. We all know the answer.

It was also the question asked at the Service of Christian Witness held on Zoom for a large audience (congregation?) in 56 little boxes on screen at 10am on Good Friday, April 2.

This annual event, organised by West Wimbledon Churches Together, brought together faithful members of the eight local Christian churches, including the Sacred Heart, in a service of welcome, readings, storytelling, music, songs, prayer and, most powerful of all, shared silence.

Led by Deacon Dawn Canham of the

Methodist Church in Raynes Park with music by Joe Davison of the Raynes Park Community Church, participants from each of the churches played the parts telling the story of the Passion of Christ in turn from the perspectives of Pontius Pilate, King Herod, Simon the Cyrene and the ordinary onlookers in Jerusalem and by the Place of the Skull where the crucifixion took place.

The subject of suffering in these difficult times of Covid and lockdown was placed in context by Alistair Newman new curate of St Matthew’s Church, Durham Road, whose homily invited those who are suffering in any way to place their troubles at the Foot of the Cross and to believe that God’s love is stronger than death.

David Hurst



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St Joseph: separating the facts from the fiction

When proclaiming the Year of Saint Joseph, Pope Francis spoke of him as “a father in the shadows”. JOHN SYMES steps into the shadows to find out what we really know of Mary’s husband and our Lord’s earthly foster-father

In his Apostolic Letter *Patris corde* (“With a Father’s Heart”) in which he proclaimed the Year of Saint Joseph, Pope Francis describes Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows.

The letter marked the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pope Pius IX’s declaration of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church, but it is also telling that Pope Francis wrote *Patris corde* against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, to which he specifically alluded. The pandemic, he said, helped us see more clearly the importance of “ordinary” people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, “the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence,” who nonetheless played “an incomparable role in the history of salvation”.

That a man who was “a father in the shadows” and “a hidden presence” should be so honoured and commemorated for his “incomparable role” must have left many Catholics who thought about it scratching their heads and asking, “Well, what do we know about Joseph?”

The ‘official’ history

What we know of Joseph in the canon of works that make up the New Testament agreed at the Council of Trent comes from the gospels of Matthew and Luke, the only works that cover the Annunciation, the



Saint Joseph with the Infant Jesus, by Guido Reni, c. 1635. Over the centuries, artists have depicted Joseph as everything from a young man to a Abraham-like elderly patriarch, as here

Nativity and the Flight into Egypt.

Even here, there is some confusion sown. Matthew, in his genealogy of Jesus, describes Joseph as the son of Jacob, while Luke has him as the son of Heli. Some biblical scholars have explained the discrepancy on Matthew using a strictly Jewish method of tracing Jesus’ genealogy through the male line, while Luke traced it through Mary’s line. No matter: both lineages include King David (and trace it even further back to Adam and thence God).

It is highly likely that Joseph, being a

descendent of David, was born in the royal city Bethlehem, but by the time he is first mentioned he is living in Nazareth and working as a *tekton* – which could be translated as either a mechanic or a highly skilled craftsman, particularly a carpenter. The latter definition is the one that has handed down and generally accepted..

Why Joseph had forsaken his home town to move to Galilee is unsaid, although the simple and most likely answer is that Nazareth was close to where the work was. It was near the city of

Sepphoris, which had been more or less razed by the Roman client-king Herod the Great when he recaptured it from the Parthians in about 43 BC, and was being rebuilt on a lavish scale. Joseph's skills would have been much in demand.

That Joseph and Mary were descended from the line of David explains why they travelled to Bethlehem for Caesar Augustus's great census. The journey was particularly fraught, as by this time Mary was pregnant, itself an initial additional worry for Joseph, who we are told, agonised over the identity of the father, being unaware of the mystery of the Incarnation. According to Matthew, his mind was only put at rest by a dream in which he was visited by an angel saying, "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy



Joseph The Carpenter, by Georges de La Tour, c 1645, shown being watched by an attentive young Jesus

Ghost ... And Joseph, rising from his sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took unto him his wife."

The Nativity story is too well-known to recite here, but it is interesting to note that the Flight to Egypt was precipitated by another of Joseph's dreams, in which the Lord instructed him, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him" (Matt 2:12).

It should be noted here that to embark on such a hazardous journey with a young wife and an infant son at such a perilous time is an outstanding display of example of a father who was not only extremely resourceful, but also what Pope Francis calls "creatively courageous".

According to Matthew, an angel appeared to Joseph following the death of Herod, instructing him to lead his family out of Egypt to "the land of Israel", although even here the situation was not safe under Herod's successor Archelaus, and following another warning dream, they travelled to Galilee. We next find Joseph, Mary and Jesus back in Nazareth.

The last mention of Joseph is the frantic hunt for the missing 12-year-old boy in Jerusalem, when he is found precociously preaching to his elders in the temple (Luke

2-42-51). Joseph then disappears from the Gospel narrative, apart from tangential references to “Jesus, son of Joseph”.

The ‘unofficial’ history

It is within the “unofficial history” that we find ourselves in the “hidden” parts and “shadows” of Joseph’s story.

These fall into two broad categories: the implicit – reasonable inferences made by biblical scholars on what was highly likely to have occurred based on what we know of Jewish society at the time – and the explicit – the apocryphal works that exist outside the official canon. Among those that are rich in details about Joseph are the so-called [Gospel of James](#), the [Pseudo-Matthew](#), the [Gospel of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary](#), the [Story of Joseph the Carpenter](#), and the [Life of the Virgin and Death of Joseph](#).

By their very nature, these works must carry a canonical health warning: treat with extreme caution. As the *Catholic Encyclopedia* says, “... the non-admittance of these works into the Canon of the Sacred Books casts a strong suspicion upon their contents; and, even granted that some of the facts recorded by them may be founded on trustworthy traditions, it is in most instances next to impossible to discern and sift these particles of true history from the fancies with which they are associated”.

But we should not dismiss these works out of hand: they are often the source of many of the legends and traditions that surround Joseph to this day.

Life before Mary

The apocryphal writings have it that before his betrothal to Mary, Joseph had married,



Gfrehalter, via Wikipedia

Marriage of the Virgin, Saint-Quiriacus de Provens; Joseph is shown holding the traditional lilies

at the age of 40, a woman called Melcha or Escha by some, Salome by others. They lived 49 years together and had six children, two daughters and four sons, the youngest of whom was James (the Less, sometimes referred to as “the Lord’s brother”).

These may be the “brethren of the Lord” referred to in all four gospels, as well as in Acts 1:14 and I Corinthians 9.5. However, the exact definition of “brethren” here has been much debated, with some scholars arguing that it does not mean “brothers and sisters” but cousins or some other, wider meaning that denotes closeness that was not necessarily familial.

Although it is to be found in many Orthodox writings, the belief that Jesus had step-brothers and stepsisters was not adopted by the Western church, which instead followed the line argued by the influential translator of the Vulgate Bible,



Dream of St Joseph, c. 1625–1630, by Gerard Seghers. Joseph was a man much-visited by heavenly dreams, both before and after his marriage to Mary. Here he is warned to flee to Egypt.

St Jerome (c 340–420), who contended that Joseph, like Mary, was celibate throughout his life.

Marriage to Mary

According to apocryphal sources, a year after the death of Joseph's wife, the priests announced throughout Judea their intention to find a suitable potential husband for Mary, who was then aged about 12–14. Joseph, whose simple arithmetic suggests was about 90 at the time (if he was 40 at the time of his "first marriage"), was one of the contenders and travelled to Jerusalem among the candidates. A miracle manifested God's choice of Joseph, and two years later the Annunciation took place.

The miracle concerned gave rise to one of the more enduring legends about Joseph. According to this, all the contenders were ordered to give up their staves in order for the choice to be made. Joseph's staff is said to have suddenly blossomed with lilies, showing that he was he

was clearly favoured by God, which is why he is often depicted with lilies in paintings, stained glass windows and statues.

If we accept the two-year betrothal, we can dismiss the suggestion made in some apocryphal works that the priests wanted Mary affianced quickly because she was already pregnant. Similarly, the idea that the priests were looking for a "guardian" of Mary, rather than a potential husband, is an eastern Orthodox tradition that has never been accepted by the Roman church.

What is more a matter of debate was whether she merely betrothed or actually married to Joseph at the time of the Annunciation and Incarnation.

Most modern commentators agree with St Thomas Aquinas' conclusion from the relevant sections of the Gospel of Matthew that they were merely affianced – Mary appears to still be living with her mother at the time of the Annunciation, rather than with Joseph. This of course accords with Matthew's account of Joseph's troubled

thoughts on learning that Mary was pregnant and resolution to “put her away quietly” i.e. discreetly drop her, until his dream of the angel’s visit put his mind at ease.

However, it seems clear that by the time of their trip to Bethlehem the two were man and wife. Yet despite its popularity among artists to depict the scene – among them Giotto, Raphael, and [many others](#), – there is scant information about when and where the marriage took place. It seems highly likely that it took place in Nazareth, since both were living there at the time, but exactly when is not made explicit in any source, other than Matthew’s almost throwaway comment that Joseph “,, and took unto him his wife [Mary]” after his dream. This places it sometime after the Incarnation and before the journey to Bethlehem.

The death of Joseph

There are three enduring traditions commonly associated with Joseph’s death: first, that he died before Jesus’ public ministry began; second, that he lived an incredibly long life; third, that he died a “happy death”, with both Mary and Jesus beside him.

The support for each of these is two-fold: what is in the Gospels, or at least what can be reasonably deduced as highly likely, even though it is not explicitly stated; and our old friends, the apocryphal accounts. Sometimes both seem back up each other, sometimes they differ, but to take them by turn:

That Joseph died at some stage after he and Mary discovered Jesus preaching in the temple at Jerusalem, noted above, but before Jesus began his public ministry is the most likely explanation for Joseph’s subsequent absence from the gospels. He is not mentioned among those at the wedding at Cana, to which, if he were alive, he might reasonably be expected to have



Death of Saint Joseph, by Francesco Maggiotto (1805), surrounded by Jesus, Mary and angels and cherubs. Artists began depicting Joseph’s “happy death” in the 17th Century.

accompanied Mary, nor is he included when the New Testament works speak of the Jesus’ mother and brothers and/or brethren on other occasions.,

Most notably he is not present at the crucifixion, where Jesus, shortly before his death, entrusted his mother’s care to his beloved disciple John – an unlikely event if her husband were still alive.,

From the apocryphal works, notably *The Story of Joseph the Carpenter* (which dates from the 5th century and purports to tell Joseph’s story as dictated by Jesus), stems the belief that Joseph died at the age of 111 on 20 July (AD 18 or 19). This advanced age seems highly unlikely, although it does have the dubious merit of tying in with the

other apocryphal works, mentioned above, that have Joseph aged about 90 when he embarked on his “second marriage”. The early scholar St Epiphanius of Salamis (c 310-403) has Joseph dying at a slightly more credible 90, but again, there is little if any evidence to support this.

Related to this is the enduring tradition that Joseph died “a happy death” in the presence of Jesus (then aged about 19), Mary and angels. Again, there is no supporting evidence, but it gained widespread currency and Joseph was popularly acclaimed the saint to call on for a peaceful and holy death; artists began depicting such a deathbed scene in the 17th century.

Veneration

The veneration of St Joseph would seem to have started about 800, and references to him as *Nutritor domini* (educator/guardian of the Lord) continued throughout the 9th century. It was St Thomas (1225–74), who first floated the idea that Joseph was essential in the plan for the Incarnation because, if she had not been married, the pregnant Mary would have been stoned to death. It was not an idea that found much purchase with other scholars.

Veneration received a major boost in the 15th century through the works of the popular preacher Bernardine of Siena, the theologian Pierre d’Ailly, and particularly Jean Gerson, who wrote the influential *Consideration sur Saint Joseph* and preached sermons on St Joseph at the Council of Constance.

Joseph’s name was inserted into the Litany of Saints in 1726 by Pope Benedict XIII and his feast day, March 19, was fixed as a



solemnity. Benedict XIII also created another feast day in the second week of Easter, although Pope Pius XII in 1955 replaced this with the feast of St Joseph the Worker on the May 1, a deliberate counter to the Communist celebration of May Day.

In 1889, Pope Leo XIII put St Joseph centre-stage in his encyclical *Quamquam pluries*, urging Catholics to pray to him as patron of the Universal Church in light of the many challenges the faith faced from modernity.

Leo also set the guidelines for what could be called a “theology of St Joseph”, fitting him into the history of salvation, of human redemption, both at the level of the Incarnation, as husband of Mary and father of Jesus, and at the level of the Church’s life, as its natural protector. Many of these ideas are echoed in *Patris corde*,

However, Josephology, as the theological study of St Joseph is called, was slow to take off. It was not until 1989, on the occasion of the centenary of *Quamquam pluries*, that Pope John Paul II issued *Redemptoris Custos* (“Guardian of the Redeemer”), which presented St Joseph’s role in the plan of redemption, as part of the “redemption documents” he issued such as *Redemptoris Mater* to which it refers.

On a more prosaic, weekly level, Pope John XXIII inserted the name of Joseph in the Canon of the Mass, immediately after that of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in 1962. In 2013, Pope Francis had his name added to the three other Eucharistic Prayers.

Now with the celebration of the Year of St Joseph, it could be said that here is a father who has definitely stepped out of the shadows.

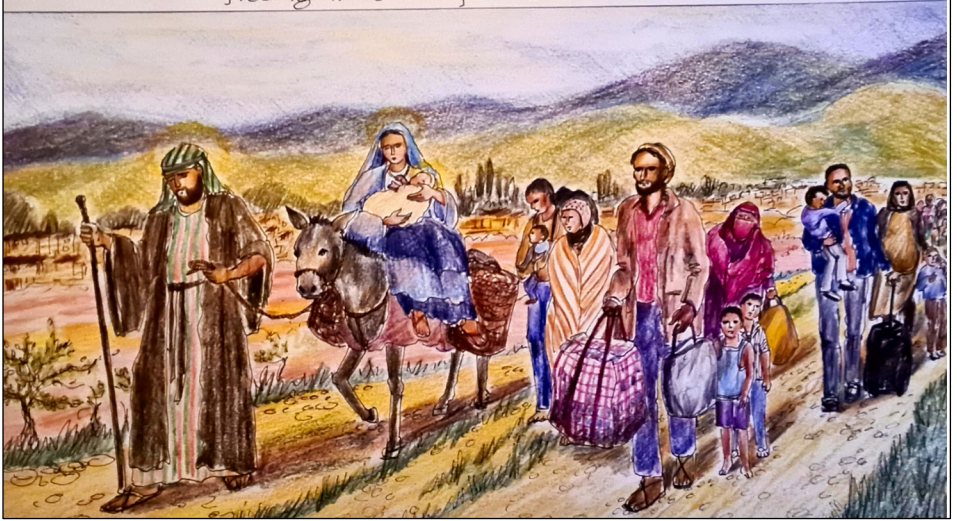
St John’s Seminary, Boston via Unsplash

St Joseph at the Sacred Heart

To celebrate the Year of Saint Joseph, Rehana Edun-Noyes organised a display of art work and artefacts about him in the church. Among the pictures on display were Moya Hogarth's distinctive paintings, as well as works from the parish's own collection already hanging in St Joseph's Chapel

Flight into Egypt

Joseph, Mary and the Child Jesus flee to Egypt. Present day refugees fleeing wars and persecution.



Flight into Egypt, a work specially created by Moya for the exhibition, from an idea of Rehana's



Pope Francis' Prayer for Year of Saint Joseph
With veneration of the Holy Fathers, Spouse of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the Holy Child entrusted to his arms, from the year Mary placed her trust with the Christ because truth.
Blessed Joseph, be as this, show yourself a father and guide on the path of life. Obtain for us peace, mercy and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen.





Left: An appropriate display of carpentry tools by the tabernacle introduced viewers to the works on display in the St Joseph's Chapel behind



As well as the statue in the Saint Joseph's chapel (see front cover) there are two other unusual depictions of the saint in the church. The first (left) has him as a Franciscan monk, with the baby Jesus holding the globe signifying the universal church. The second (right) is of Joseph the Worker, commissioned by Hannah Azzouz as a memorial to former Parish Priest Fr Francis (Frank) Walsh. Its rough-hewn depiction did not find favour with the parish and it subsequently found itself confined to corner of the baptistry



A terrible storm at sea

TWELFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Jesus and his disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee when a terrible storm blew up and huge waves crashed over the boat. Use the clues to find the code and then use the code to find out what they said to Jesus

A young dog

△ □ △ △ ◇

Season following autumn

⊞ * △ ○ ↓ ~

A tune that is sung

* =○ △ ⊞

Something to wipe your feet on

→ ○ ○

Someone you visit when ill

⊞ =○ ◇ ○ =○ ~

“
 → ○ * ○ ↓ ~ ⊞ ↓ ○ ~ ↓
 ⊞ =○ * △ ⊞ ⊞ =○ ⊞ △ !
 ⊞ =○ ◇ =○ □
 △ =○ ○ ◇ ○ ~ ↓ ?”



MARK 4:39

CHUCKLES

Q: What did the frog order when he hopped into McDonald's?

A: French flies and a Diet Croak!

Q: Where do sick boats go to get healthy?

A: The dock!

I'll tell you a coronavirus joke, but you have to wait two weeks before you see if you got it!



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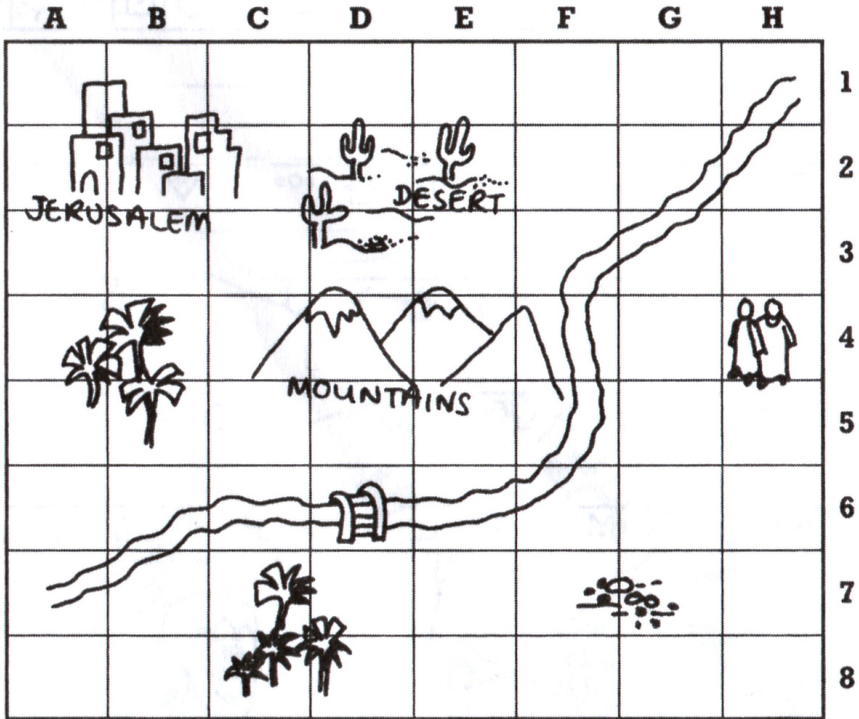
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The precious gift of family

Early last year – just before the first lockdown – an anonymous reader sent us this story. A year-and-a-half-later, we finally publish it – with apologies to our contributor for the delay – since it has special poignancy with what we have all been through, and has special pertinence in the Year of St Joseph.

A little boy asked his father how much he earned an hour.

The father was angry as to why the boy had asked the question, but replied that he earned £100 per hour. The son asked his father for £50, which his father gave him but told him to go to his room.

The father later went to his son's bedroom and saw him counting a bundle of notes.

The son said, "Father, if I give you this £100, will you come home one hour earlier from work tomorrow, so we can be together for an hour?" The father tried to hide his tears.

The priest who was telling this story then said, "Time and values. If we die, our jobs can be replaced in months or even days and our colleagues will forget us. Our family will pray for us, remember our anniversaries and memories for a long time.

"How do we spend our time and lives with people gifted to us as family by God?"



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St Thomas More's Prayer for Good Humour

In a Christmas address to the Roman Curia in 2014, Pope Francis said, "A bit of good humour is very good for us! It will do us much good to pray St Thomas More's prayer frequently: I pray it every day, and it helps me." Here it is:



Korea.net/Korean Culture and Information Service via Wikipedia

*Grant me, O Lord, good digestion, and also something to digest.
Grant me a healthy body, and the necessary good humour to
maintain it.*

*Grant me a simple soul that knows to treasure all that is good
and that doesn't frighten easily at the sight of evil,
but rather finds the means to put things back in their place.*

*Give me a soul that knows not boredom, grumblings, sighs and
laments,*

nor excess of stress, because of that obstructing thing called "I."

Grant me, O Lord, a sense of good humour.

*Allow me the grace to be able to take a joke to discover in life a bit
of joy,
and to be able to share it with others.*

Feast of St Thomas More, Martyr: June 22