

2024

EDGEWAYS

The Sacred Heart Parish Magazine
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www.sacredheartwimbledon.org.uk



Edgehill Players' much loved writer and director
Terry Marsh and Wendy Tansey

SACRED HEART PARISH

Edge Hill
Wimbledon
SW19 4LU

HELLO FROM THE EDITOR

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Our warmest congratulations go to Fr David, who has been appointed by the Archbishop an Honorary Canon of St George's Cathedral, Southwark. This honour is in recognition for his long and dedicated service to the diocese as Chair of the Art & Architecture Committee for 21 years and now Chair of the Historic Churches Committee, and for a number of years as Director of the diocesan Formation Centre which was located in Tooting.



When I congratulated Fr David on this honour and asked what it meant, he replied with his usual witty smile, 'well, it certainly does not come with a pay rise'! There will be a recognition service in the church for Fr David on or around St George's Day in April.

Our front cover shows the photograph of Wendy Tansey and Terry Marsh, much-loved writer and director of the Edgehill players which has returned after a lengthy lay-off with two productions each year for the past seven years. There follows a review of the 2024 Edgehill Players pantomime, *Sleeping Beauty*.

Later in this edition of Edgeways we get to know more about Rob Hitchcock, our new Youth Minister, Primi Fontanora on behalf of the PPC encourages parishioners to be more generous, we recall the Service for Christian Unity and we take a look at the past and future talks organised by the parish Newman Circle.

And read all about abstinence during Lent which starts ... on Valentine's Day. Now, is that co-incidence?!

As always, I remind readers that Edgeways is *your* parish magazine and needs the input of parishioners with ideas, content and, from June onwards, editorial skills. Please email these to dthurst52@gmail.com

David Hurst, Edgeways editor - until June 2024

LENTEN FASTING

In 1873 a Bishop issued these regulations for Lent, 'Every day during Lent except Sunday, is a day of fast of one meal, which should not be taken before mid-day, with the allowance of a moderate collation in the evening.'

A collation is a light meal, a snack. Also, meat was not allowed on Wednesdays, Fridays or Saturdays. Do you - be honest - fast every weekday in Lent and avoid meat three times a week? I know I don't. In the eastern Churches eggs are banned in Lent, so no cakes etc. We have it easy in the Latin Church!

Under the current regulations in England & Wales Catholics are required on Fridays to abstain from meat and to unite this with prayer. Those who don't eat meat should abstain from some other food. It is easy to try and wriggle out of this but can we not make the effort to fast and abstain on Fridays in Lent, especially on Good Friday, as Friday is the day of our Lord's death on the Cross? Ash Wednesday is also a day of abstinence and fasting. Note that abstinence means not eating meat; it doesn't mean we have to eat fish.

For obvious reasons of health, the young and old, and those who are ill or pregnant, are not bound to fast but otherwise it is good to fast. The CAFOD family fast day is a good opportunity to fast as a family.

I saw some Canadian lobster on sale in the supermarket. Quite apart from the issue of its carbon footprint (although do crustaceans have feet?), eating expensive seafood in Lent might be within the letter of the law, but is it within the spirit? Compared with yesteryear or with eastern Christians we are not good at fasting. However, the conspicuous consumption in modern western society perhaps requires us to make a special effort to fast this Lent.



FROM THE DESK OF FATHER DAVID

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The regulations I quoted above also say, *'All alike should enter into the spirit of this holy season, which is, in a special manner, a time of prayer, and sorrow for sin, of almsgiving, and mortification.'*

We fast in Lent not to lose weight but to express our sorrow for our sins, to show solidarity with the poor and hungry of the world. and to unite ourselves with other Catholics in a common witness and sacrifice.

What to do if you are invited out for a meal on a Friday? If friends and colleagues value us they will not be offended if we politely tell them that we don't eat meat on a Friday. This simple act permits us to witness to our faith and to show it is important to us.

If you don't fast on a Friday, this Lent is a good time to start, added to almsgiving and prayer.

Fr David

THE PARISH PANTOMIME - REVIEW

'Everyone loves a fairy when she's 40!'

This adaptation of the title of Tessie O'Shea's classic song neatly represents this reviewer's opinion of these pillar characters in the latest Parish Panto.

The audience loved the septet of multi-coloured fairies with a combined aged of ... I daren't even guess, when each one, accompanied by two younger counterparts, gave a suitable gift at the christening party of the royal baby, Princess Briar Rose, as she peeked over her pram to raucously sing, *'It's my party and I'll cry if I want to!'*

The seventh late-winter-to-avoid-the-rush pantomime from our

own Edgehill Players was *'The Sleeping Beauty'*, loosely adapted and creatively directed by pantomime heroes, Terry Marsh and Wendy Tansey.

But beware, the power-hungry bad fairy, Carabosse with her posse of hobgoblins, arrived at the *'better than Mar-a Lago'* palace to place a spell on the young princess that she would prick her finger at the age of 18 and fall into a deep sleep for 200 years.



THE PARISH PANTOMIME - REVIEW

The witch's theme song was, *'If I ruled the world, every day would be a day full of gloom!'* and even a kingly amnesty on all sharp objects and a swarm of *'Burt's Bees'* did not prevent the spell from coming true on a spinning wheel and, lo, the princess and royals all fell into a deep sleep.

Cue for Doris Day's charming *'Dream a Little Dream of Me'* before the royal descendant, the 11th Prince Renard of Transylvania, arrived to cut down the forest with a chainsaw only to find that he was usurped in *'that'* kiss to wake the princess by teenage fairies with smart phones delivering a *'wake-up App'* – a thoroughly modern twist!

Giving parish singers and dancers the chance to shine led to troupes dancing to the lively, *'Up town funk'* and, of course, *'Wake me up before you go go!'* and Katy's Songbirds delivering *'Masquerade'*.



Our panto would not be true to its own traditions without **that** cow, Buttercup from *'Jack etc.'*, rocking up and we were not let down – well, we do have the costume!

After our three priests made their obligatory guest appearance, the rousing finale with over 90 performers on the stage, Mexican Wave, and all, was, *'I'm walking on sunshine'*.

Truly another pantomime fizzing with joyous energy for all ages!

From our Arts Correspondent (photographs courtesy of John Stone)

INTRODUCING ROB HITCHCOCK

'I knew what I was meant to be when I fell into the Spirit'

This powerful and moving statement explains why Rob Hitchcock first became a youth minister in our Catholic faith. An event happened to him in 2009 at the age of 15 when he was taking part in a retreat at Walsingham run by the Charismatic Renewal Movement.

As his group were 'Praying in the Spirit' together, Rob actually fell over. He knew, from that moment on, that this was the Gift of the Spirit and that his life was never going to be the same again.

Rob was born in Burton-on-Trent, famous as *'the land of Carling and Marmite'* - that means using yeast at both ends of the brewing process. See what you learn from reading Edgeways!

His is a 'mostly' (his word) Catholic family: his mother is Irish Catholic and his father is 'well, not bothered'! He is the middle of three children with an older and a younger sister. He was a student at St Modwin's RC school where in the sixth form Rob studied Travel and Tourism but, in 2014, he really felt that God was calling him to the ministry.

He achieved a BA from St Mary's University in Twickenham and then a master's degree in Theology, Religion and Ethics while studying under Dr Peter Tyler. He enjoyed learning about spirituality, in particular reading St John of the Cross and (our old friend) St Ignatius of Loyola.

His first job as a youth minister was at the parish of St Mary Immaculate and St Andrew in Hitchen which is run by Assumptorist priests. The role involved training all ages in the parish for the Sacraments: baptismal parents, first holy communicants, confirmands, marriage candidates and RCIA course attendees.

Rob says that his proudest achievement there was to develop, even to 'heal', relationships between the church primary school and the parish priest.



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Impressive.

Although Rob was not actively looking for a new job when the phone rang, he jumped at the chance as he knew of the Sacred Heart parish, saying that it is 'famous'! After the interview he did not think he had got the job but then the offer came through and now ... welcome!

In his teaching role, Rob says that his vision and hope is not to just churn out what is on the page but to inspire those he is working with, whatever their age, to recall, 'oh, that is what Rob taught me'. He says that 'learning is more than just the book'.

Even his friends flatter Rob as having an encyclopedic knowledge of religion – should we test him, I wonder?!

If we allow Rob time for a hobby in his super-busy parish ministry, he will spend it playing music which he luckily takes to naturally. He is due to play his violin with the Hertfordshire Philharmonic, no less, on Saturday 9 March at St Mary's Church in Potters Bar.

The role of Faith Minister involves preparing candidates for the sacraments, working closely with the parish schools and developing youth to young adult Catholic formation.

Rob invites active support from sacramental parents and other parishioners to step forward and as catechists and to help in other support roles. So, if you have the time, please do not be afraid to contact Rob on wimbledonpfm@rcaos.org.uk

Welcome and good luck, Rob!

'INSPIRING GENEROSITY'

***'This has taught us love – that Jesus gave up his life for us; and we, too, ought to give up our lives for our friends.'* 1 John 3:16**

To be a Christian means following Christ to become more like him.

God died on the cross for us. Jesus the man gave himself so utterly to his mission that he seldom even had time to pray quietly by himself before crowds came to him, wanting another piece of him. In this way, Jesus sets us the ultimate example of generosity.



And isn't the first line of the Prayer of St Ignatius, familiar to anyone at a Jesuit school, *Lord, teach me to be generous?*

And so, it's clear that each of us should be on a journey towards becoming the most generous person we can possibly be.

But God doesn't ask everything of us at once – we're only weak humans, after all. Our journey is undertaken in faltering baby steps, our little hand in the hand of God as he leads us on our tottering, tentative way towards whatever version of goodness we can manage.

- Could I give a little more to each collection?
- Could I serve coffee after mass once a month?
- Could I help run the Brownie group?
- Could I visit a lonely elderly person?

'INSPIRING GENEROSITY'

In making these small acts of generosity, we normalise the giving of ourselves, our money and our time to others. Each further act becomes more do-able. Before long we find ourselves naturally becoming more open to giving whatever is needed for the benefit of others. And in this outpouring of ourselves and our gifts we find ourselves unburdened, our loads lightened and we are filled with joy.

So why not just give it a go!

To get involved in parish groups and activities look for opportunities on the parish website below, in the newsletter or speak to Fr David, Fr Matthew or Fr Sebastian.

www.sacredheartwimbledon.org.uk/parishcommunity

To donate to the parish, use the card machines at the back of the church, increase your standing order or speak to Chris Woodward (email below) about targeted donations. Please sign a gift-aid form which increase your donation by 25%.

finance@sacredheartwimbledon.org.uk

Primi Fontanora for the Parish Pastoral Council

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SERVICE FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

'Large congregation defies Storm Isha!'

As the rain and high winds of storm Isha battered the area, a large and enthusiastic congregation defied the weather to attend the annual **Service of Christian Unity**, hosted this year by the Sacred Heart on the evening of Sunday 21 January.

Part of the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**, worshippers from the eight members of Churches Together West Wimbledon (CTWW) were uplifted by a bespoke (national) service accompanied by beautiful music and singing from our organist, David Lammie, conductor Bob Rathbone, and many from the 12.00pm Mass Choir who had made the effort to rehearse and sing. Thanks to all of them.

The service was concelebrated by Fr David, Fr Matthew, Fr Sebastian and Deacon Julian from the Sacred Heart together with Ali Wallace (Wimbledon Quakers), Jill Grinsted (Raynes Park Community Church), Reverend Peter Kelly (St Saviour's Church, Grand Drive), and Reverend Alistair Newman (St Matthew's Church, Durham Road).

Members of the congregation represented the other member churches of CTWW, namely Christ Church (Copse Hill), Holy Cross (Motspur Park) and Raynes Park Methodist Church (Worple Road).

In a world of increasingly fractured interreligious relationships, this service of unity was really encouraging and a genuine experience of ecumenical prayer and worship.



Quaker representative Ali Wallace delivers the Intercessions from the pulpit.

SERVICE FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

As well as to all of the ministers who led the service, sincere thanks are due to Cathy Dickenson for being our parish representative on Churches Together and for organizing the preparations and refreshments, ably assisted by Monica Noble and Diane Sutherland. These were served in the lounge after the service and were enjoyed by all, including many younger people, in a most convivial and 'ecumenical' atmosphere.

What is Churches Together?

Churches Together in England is the national ecumenical instrument supporting and encouraging churches from a wide range of traditions to work together.

With churches drawn from the Anglican, Catholic, Pentecostal, Charismatic, Orthodox, Lutheran traditions, Free Churches, Quakers and others, Churches Together unites one of the broadest range of churches in the whole of Europe.

<https://cte.org.uk>

Churches Together in West Wimbledon brings together eight local Christian churches, namely the Sacred Heart, Christ Church (Copse Hill), St Matthew's (Durham Road), St Saviour's (Grand Drive), Holy Cross (Motspur Park), Raynes Park Methodist Church, Raynes Park Community Church (Salvation Army) and the Wimbledon Quakers.

Meetings are held periodically to plan the annual Service of Unity held in January (see above), the 'Walk of Christian Witness' through Raynes Park on Good Friday, a social event usually held around Pentecost Sunday and to produce a leaflet of all Christmas Services distributed throughout SW20 in late November.

Sacred Heart parishioner, Cathy Dickenson, has recently stepped forward to co-ordinate the group.

For more information, please email Cathy at cathymmay@aol.com

THE NEWMAN CIRCLE IN WIMBLEDON



John Henry Newman ((1801 – 1890) was an English theologian and academic who was famous for his preaching, first as an Anglican and later as a Catholic priest. Through his prolific teachings, he wanted to achieve *'an intelligent and well instructed laity'*. He was canonised as a saint in 2019 and we streamed the service as it took place from Rome, live into the lower hall.

The Newman Association is a national organisation, founded in 1942, whose members meet regularly in local 'circles' to discuss and develop their understanding of the Christian faith.

The Newman Circle in Wimbledon was run for many years by parishioners, Eugene Bryne, then Bill and Bridget Russell, and is now run by Rock and Wendy Tansey. It is held regularly in the lounge with refreshments and discussions after.

Recent talks on a variety of topics have been given by some very eminent speakers, including the following:

'Missio – supporting missionaries, priests and nuns to help the poor overseas'
by Fr Anthony Chantry

'Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking' by Fr Mark Odion, Bishops' Conference

'The Future of the Church: why do so many young people leave the Church while others remain?' by former youth minister Eleanor Bowman and James Roberts

'What happens to children excluded from mainstream schools'
by Samantha Axbey, head of a local pupil referral unit

'The Jesuit Examen - finding God in all things' by Fr Gerard Mitchell SJ, former Sacred Heart parish priest when we were a Jesuit parish

'The Ministry of Women in the Anglo-Saxon World through the life and times of Hildegard of Whitby' by Dr Anne Inman, author and lecturer in theology

THE NEWMAN CIRCLE IN WIMBLEDON

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'Caring for people at the end of life ... a doctor's perspective' by Professor Paddy Stone, Head of Department, Marie Curie Palliative Care Research Department, UCL

'Fratelli Tutti - Fraternity & Social Friendship' papal encyclical by Fr Michael Holman

'Theology of Disability and Inclusion' by Baroness Sheila Hollins, professor of psychiatry of learning and disability, President of the Catholic Union 2024

'Signs of the times' by Fr Brendan Callaghan SJ, former principal Heythrop College

'Laudato Si - Our Common Home', papal encyclical by Dr Peter Coughlan

'The 500th Anniversary of the 1521 conversion of Ignatius Loyola' by Fr Laco Sulik SJ

'Archbishop Oscar Romero' by Julian Filowchowski, former director of CAFOD

'The History of the Crib' by parishioner Tim Everson, author and parishioner

'Putting the record straight on Siegfried Sassoon' by Sr Jessica Gatty, the Religious of the Assumption, god-daughter of the poet

'Our Parish community work, including Merton Citizens' by David Hurst, parishioner

'Is the right to strike consistent with the common good?' by Dennis Barry parishioner and practicing barrister

'The history of the Catholic Church in England' by Deacon Julian Burling, parishioner and practicing barrister

Regular meetings by the Wimbledon Newman Circle continue – all are welcome.

See below for topics – date to be confirmed.

THE NEWMAN CIRCLE IN WIMBLEDON

'Love the stranger' 2023 - the Catholic Bishops' response to migrants and refugees

The next meeting of the Wimbledon Newman Circle will take place at 7.00pm in the lounge on **Wednesday 28 February**. The speaker will be Liam Allmark who is the head of communications, fundraising and advocacy for the Jesuit Refugee Service UK.

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation, at work in over 50 countries around the world with a mission to **accompany, serve and advocate** for the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.

Liam has spent eight years as an adviser on international affairs and migration to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. In this role he travelled with the bishops to support the Church's work with displaced people in many parts of the world, including Palestine, Iran, Myanmar and Thailand.



The talk will cover, inter alia, topics like the background of the document, '**Love the stranger**' and how it relates to questions that are relevant to us in the UK, the migration act and the Rwanda Plan, the desperate situation in the English Channel and how Catholics can respond.

This will be a stimulating talk – do not miss it! For more information on JRS, or to make donations, see www.jrsuk.net

Future Newman Circle Talks – 7.00pm for 7.30pm talk (dates to be confirmed)

'Laudate Deum - the Pope's exhortation' by Fr Dominic Robinson SJ, chair of Westminster Justice and Peace commission

'Radio Maria – a Christian voice by your side' by Fr Toby Lees OP, priest director

'Julian of Norwich' Fr Brendan Callaghan SJ former principal of Heythrop College

'Politicians with whom I disagree' three hours by Rock Tansey QC (only kidding!)

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FAITH IN ACTION DROP-IN SERVICE

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The Faith in Action (Merton) Homelessness Project came about when Cllr Linda Kirby, at the time Mayor Linda Kirby, saw an incredible amount of good work being done by various faith groups across the borough. She organised an event to bring them together and out of this came a further meeting, Churches Together.

It was here that real concern for people experiencing homelessness in Merton was highlighted. As Cllr Kirby visited the different local organisations during her term of office as Mayor during the year 2000, she realised that the Merton faith groups would be the ones to take this forward, and they have taken the lead ever since.

Faith in Action Merton Homelessness Project runs a twice-weekly Merton Drop-In, on Wednesdays and Fridays (10am – 2:30 pm) throughout the year, together with the Merton Winter Night Shelter. This is held in the **Salvation Army Hall** (right) at 109 Kingston Road, and supports local people experiencing homelessness and vulnerably-housed people.



On these days, volunteers welcome between 50 and 60 guests and provide them with hot showers and shaving materials, laundry facilities and hair clippers where they often cut each others' hair!

On arriving a breakfast of toast, cereal, tea and coffee is offered and later a hot lunch is provided, served by the willing and smiling volunteers and, most importantly, there are computers linked to the internet, with help and practical advice on hand to assist with benefits' claims, possible job applications and support with housing enquiries.

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FAITH IN ACTION DROP-IN SERVICE

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No guest is turned away and there is no judgement on the basis of race, gender or nationality. The aim is for the guests to leave the centre feeling clean, full, calm and happy.

To continue to run this centre, the charity needs financial support as well as practical donations such as clothes (underwear, hats, coats, gloves and scarves), sleeping bags, waterproof trousers (for when it rains) and food.

As well as the Drop-In centre, Faith in Action also organises the Merton Homelessness Night Shelter of which the Sacred Heart parish, one of fourteen participants in Merton, have been an active part for the past three winters.

The shelter takes place for 12 guests each Thursday night in the lower hall until 14 March.

If you are able to help, either with time to volunteer or a donation, please call 07843 280413 or email grace@mertonfaithinaction.org

Thank you.

Grace O'Neill, Faith in Action

FAMILY MASS CAFE TAKES OFF!

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A full house of children, parents and other parishioners enjoyed the Café that took place in the lounge after the **Family Mass on Sunday 21 January**. Made possible thanks to the generosity of time and of money by the Jones Family (with help from their friend Agatha), the Café welcomes everyone to meet and chat over tea, coffee, juice and, of course, biscuits. But you had better be quick because, when they are gone, they are gone!



NB the Café takes place in the lounge after the family Mass on Sundays when there is no Continental Café – see Diary for dates.

LENT TALKS

A series of Lent talks will take place on Tuesdays in the upper hall, with refreshments at **7.00pm** and the talk and questions **7.30 – 8.30pm**. The overall theme is *'Let us remember the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm and look forward to the future with confidence'* from Novo Millenio Innuendo of John Paul II. The talks are separate so you can attend one or as many as you wish.

27 February	Dr Caroline Hull, director of Aid to the Church in Need UK
5 March	Fr Michael Holman SJ, former head of Wimbledon College
12 March	Martin Kucharski, creator of Universalis and author
19 March	John Coleby, project manager, Caritas Southwark

PARISH DIARY

February		
Sat 10	11.00am	Mass for the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre
Sat 10	7.00pm	Pancake party in the upper hall
Sun 11		Café after Family Mass in the lounge
Wed 14		Ash Wednesday marks the start of Lent
Sun 18		Second Collection for the Clergy Support Fund
Sun 18		Continental Breakfast in the lower hall
Sun 25		Children's Liturgy
Sun 25		Second Collection For CAFOD
Sun 25		Café after Family Mass in the lounge
Tue 27	7.00pm	Lent talk by Dr Caroline Hull in the Upper Hall
Wed 28		Newman Circle: Liam Allman from JRS in the lounge
March		
Sat 2	10.30am	'Walk & Talk' from War Memorial to Sacred Heart
Sun 3		Children's Liturgy
Sun 3		Café after Family Mass in the lounge
Tue 5	7.00pm	Lent talk by Fr Michael Holman SJ in the upper hall
Sat 9		Synod Activation Day, Amiga Hall, Southwark Cathedral
Sun 10		Café after Family Mass in the lounge
Tue 12	7.00pm	Lent talk by Martin Kucharski in the upper hall
Sun 17	3.00pm	New parishioners' welcome event in the lounge
Tue 19	7.30pm	Lent talk by John Coleby in the upper hall

AND FINALLY ...

Second Collection Dates and Charities

Sunday 18 February: Clergy Support Fund



The second collection at all Masses on Sunday 18 February are for the **Southwark Diocese Clergy Support Fund**.

The support fund enables the diocese to support our clergy at times of ill health, at their retirement and in old age. After a lifetime of service and devotion to Christ, His Church and His people, your donations help to ensure a dignified retirement for all of our priests.

www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/donate/clergy-suport-fund-2023

Sunday 25 February: CAFOD bi-annual collection



The second collection at all Masses on Sunday 25 February are to support **CAFOD**.

The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) is part of one of the largest aid networks in the world with the potential to reach and help needy people living in 165 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. The Church is trusted even in the most dangerous countries, regardless of their religion and means. This results in your support really helping those who need it most.

www.cafod.org.uk/donate

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