

Sacred Heart Parish Magazine

Vol. 37 No. 1

sacredheartwimbledon.org.uk



Getting to know Fr Peter Mudu Frank (pp.6–7)

- 🎄 Christmas school carols (pp.12–13),
concerts (pp.16–17), and teas (pp. 14–15)
- 👶 Children's Christmas Crib service (p.11)
- ❤️ Jesuit Missions thanks supporters at annual
reception (pp. 18–19)

***FREE* but donations are always welcome**

The Gospel infancy narratives: The birth of Christ in history

Two Gospels – Matthew and Luke – give information about Jesus' birth. These 'infancy narratives' reflect themes and passages from the Old Testament. Matthew, in particular, emphasises how Jesus is the One who fulfils the Old Testament prophecies.

Some scholars question whether the evangelists made up or manipulated the stories from the Old Testament, so as to 'prove' that Jesus was the Messiah.

One problem is that Matthew and Luke record different events with little overlap, while Mark, the earliest Synoptic Gospel, has no infancy narrative. In *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives* (2012), Pope Benedict XVI suggests that the full story only became public after Mary's death. This would explain why the first part of Matthew appears, from stylistic analysis, to have been written later than the rest of the Gospel. If Mark is indeed the earliest Gospel, then its author may not have known what happened at Jesus' birth when he was writing.

Nevertheless, Matthew and Luke agree on all the key aspects of the Christmas story: the major characters, the timing, the place, and the main miracles. They narrate different aspects of the story, choosing which parts to tell in order to fit in with their perspective, and their understanding of what was important about Jesus – but they never actually disagree or contradict each other. Many scholars take the view that the divergences between Matthew and Luke indicate that they have not falsified the stories, because the natural tendency would be to harmonise their accounts.



Some may object that although Matthew and Luke faithfully reported what they were told, they were deliberately misled by Mary or their other sources. This is not impossible, but it is rather non-serious!

Importantly, Matthew and Luke were not merely writing simple history; their theological intentions are quite clear (see, for example, the very beginning of Luke). Matthew's genealogy of Jesus, which is different from Luke's, is obviously (and deliberately?) rather artificial.

Another hurdle is the prevalence of miracles in the infancy narratives, not least Jesus' birth to a virgin. Anyone who believes that miracles cannot happen will reject the infancy stories (and, therefore, the whole of the Gospels): 'The miracles are nonsense, so the story must have been made up'. But if one believes in God – the God of the Scriptures – then there is no problem.

Another problem is the absence of independent historical verification for the events of the infancy narratives. But there simply are no historical records of the time to consult.

Returning to the view that Matthew and Luke invented the infancy narratives from the Old Testament, one strong counter-argument is that they didn't make a very good job of it. The prophecy Matthew quotes in 2:23 – 'He shall be called a Nazarene' – doesn't appear anywhere in the Old Testament.

And yet, if you began with the prophetic texts quoted by Matthew and Luke, you wouldn't arrive at the Christmas story as they narrate it. Why would they stress the virginal conception and the other miracles, which only make the story harder for people to accept?

The virginal conception is not as fundamental a part of Christian belief as, say, Christ's resurrection. It is far more likely that, in hearing and trying to make sense of the events of Christ's birth, the evangelists recalled various snatches of Old Testament prophecies, which now appeared to them to have come true in Jesus.

In summary, we can regard the Gospel accounts of Christ's birth as historical, but they clearly present the theological significance of what occurred.

And the real importance lies in our response: what does this mean to me and for me in my life?

Canon David

**Ambassadors
for Christ**

The Archdiocese of Southwark has launched an exciting apologetics project to provide evidence-based answers to questions such as 'Is Jesus God?' or 'Does prayer work?'. Ambassadors for Christ is designed to equip you with a deeper understanding of your faith, so that you can confidently answer questions and be a joyful witness for the Lord Jesus and his Church.

Every Monday, a new video will be posted on YouTube, along with a worksheet for parishes, schools, youth groups and families to use as part of their faith formation. The first video stars the Archbishop, while five of the later ones are presented by our very own Canon David. To learn more and take part, please visit rcaos.org.uk/ambassadorsforchrist.

New volunteers are needed to help run the Children's Liturgy of the Word! Running during the 10.00am Mass on Sundays in term-time, the Children's Liturgy of the Word is a really lovely and rewarding ministry. You can learn on the job, starting as an assistant and, when you feel ready, you can move to leading. We are a friendly and supportive group, and you would only have to do six to eight sessions a year. To learn more, please email Elizabeth at elizabethbottriell@hotmail.com.

(Almost) goodbye!

Since Canon David invited me to be editor of the relaunched *Edgeways* in December 2023, together with designer Matteo Baccaglini, I have edited 20 editions of our 24-page magazine.

Shortly before putting this edition of *Edgeways* to bed, I was on the verge of hanging up my laptop in silent protest at the lack of feedback and articles submitted by parishioners. I was fed up with being the sole and isolated commissioner, writer, and producer.

My mind was changed later that day when I met just one person in the Lounge, a stranger to me, who stopped me and said: 'Ah, you are David Hurst who writes for and edits the parish magazine – I think it is very good and I look forward to reading it each month.'



That unsolicited flattery played directly to my vanity and ... I have decided to carry on producing the monthly periodical for our readers!

So, please, I openly invite feedback, good or bad, on your parish magazine, mainly so I can tell that someone, anyone, out there actually reads it. Please write to me with your work or ideas at wimbledonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk.

So many carols, concerts, and fairs!

This month, before reporting on the many Christmas events, your editor meets the second of our two new assistant priests, Fr Peter Mudu Frank, who has already had a busy life in training and ministry as a priest in Nigeria ([pp.6–7](#)).

Canon David reflects on the Gospel infancy narratives ([pp.2–3](#)) and we pay tribute to the late Fr Simon Bishop SJ ([pp.20–21](#)), ordained in our church.

December is always a very active month of events in our parish, including the carol services of Donhead Preparatory School ([p.12](#)) and Marymount International School ([p.13](#)), and Katy's Songbirds' Christmas Concert ([pp.16–17](#)).

Never one to miss a party, your editor dutifully (!) attended and enjoyed community teas at Ursuline High School ([p.14](#)) and King's College ([p.15](#)), both in the same week and organised and hosted by the pupils.

In collaboration with Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, an important parish initiative this Christmas was our parish's hamper appeal ([p.8](#)), with twenty-six hampers distributed to families and individuals in need in our community.

Turning to parish groups, before they hand back their aprons, we thank Tess Corrigan and Julian Hoskins for helping Angela Maher run the ever-popular

monthly Continental Breakfast ([p.8](#)). We also hear from the Parish Flower Group ([p.9](#)), which is seeking new volunteers.

Elsewhere in December, those songsters from Songs on Wheels entertained the parish Friendship Group ([p.10](#)), while our near neighbours on Edge Hill, Jesuit Missions, thanked supporters for their generosity at a special reception ([pp.18–19](#)). They invite your continued donations to support their projects in South Sudan and Guyana.

And don't miss some important upcoming events: the Youth 2000 retreat on Sunday 24 January (*below*) and Edge Hill Players' original production of *Puss in Boots* on Saturdays 31 January and 7 February (*back cover*).

Finally, we flick through the *Edgeways* archives to look back on previous Januaries ([pp.22–23](#)).

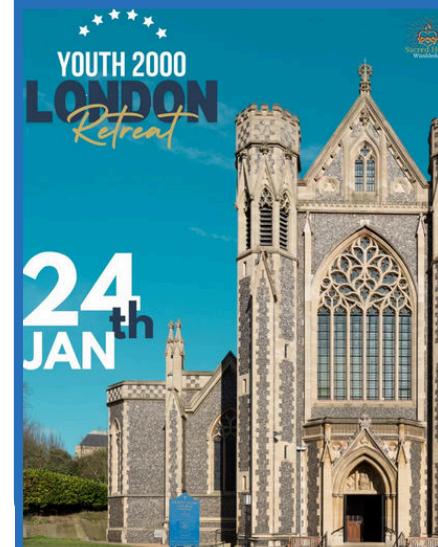
I don't know about you, but I'm exhausted after a busy December and need a quiet January!

David Hurst

We welcome your letters, feedback, and article suggestions! Please email the editor at wimbledonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk.

Production credits: David Hurst (Editor, wimbledonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk) and Matteo Baccaglini (design and layout).

Saturday 24 January : Youth 2000 Retreat



This retreat in our church will be an opportunity for people aged 16 to 35 to come together to explore faith, build relationships, and find hope.

Come along to explore what it means to be in relationship with God – to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist, grow in relationship with Him and His Mother, and form friendships with other young adults from the local area.

The jam-packed day will include talks, workshops, Adoration, and other activities to nourish your faith.

For more details and to book your place before Monday 19 January, please visit tinyurl.com/3p5svfsk.

We can't wait to see you there!

'I knew that this is what I wanted to do.'

Your editor talks to Fr Peter Mudu Frank, one of our two new assistant priests, and learns about his wide pastoral experience.

We extend a warm welcome to Fr Peter Mudu Frank, who arrived in Wimbledon from Nigeria on 4 October 2025 for his first overseas posting.

Fr Peter is a priest of the Diocese of Zaria, in the ecclesiastical province of Kaduna, northern Nigeria. Fr Peter himself hails from Kaduna State, from a family of Adara ethnicity. He has three brothers and a sister, and was brought up speaking both Hausa and English at home. Fr Peter tells me that over 250 languages are spoken across Nigeria!

The family has always worshipped at the large Catholic parish of St Matthew's, with Masses in both Hausa and English, in a local community named Television Village. Fr Peter and his siblings attended the government primary school Angwan Maichibi and then the government secondary school of Sabon Tasha.

After serving as an altar boy from the age of 10, Fr Peter was inspired by his local parish priest, Fr David Akaito, and knew from the age of 13 that he, too, wanted to become a priest. [I checked and Fr Peter has thanked his inspiration in person!]

Following an in-depth interview, he started on the training path towards priesthood with a year of spiritual preparation, followed by four years studying for an MA in Philosophy at St Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary at Makurdi, Benue State, which is affiliated to the Pontifical Urban University in Rome.



He then spent a year carrying out pastoral work, teaching doctrine and religious studies in the Minor Seminary. At the age of 24, he returned to Kaduna, where he studied for three years for a BA in Theology at the Good Shepherd Major Seminary.

On 9 February 2013, Fr Peter was ordained into the diaconate at Christ the King Cathedral, Zaria. The ordination was conducted by Most. Rev. George Jonathan Dodo, the first Bishop of Zaria, where he was known as 'a modest and courageous leader' before his death in 2022.

Together with five colleagues with whom he had trained, Fr Peter was ordained priest on 5 October 2013 at Christ the King Cathedral. His first role was as an assistant priest at Our Lady Queen of Peace, Ahmadu Bello University, always in Zaria.

Coincidentally, Fr Peter then moved to be an assistant parish priest at the Sacred Heart Church, Wusasa. At this time, he became the Personal Secretary to the Bishop of Zaria, Youth Chaplain, and the acting diocesan Director of Vocations.

In 2019, he was appointed as Parish Priest of St Paul's Church in Angwa Saiki. Regular Masses had to be said in twelve 'outstations', so Fr Peter tells me he rode a Suzuki 250cc motorbike to cover the ground. Makes our parish boundary look minuscule!

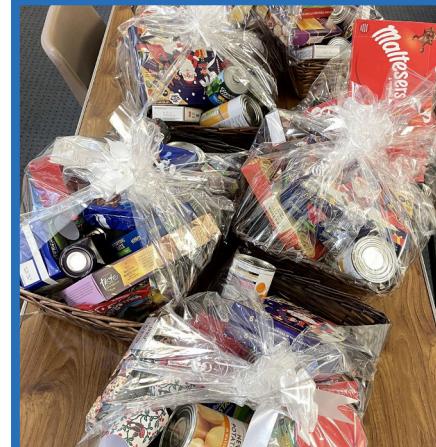
Also in 2019, his bishop sent him to study for an MA in Psycho-Spirituality Therapy and Counselling at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in Nairobi.

From 2021 to September 2025, he was Parish Priest of St Dennis' Church, Danladi, with fourteen outstations.

Before his posting to England, Fr Peter was asked by his bishop for his consent, which he willingly gave. He tells me that a key reason for his being here is 'to represent my Catholic Diocese of Zaria in Nigeria by showing a good example'. What a fine ambition.

As I always do when writing personal profiles, I asked Fr Peter what he likes to do in his spare time – if he has any when not working as a priest! He likes listening to good music, reading, and watching football and films – but his secret skills are playing the saxophone and playing badminton. So watch out for these!

Christmas hamper appeal



This Christmas, in lieu of the Christmas Lunch, the parish teamed up with Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School to deliver hampers to families and people in need in our community.

Twenty-six hampers were lovingly put together by pupils at the school, and distributed to people identified by the school, Parish Office, and our parish's Society of St Vincent de Paul.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to organise this initiative, including Rob Hitchcock and Siobhán Heffron, and to everyone who donated items or money towards the hampers.



Would you like your house to be blessed by one of our clergy? Please contact the Parish Office to arrange an appointment!

Tess Corrigan and Julian Hoskins hang up their oven gloves for Continental Breakfast



Parishioners Tess Corrigan (*pictured, left*) and Angela Maher (*pictured, right*) started the monthly parish Continental Breakfast before Fr Gerry Mitchell SJ left as parish priest in 2008.

When Angela's husband was alive, he would get up on Sunday morning and prepare the rolls with bread donated by their popular bakery on Durham Road.

The popular initiative has continued ever since, with Tess and Angela welcoming parishioners after the 8.00am and 10.00am Sunday Masses. They have been joined by Julian Hoskins (*pictured, centre*), who helps to serve, and more recently by Graham Kennedy, who collects donations by card.

Tess and Julian are now hanging up their oven gloves, and Terri Redwood has volunteered to take Tess' place.

Angela says: 'I would like to thank Tess for her help and friendship – I think we have both enjoyed doing this for the parish. Thanks also to Julian for all his great help over the last couple of years. We are now looking for someone to replace Julian too! Thank you.'

If you are interested in helping Angela to run the Continental Breakfast from 7.30am to 12 noon for one Sunday morning each month, please email angelamaher@yahoo.com.

The Sacred Heart Flower Group is looking for new members!

Our Parish Flower Group is made up entirely of volunteers, who give two to three hours a month to the group. Many of our volunteers have given years of dedicated service, but we would welcome new members. No experience is needed, but a willingness to learn and to make a commitment to the group. This is a lovely way to volunteer for the parish!

Each week, a team of between three and five members comes together under the leadership of one of our buyers to arrange the flowers for the following week. This is usually done on a Thursday afternoon or Friday morning, fitting around services and other events in the church.

We ask each member of the group to:

- be flexible,
- work as part of a team, and
- help to share the workload throughout the week.

The work can include:

- collecting and sorting flowers before arranging is done,
- helping to supply greenery if possible,
- watering the arrangements during the week, and
- clearing at the end of the week.



Much planning is done to organise the rota across the year, and it is important that all members can communicate well with both the buyers and other group members.

Patricia Turner

If you would like to know more about how you can be involved with the Flower Group, please email Patricia Turner at sacredheartflowers@outlook.com.



Would you like to write for Edgeways?

Do you have an article that you think would be a great addition to YOUR parish magazine? We're always open to contributions! Please contact the editor at wimbledonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk.

Friendship Group welcomes Songs on Wheels



For the parish's Friendship Group, Christmas doesn't begin until Songs on Wheels arrive to share their enthusiasm and singing. Once again this year, Songs on Wheels were fab and everyone joined in singing along, tapping their feet, and doing the hokey-cokey! Words from their coordinator, Libby Asher, follow.

Songs on Wheels is a group of friends, mainly retired, based in the Wimbledon area. Since January 2014, we have been travelling to care homes, day centres, and clubs for older people or those with physical or mental disabilities to share our enjoyment of singing old songs.

Programmes last just under an hour and include showtunes and popular songs mainly from the '30s, '40s, '50s, and even '60s, as well as comedy songs, traditional songs, and light classics. The group sings mainly in four-part harmony, and is accompanied by our professional pianist.

We supply programmes with the words of the songs and simple props and costumes, which our audiences always find engaging. We have homemade Pearly King and Queen hats, some honeysuckle and an



Angela and Terri serving teas with cheer!

outsized bee, and an itsy-bitsy, teeny-weeny yellow polka-dot bikini, recently modelled with panache by a lady on her 100th birthday.

We always get people joining in, whatever their physical or mental frailty. It is particularly rewarding to see people living with dementia heartily singing every word of songs they knew when they were younger and shaking off their confusion or anxiety during that time.

You can visit songsonwheels.org to learn more about Songs on Wheels.

Children's Christmas Crib Service



On Christmas Eve, our younger parishioners brought the Nativity to life as actors and readers in the annual Children's Christmas Crib Service.

We extend our thanks to Rachel Marshall for organising the service, and to all other volunteers who facilitated this special liturgy.



'... but where is the baby?' they all exclaimed!

Donhead Preparatory School Festival of Carols and Readings



Photographs: Donhead Preparatory School on Instagram (@donheadpreparatory)

Marymount International School Carol Service



Photographs: Marymount International School London on Instagram (@marymountlondon) (top-right and centre-left)

Ursuline High School Christmas Tea Party

Advent is the season of hope, of longing, of joyful expectation, and of peaceful preparation. It's also a time for fostering community, giving, and celebrating shared values.

At the Ursuline High School, we teach our students that generosity is not just about physical gifts/money (although we all love those – right?). But we can show generosity in many other ways, by being generous with our time, our empathy and compassion, our understanding, a listening ear, a helping hand, in making people feel seen, and appreciated!

It was this very generosity that was shining through as we hosted our annual Christmas Tea Party for our elderly community, including many parishioners. Our guests were treated to an afternoon of food, a nice cup of tea, carols, and a Christmas quiz!

The connections formed between generations on the day were lovely to see! Perfect for the festive season!



This article was adapted from the original on the Ursuline High School's Instagram account (@uhswimbledon).

King's College Friends Community Tea



The Friends of King's Community Tea takes place in the large dining room at King's College School each year on the last Sunday of the autumn term.

In excess of 200 guests are invited from local care homes, retirement homes, and community organisations and groups. A small planning committee of parents organises a large team of volunteers from the school community, teachers, and the Sixth Form to provide transport, refreshments, gifts, and to look after guests on the day as table hosts, chaperones, and kitchen assistants.

The event has been running for at least fifteen years and many guests are regular attendees. Guests enjoy sherry, tea, sandwiches, and Christmas cakes, and are entertained by Christmas readings and carols from the King's College Junior School choir. There are addresses by the school chaplain and headteacher, and a choir in red blazers is led in carols by the head of the Junior School.



Can you spot yours truly (ed.)?

Every guest leaves with a gift and a handwritten card from one of the pupils, which is very special.

This community event is a real collaboration between King's College School and the parents' association, Friends of King's, and has become one of the highlights of the Christmas calendar for many of the guests. We are delighted that the group from the Sacred Heart parish attends each year.

Cathryn O'Hare

Katy's Songbirds' Christmas Celebration



Katy's Songbirds Christmas Celebration was a wonderful evening of traditional carols and festive music featuring Katy Lees, Giles Kennedy, Putney & Wimbledon Bass Band, the Lantern Arts Youth Choir, and Edge Hill Players.

The concert supported Beat, an eating disorders charity, and Breast Cancer Now, and was sponsored by Flaherty Builds Ltd, Visiting Angels North Surrey, and Lisa Burke Health and Beauty. As of 30 December, the concert had raised £2,720.

Photographs by John Stone.



Mozart's Requiem



Please save the date for the Sacred Heart Chorus and Orchestra's annual concert on Saturday 20 June, when Mozart's Requiem will resound through our church, twenty years since its last performance.

Jesuit Missions in service at the peripheries

Headquartered at 11 Edge Hill, Jesuit Missions is the international mission and development office of the Jesuits in Britain. At the annual reception for supporters on Friday 5 December, Director Paul Chitnis delivered the following message:

The greatest of Jesuit missionaries, St Francis Xavier SJ, had a very unexpected start to his missionary journey to India when the Jesuit slated to go became ill and St Ignatius decided that Xavier should replace him. That was with 24 hours' notice. It was two years and two months before he arrived in Goa. St Francis and St Ignatius were never to meet again.

There is something rather moving about these two friends, both from wealthy backgrounds which they renounced, both dedicated to this new Society of Jesus, being physically separated but spiritually united by their utter conviction and commitment to their mission. That conviction and commitment have been the cause of many a physical separation over the last century when Jesuits from Britain have travelled to 'the missions', including Guyana, where the Jesuits first arrived more than 150 years ago.

Without you, our supporters, Jesuit Missions is, if not empty, a significantly diminished Jesuit work. Because of you, we have supported tens of thousands of people in twelve countries across the world this year.

I recall some of the people I met on my visit to South Sudan one year ago: women like Julia and Ayweil; children like Farah and Mubarak. People with names and stories, like you and me, that deserve to be known.



Refugees in South Sudan who have fled across the border from Sudan out collecting supplies

Since my visit last year, swinging cuts in international aid across the Western world have led to a further deterioration in the situation in South Sudan. Furthermore, the conflict in Sudan shows little sign of abating.

But the presence of the Jesuits in South Sudan – as in so many other places – is itself a sign that, even if the international community forgets, we will not.

The interior of Guyana is a very remote and often inaccessible place. One of the Jesuits we accompany is Fr Joel Thompson, who is working with indigenous communities in a project which seeks to revitalise the local Wapichan culture and language. In recent years, these have faced a real danger from global influences through technology and the internet. As a result, fewer families are passing on the Wapichan language.

Fr Joel reminds us that the Wapichan way of life is profoundly connected to nature. Their homes are built from forest materials; their food is grown and harvested in harmony with the land. Even village names originate from animals or features of the environment. To lose their language would be to sever the very bond that has sustained them for thousands of years.

That's why we are supporting a project which is working hand-in-hand with teachers, village councils, and the government to integrate Wapichan language, culture, and values into the school curriculum. In 2025, 24 teachers were trained to deliver lessons to 300 indigenous children and their families.

In South Sudan and in Guyana, the Jesuits, like St Francis, are on the frontiers working and praying for change.

Earlier this week, I was on a call with Jesuit partners from different parts of the world from Madagascar to Macau, from Johannesburg to Juba. We were reminded that all Jesuits are missionaries. But as Pope Francis writes in *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013): 'All of us are asked to obey [the Lord's] call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the peripheries in need of the light of the Gospel.'

Thank you again for being with us on the peripheries, the frontiers to which we are called.



Donate now:
jesuitmissions.org.uk/donate



Pupils supported by the Quality Bilingual Education Programme in Guyana



6.30pm Sunday 25 January: 'One Body, One Spirit' United Service

Churches Together in West Wimbledon's United Service for the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity will take place at Christ Church, West Wimbledon (Cottenham Park Road, SW20 0RZ). Everyone is welcome.

Fr Simon Bishop SJ (1967–2026)

It is with great sadness that the Jesuits in Britain announced the death of Fr Simon Bishop SJ, who died on the evening of Sunday 4 January. He was 58 years old and in the 33rd year of his religious life. May he rest in peace.

Simon Bishop was born in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on 28 March 1967, the youngest of four children of George (who died in 2001) and Dawn. He was baptised at St Peter's, Oyster Bay, on 8 April 1967. Several happy early years were spent in Fiji before the family returned to Britain.

He was educated at Stonyhurst College from 1975 to 1985. One Jesuit who was starting to teach there recalls encountering him as a schoolboy serving at the altar: 'There was this little carrot-head waiting for me with a welcoming smile. He knew exactly what to do and did it with grace and dignity.'

In his final year at Stonyhurst, Simon was taught Scripture in preparation for university, and was remembered as thoughtful, generous, and deeply engaged. He was also a keen sportsman, playing cricket both at school and later at university.

Simon went on to study Theology at the University of Cambridge (1986–89). Friends recall watching him play cricket for the University during these years and accompanying him on pilgrimage to Lourdes, experiences that reflected both his sociability and his growing spiritual depth. After Cambridge, Simon trained as a social worker at the University of York (1990–92). During these years, those close to him sensed an evident vocation taking shape. As one Jesuit later reflected: 'I found myself wondering why he was not



applying to enter the Society ... and eventually he gave in to the Lord.' Simon entered the Jesuit novitiate in Birmingham in September 1993, on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.

From the very beginning of his Jesuit life, his qualities were apparent to those around him. A fellow novice recalls that 'from the first day of the novitiate', Simon was unselfish, focused on others, and genuinely interested in them. Studies in philosophy followed at Heythrop College (1995–98), after which Simon undertook Regency at Wimbledon College, working in teaching and youth ministry. He then moved to Paris to study theology at the Centre Sèvres, where he was ordained deacon at St Ignace in 2003. Later that same year, he was ordained priest at the Sacred Heart, Wimbledon.

In 2004, Simon was missioned as Chaplain to St Aloysius' College, Glasgow. Here, his focus on other people and their needs became especially visible. One Jesuit recalls walking with him from the Jesuit house, which was then in Woodside Place, to the College, a walk of about half a

mile, and observing how Simon greeted, by name, everyone they encountered: 'He knew the name of every person he saw on that journey and greeted them all by name, every coffee-seller, every beggar, every person walking their dog, and certainly every pupil and every member of staff. He had an incredible ability to befriend, but he could do it because he was genuinely interested in every person he met.'

Appointed Vocations Promoter in 2006, Simon accompanied many as they discerned their calling. In 2009, he undertook Tertiationship in Australia, travelling via Guyana, before returning to the British Province. He was then missioned to the Oxford University Chaplaincy, first as Assistant Chaplain and, from 2010, as Senior Chaplain. During his years in Oxford, Simon took his Final Vows in November 2011.

Oxford was also where many experienced Simon's calm, reflective spirituality and gentle joy. From 2013, he served as Chaplain to the Oxford Leg of the Student Cross pilgrimage. He also drew other Jesuits into this work, including novices, quietly modelling companionship in mission. Jesuit friends recall overlapping with him in Oxford, sharing ministry, conversation, and sacramental life, including hearing one another's confessions. On one such occasion, Simon's radiant smile after absolution was accompanied by the words: 'What a privilege to be able to say those words!'

After three years as Director of Spirituality for the Province, Simon was appointed Novice Master in September 2017. A former novice remembers learning from his quiet fidelity to religious life: 'Simon's presence and example will have marked and inspired the entire cohort of men currently in formation.'

It was during his time as Novice Master that Simon's illness first emerged. Even so, he continued to serve for as long as and in whatever ways he could. Friends recall his openness about his diagnosis, his gratitude for prayer, and the steady, hopeful faith with which he carried this final chapter of his life. Even in his later years, those who knew Simon noticed that his core qualities endured and deepened.

In a recent interview with *The Way*, the Jesuit international journal of contemporary Christian spirituality, Simon reflected on his life and ministry: 'I suppose my Jesuit life has changed, and I have been asked to be in different places and do different things. Most recently, I have needed to go to hospital for various treatments and, lying on an operating table or in surgery or follow-up treatment with a necessity for all sorts of other treatments, in the quiet there, I have found myself saying that simple prayer: *There is nowhere else that I would rather be*. Somehow, the Lord is asking me to be with Him here in this place at this time.'

'If we really believe that — that somehow we are this place where the Lord can be, and the Lord is also at home in you, in me, in those we meet, in our world — how could we destroy our world? How could we do or say something harmful to another person?'

We give thanks for his generous life and ministry, and we pray for the repose of his soul and for the consolation of his family, friends, and all who knew him.

This article is excerpted from the original on the website of the Jesuits in Britain (jesuit.org.uk/news/rest-in-peace-fr-simon-bishop-sj-1967-2026). For those wishing to send condolences, please send them to dsmolirasj@jesuit.org.uk.

This month back then – an Edgeways history of YOUR parish!

Enjoy and remember some headlines of stories from back issues of Edgeways in January 1997, 2000, 2005, 2015, and 2020 (and December 2009 as we can't find January 2010!).



Back issues of Edgeways are available to borrow by emailing David at wimbledonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk. Issues from March 2020 are available in the digital archive at sacredheartwimbledon.org.uk/edgeways.

January 1997 (Vol. 9 No. 1) top-left

- Photographs of parishioners enjoying the parish Christmas lunch
- Tony Brook invites questions for parliamentary candidates
- Mick Middleton reports on the work of the Manna Society

January 2000 (Vol. 12 No. 1) top-centre

- Fr Gerard Mitchell SJ's address at the Ecumenical Millennium Service
- Tony Brook reports on Michael Edwards' talk on Catholic Education
- Seven members of Churches Together run a study day on local homelessness

January 2005 (Vol. 17 No. 1) top-right

- Michelle Peters writes on the Sacred Heart Choir Christmas party
- John Powell reports on the 33 days in office in 1978 of Pope John Paul I
- Eleanor and Roger Glencross mark ten years of selling goods for Traidcraft

December 2009 (Vol. 21 No. 11) bottom-left

- Louise Cooper and Richard Marton take on the parish Christmas lunch
- Sue Chapman meets new volunteers for the Safeguarding Team
- Bob Rathbone conducts Handel's *Messiah*, raising money for the Organ Appeal

January 2015 (Vol. 27 No. 1) bottom-centre

- Frs Sam Davey and Ted Nwokeji's first Sacred Heart Christmas
- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School children sing at the Raynes Park Christmas Festival
- John Symes reports from the bar at the Sacred Heart Christmas lunch

January 2020 (Vol. 32 No. 1) bottom-right

- Fr Dennis Bukenya CSSp and Fr Joe Donkor sing grace in Swahili at the parish Christmas lunch
- Anne Nash fondly remembers Fr Patrick Rorke SJ
- Davinia Miln leads the dancing to McBain's Band at the Epiphany party

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

We welcome into the family of the Church those who have recently been baptised:
Amelia Banchio • Leonor Anastasia Prill

We congratulate those who have recently been married in our church:
Gabriel James Harry Smith and Caitlin Mary-Ellen O'Keefe

We offer sympathies to the families and friends of those who have died recently:
Eileen Norris • Vera Eileen Bunce

AND FINALLY ...

EHP 2026 PANTOMIME

PUSS IN BOOTS

31st Jan & 7th Feb 2026

An original pantomime written & directed by
Wendy Tansey
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