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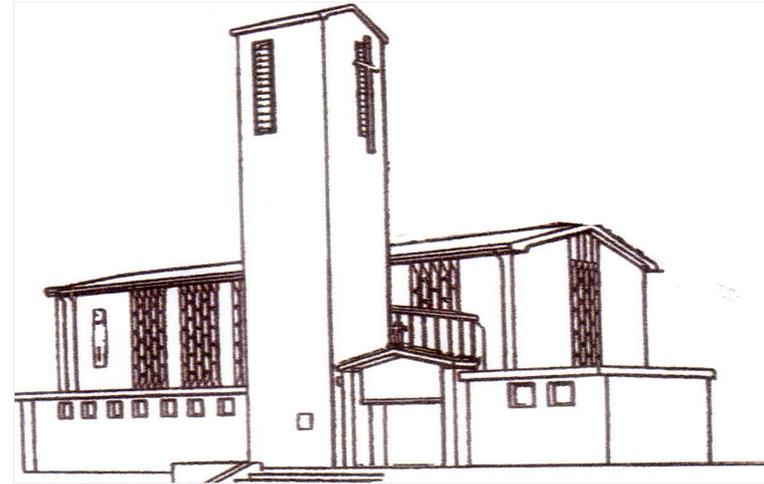
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Volume 30 Issue No 3

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CATHOLIC PARISH OF RAINHAM PARISH MAGAZINE



St. Thomas of Canterbury Church
61 London Road, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 7RH

Parish Website www.rcrainham.co.uk
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Kent, ME8 0BG Telephone 01634 232972

Deacon James Coleman - 248 Lower Twydall Lane,
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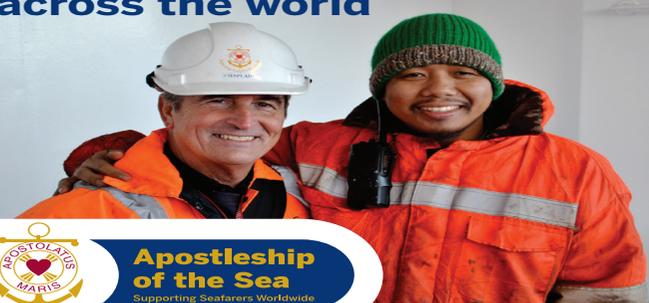
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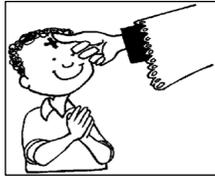
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Ash Wednesday marks the onset of Lent, the 40-day period of fasting and abstinence. It is also known as the 'Day of Ashes'. So called because on that day at church people have their foreheads marked with ashes in the shape of a cross.

The name 'Day of Ashes' comes from "Dies Cinerum" in the Roman Missal and is found in the earliest existing copies of the Gregorian Sacramentary. The concept originated by Roman Catholics somewhere in the 6th century. Though the exact origin of the day is not clear, the custom of marking the head with ashes on this Day is said to have originated during the papacy of Gregory the Great [590-604].

In the Old Testament ashes were found to have been used for two purposes: as a sign of humility and mortality; and as a sign of sorrow and repentance for sin. The Christian connotation for ashes in the liturgy of Ash Wednesday has also been taken from this Old Testament biblical custom. Receiving ashes on the head as a reminder of mortality and a sign of sorrow for sin was a practice of the Anglo-Saxon church in the 10th century. It was made universal throughout the Western church at the Synod of Benevento in 1091.

Originally the use of ashes was a token penance and was a matter of private devotion. Later it became part of the official rite for reconciling public penitents. In this context, ashes on the penitent served as a motive for fellow Christians to pray for the returning sinner and to feel sympathy for him. Still later, the use of ashes passed into its present rite of beginning the penitential season of Lent on Ash Wednesday.

There can be no doubt that the custom of distributing the ashes to all the faithful arose from a devotional imitation of the practice observed in the case of public penitents. But this devotional usage, the reception of a sacramental which is full of the symbolism of penance is of an earlier date than was formerly supposed. It is mentioned as of general observance for both

clerics and faithful in the Synod of Beneventum, 1091 [Mansi, XX, 739], but nearly a hundred years earlier than this the Anglo-Saxon homilist Ælfric assumes that it applies to all classes of men.

Putting a 'cross' mark on the forehead was in imitation of the spiritual mark or seal that is put on a Christian in Baptism. This is when the newly born Christian is delivered from slavery to sin and the devil, and made a slave of righteousness and Christ [Rom. 6:3-18].

This can also be held as an adoption of the way 'righteousness' is described in the book of Revelation, where we come to know about the servants of God. The reference to the sealing of the servants of God for their protection in Revelation is an allusion to a parallel passage in Ezekiel, where Ezekiel also sees a sealing of the servants of God for their protection:

"And the LORD said to him [one of the four cherubim], 'Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark [literally, "a tav"] upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it.' And to the others he said in my hearing, "Pass through the city after him, and smite; your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity; slay old men outright, young men and maidens, little children and women, but touch no one upon whom is the mark. And begin at my sanctuary." So they began with the elders who were before the house." [Ezekiel 9:4-6]

Unfortunately, like most modern translations, the one quoted above is not sufficiently literal. What it actually says is to place a tav on the foreheads of the righteous inhabitants of Jerusalem. Tav is one of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and in ancient script it looked like the Greek letter chi, which happens to be two crossed lines [like an "x"] and which happens to be the first letter in the word "Christ" [in Greek Christos]. The Jewish rabbis commented on the connection between tav and chi and this is undoubtedly the mark Revelation has in mind when the servants of God are sealed in it.

The early Church Fathers seized on this tav-chi-cross-christos

connection and expounded it in their homilies, seeing in Ezekiel a prophetic foreshadowing of the sealing of Christians as servants of Christ. It is also part of the background to the Catholic practice of making the sign of the cross, which in the early centuries [as can be documented from the second century on] was practiced by using one's thumb to furrow one's brow with a small sign of the cross, like Catholics do today at the reading of the Gospel during Mass.

Clifford Mickleburgh



Take Time

- Take time to think *it is the source of power*
- Take time to play *it is the secret of staying young*
- Take time to be quiet *it is the opportunity to seek God*
- Take time to be aware *it is the opportunity to help others*
- Take time to love and be loved *it is God's greatest gift*
- Take time to laugh *it is the music of the soul*
- Take time to be friendly *it is the road to happiness*
- Take time to dream *it is what the future is made of*
- Take time to pray *it is the greatest power on earth*

'There is a time for everything

????? Puzzle Page ?????

This is a quiz for people who know everything! These are not trick questions. They are straight questions with straight answers

- 1 Name the one sport in which neither the spectators or the participants know the score or the leader until the contest ends.
- 2 What famous North American landmark is constantly moving backwards?
- 3 Of all vegetables, only two can live to produce on their own for several growing seasons. All vegetables must be replanted every year. What are the only two perennial vegetables?
- 4 What fruit has its seeds on the outside?
- 5 In many liquor stores, you can buy pear brandy, with a real pear inside the bottle. The pear is whole and ripe, and the bottle is genuine; it hasn't been cut in any way. How did the pear get inside the bottle?
- 6 Only three words in standard English begin with the letters "dw" and they are all common words. Name two of them?
- 7 Name the only vegetable or fruit that is never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form except fresh?
- 8 Name 6 or more things that you can wear on your feet beginning with the letter 'S'.

ANSWERS NEAR THE BACK



#Aphoto2018

(Continued from November/December 2018 Magazine)

The Farm

One of Ahotokurom's main aims is to become self-sustaining and one of their methods of doing this is by growing their own crops. They use these for their own consumption as well as allowing people to buy their fruit to sell in the streets, helping their local community and economy. All of this has been successful thanks to Joe, the head farmer, and his hard-working team.

Joe is very proud of his farm as it has taken him 3 years to get it up to the high standard it is today. It started with just a few different crops but now there is a huge range: bananas, plantain, groundnuts, corn, pineapples, tomatoes, mangoes and watermelon to name a few. It has been discovered that watermelon has a lot of underlying health benefits so to be able to successfully grow them has meant that they can now help prevent conditions such as kidney diseases, high blood pressure and even cancer.

There has also been a successful growth of a cocoa plant which, when it is fully grown, will be a huge source of income for Ahotokurom as it can be sold to be processed into things like chocolate.

The farm is also home to animals: pigs, chickens and goats to be specific. Several new chicks have hatched over the last few months and there have been four new additions to the pig family, bringing this total up to 17. Mohammed, a graduate from St Elizabeth's takes care of them and has even taken time out of his weekends to go in and feed them. He was proud to show them off to the group while we were there.

History

In our first week, we took a day to visit Cape Coast Castle, one of about forty "slave castles", or large commercial forts, built on the

Gold Coast of West Africa by European traders. It was originally built by the Swedes for trade in timber and gold, but later used in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. We explored all the holding cells and learned about the horrendous conditions that people were subjected to. At the castle, there were five main holding cells for the men that were being traded and in each of the cells there would be at least 100 people living on top of each other. They would have been given basic food and drink rations and would have to live in their own filth. Above these cells was a chapel. Only those that had no direct involvement with the slaves were allowed to attend the masses that were held there. There was one specific cell that was only for those that tried to escape. This room had no fresh air coming in, no light and anyone in there they would not be fed or given water. There would be several people in that cell at one time, each one eventually dying of starvation.

Emancipation Day is an annual festival in Ghana that celebrates the day that slaves were freed and specifically the abolition of Chattel Slavery in the British colonies on 1st August 1834. On this day of celebration there are parades, prayers, music and lots of dancing. It is a day when chiefs of local villages come together and celebrate their freedom. We were given the opportunity to visit a sacred historical place in which the slaves were given their last bath. On the walk, we were told to take our shoes off to feel what it would've been like for the slaves on their way to their last bath. After walking hundreds of miles, they were made to wash in a small river and then carry out fitness tasks in which their strength was tested. The guards with them would then either put them up for auction, or they would be taken to different locations along the coast of Ghana. Overall, visiting these places really offered us the opportunity to understand what the slaves had to go through and emotionally connect with them. It was a very eye-opening experience.

Summer Camp

On our third week in Ghana, we held a summer camp for the children in Enyindakurom which is the local village linked to

Ahotokurom. The team spent many days planning and organising activities for the children which included arts and crafts, sports and team building activities. We organised the children into teams and throughout the week, they completed various activities, gaining points on the way in order to see which team would be the ultimate winner at the end of the week.

On the last day of the summer camp we had a sports day where the teams were against each other all day competing in activities such as egg and spoon, relay and wheel barrow races and even the group leaders had a race whilst carrying water buckets on our heads like traditional Ghanaians.

At the end of the week we had an award ceremony in which the winning team won medals and each team leader chose two children who they thought worked the hardest. The children especially enjoyed this as they felt proud and excited when they accepted their awards.

The summer camp was a very memorable experience in which the leaders gained friendships with many of the children which we will treasure.

Excursions

Ghana has its own culture, its own history and its own way of life. Almost as a way of showing gratitude, the Ahotokurom team took it upon themselves to proudly show us their background and lifestyle by immersing us in mini trips across the country. From kicking back and relaxing at the beach on a warm Sunday afternoon with the children from Childcare to visiting the historic Cape Coast Castle where we discovered the inspiring slavery struggles the population faced to get to where they are today. We learnt and saw it all.

A personal favourite amongst our group was the day trip to Kokum National Park. "I'm a celeb" style, we were able to view the green lushness of Ghana from atop the trees by a 7-bridge canopy walk hanging 100ft in the air. The views were incredible. The

downpours of rain added to the thrill as it felt like we were walking through the Amazon Rainforest. In addition to this, we were given a personal tour guide who had a couple of pit stops planned for us on our way up to the canopy walk in which he taught us of the economic, cultural, and medicinal values of plants and farming. It also eased the inclined walking a little! If this wasn't amazing enough, we also had the opportunity to get up close to a little energetic baby monkey, close enough to feed it (Katie can vouch for this as she was brave enough for all of us). We ended the day by paying a visit to a crocodile sanctuary. They allowed us to free roam the path of the lake, which was not fenced off, to find the best sightseeing spots. We were quick to discover how tame and uninterested they were around human species surprisingly. What we did witness however was the food chain in action. A bird who had been attacked by another amidst the trees fell to its death before rolling in to the lake and being gobbled up by a crocodile waiting for its prey.

This day was just one of many enriching, fun and invaluable experiences. They helped us realise the importance of developing our understanding on how the people we were out there helping, lived and also the trials and tribulations they faced and the best way to do so was to educate ourselves. Even whilst travelling to and from these excursions, we stepped outside our comfort zone of the Padre Pio Rehabilitation Centre where we volunteered and drove through markets and villages to witness the poorer conditions first-hand: the make-shift houses, the cramped surroundings, bumpy roads, low quality sanitation and desperate attempts to sell and make money on the roadsides. We were also supporting the tourist industry of Ghana and helping to make a small difference to the country's growth and prosperity. Volunteering with children and adults from another country is an opportunity that compares to no other but learning extra about Ghana's culture and history made it that bit more special.

The Rainham Scholarship Scheme

One of the group's main tasks on the trip was to interview students who have benefited from the Rainham Scholarship Scheme which

has been set up in the parish to provide young people with a chance of a secondary education. At the moment there are 13 young people on the scheme. Parishioners have set up regular donations that have gone straight to the students to help pay for their courses that they otherwise wouldn't have been able to afford.

We were able to meet some amazing people with the most interesting stories. We also got to hear about all of their ambitions and hopes for the future. Most of these included going on to tertiary (third level) education which would require further funding. This is a problem the team has come across when evaluating the sustainability of the scheme.

Some of the students continue their studies by working on the compound at Ahotokurom. Marian Appiah Manu has just completed her general nursing studies and is currently helping at St Clare's as she waits for her results due in December. This is just one of the many wonderful outcomes of the scholarship scheme that the Rainham Parish have so generously donated towards.

The team is hoping to put the children at St Joseph's on the scheme to give them the best shot at independence. This would mean that donations from Rainham will have to continue to help them get to this stage.

The Rainham Scholarship Scheme is incredibly important and has helped many young people into full time employment over the last eighteen years, supporting themselves and their families to live better lives. In the New Year we will be giving presentations in the parish showing our experiences and the things we learnt, together with how important it is to so many that this project continues.

By Molly, Pippa, Natasha, Katherine, Molly & Emily



From the Registers

Baptisms:

09.12.2018	Paris Isabell Jules
09.12.2018	Bella Amelia Catherine Stanley
13.01.2019	Maxim Robert Barkovskiy

Funerals:

13.12.2018	Hanna Margaret Flynn
14.12.2018	Robert Hodgson
16.01.2019	John William Carrick
21.01.2019	Francis Doherty
23.01.2019	James Vincent Daunt

Anniversary List:

01.01.16	Maureen Atkins	01.01.17	Patricia Singh
07.01.15	Mary Price	18.01.15	Maureen Waters
18.01.18	Stephen Plummer	23.01.17	Jill Dowell
27.01.17	Ian Jenner	27.01.17	Mary McDowell
30.01.16	Norah Wood	31.01.14	Constance Helen Hicks
09.02.16	Owen Sweeney	09.02.18	Maurice Springate
12.02.18	Joan Cullen	16.02.14	Sharon O'Toole
18.02.16	Janet Laus	21.02.15	Pauline Blaber
21.02.16	Violet Dawson	24.02.14	Ron Shackelford
25.02.15	Hanelore Klara Anita Cowham		
26.02.14	Mary Teresa (Maureen) Harrison		



To THOSE who believe in thee O LORD
LIFE is but changed – not taken AWAY
(Preface: Mass for the Dead)

The People's Procession

2018, one hundred years since the end of the Great War – the war to end all wars! How to commemorate this special anniversary was discussed throughout the country. Special events at the great war cemeteries in France, Belgium and the Netherlands and throughout the British Isles were planned. Churches began practicing bell ringing with special peals to be rung on November the 11th. Thousands of poppies were knitted, crocheted and created to decorate churches, churchyards and elsewhere. St Thomas' school made plans for special memorial assemblies and children were encouraged to research their family histories of those who had been involved in the Great War. We knew that 2 of my maternal uncles had perished together in WW1 when their ship was sunk in the battle of Jutland. I noticed an announcement about a planned event to take place at the Cenotaph in Whitehall on the morning of November 11th. It was to take the form of a procession of "ordinary" people, i.e. not members or veterans of the armed forces who can already take part in their own parades. It was to be an opportunity for the general population to show their appreciation and respect for all those who had fought or given their lives in the service of their country in the wars of the 20th century.

10,000 tickets were to be allocated by ballot so I optimistically applied and was delighted to receive two tickets. Details of what we were to do on the day arrived later and we eagerly looked forward to the event. We were informed that if we had medals of our families who had served they could be worn on the day. We had Theresa's grandfather's medals from World War two and she agreed to wear them. Firstly though we had to get them mounted on a bar. In researching how to do it etc. I learned a lot about the different medals and their ribbons and found it fascinating and informative.

Finally November 11th arrived and we joined the crowds on the train all heading for the same destination. Groups of veterans proudly wearing their regimental berets, blazers and medals, mingled with family groups with youngsters parents and

grandparents. The atmosphere was very friendly and conversations about family histories were shared. What a change from train journeys where no one talks to each other!

Arriving at The Mall, our designated muster place, we were allocated randomly to various groups. Although we were very early we ended up in group K, a long way back from the front of the procession. We were invited to partake of hot drinks, muffins and doughnuts, served by huge numbers of friendly volunteers. There were some seats available mainly for the elderly and disabled but we had to get used to a long stand! We weren't bored however as everyone talked to each other and shared stories and compared medals etc. My research into ribbons helped me to identify whose ancestors were veterans of the first or second war and other conflicts. I even spotted a Boer War medal! We also had strategically placed large screens relaying the activities on Whitehall. We were entertained by watching convoys of Commonwealth leader's cars passing by up a designated lane along side us. They were followed by the Royal Horse Artillery horse and guns travelling to Green Park preparing for the gun salute. We were amused and amazed to see the number of young women in the troupe! The rumble of the gun carriage wheels and the clip clop of the horses hooves at close quarters was absolutely wonderful to hear.

Eventually the actual commemoration service started and we had a wonderful view on our large screens. I was delighted to see our ex Bishop, Paul Mason, take his place with the other religious leaders beside the Cenotaph. He cut a dashing figure and stood out from the others in his red Bishop's robes and beret! At the Eleventh hour the 2 minute silence commenced. The silence, with so many people gathered together, was inspiring and a suitable tribute to all who had fought and lost their lives. How many memories were enkindled and prayers offered in those moments. The sound of so many praying the Lord's Prayer out loud, and together was very moving and made one wish that all people could share such peace together more often in this troubled world.

The march past of veterans followed and the wonderful sound of the bands wafted over from Whitehall. Finally it was our turn and the front end (section A) set out under Admiralty Arch. They were led by a Non Military band thus emphasizing that this was a procession, not a march, of ordinary people paying their tribute to the fallen. Slowly, and I mean very slowly, the rest of the procession gradually left the Mall and at 1.30pm (90 minutes later than planned) our section started to move off. To my delight we were led by the band of the combined Guides and Scouts of Britain. They were amazing and played rousing marching music which helped us to step out at a very sprightly pace. I was thrilled to be marching under Admiralty Arch and finally heading for Whitehall. Amazingly there were still lots of people lining the streets, cheering and applauding. A Salvation Army Band and lots of veterans who had marched earlier, gave rousing encouragement as they realized we were almost at the end of the procession and had been waiting patiently all morning for our opportunity to show our respects. As we approached the Cenotaph the sea of wreaths was simply overwhelming and beautiful. Senior scouts were on hand to take our wreathes and add them to the display, in orderly rows.

The wreath we carried and laid was marked "From the children, staff and parents of St Thomas' School, Rainham, Kent, with gratitude from the next generation". Theresa had been instrumental in organizing the school's remembrance events and the wreath was a representation of the wreathes the children had made. It was nice to think that they too were represented at the Cenotaph. Finally and exhaustedly, we marched to our dispersal area in Green Park where we said farewells to the people with whom we had shared the morning and procession.

The People's Procession was a wonderful experience and I'm glad we took part. Waiting around, and standing in the Mall for 4 hours was hard but as Theresa pointed out, it was a small discomfort by comparison to the hours and years many members of the armed forces had endured for our freedom. On a personal level her paternal grandfather (whose medals she wore) had been

"mentioned in despatches" for working 48 hours non-stop in an operating theatre on a hospital ship off Sicily. The whole day was very emotional as we remembered and prayed for all our family members who had fought and those thousands who had fought and died alongside them. It would be good if it becomes an annual event and if it does please consider taking part!

Mary Bigwood

Editor's Note:

As I start this letter it is snowing and very cold, even the 2 cats took one look out of the back door, turned around and came back in not at all happy!

They've just been showing film of people sleeping out in the cold on the television and it makes me realize how lucky those of us with nice warm homes are.

There are still a few flowers out in my garden in spite of all of this and another month ^{should} hopefully see some improvement in the weather. I hope you all had a good Christmas and are managing to keep warm.

Thank you for your contributions to the magazine it's always good to hear everyone's news. Please keep writing, I get a bit desperate for things to put in sometimes.

Copy date for the next magazine is the 24 February.

Alma Payne

Editor

Tel: 01634 362896

e-mail: almapayne1@gmail.com



The Stars

Not the ones in the sky but you the Parishioners of St. Thomas of Canterbury, for your kind and generous support for Darland House which was appreciated by all.

It was suggested that any unwanted Christmas gifts, i.e toiletries, socks, underwear, t-shirts etc. would be gratefully received, however, many people went out and bought presents for the 40 people who reside at Darland House. The presents had a star on them indicating male or female so that staff could easily sort them out. You will be pleased to know that the residents were very excited with their gifts, in fact, one lady kissed the robin on the label of her present, it was very moving and wonderful to see all the smiling faces and the staff have asked us to thank you on their behalf.

The generous support of individuals helps us to assist those in our community and we are hoping to repeat these donations next Christmas

See letter from Darland House at back of Church.

**Pat
Theresa**

COFFEE:

Please come along and meet your fellow parishioners for a cup of coffee (or tea!) after the 10.30am Mass at St Thomas' on a Sunday. Everyone very welcome and it's a good way to get to know people.



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????? Still Puzzled ??????

1 Name the one sport in which neither the spectators nor the participants know the score or the leader until the contest ends.

Boxing

2 What famous North American landmark is constantly moving backwards?

Niagara Falls (The rim is worn down about two and a half feet each year because of the millions of gallons of water that rush over it every minute.)

3 Of all vegetables, only two can live to produce on their own for several growing seasons. All other vegetables must be replanted every year. What are the only two perennial vegetables?

Asparagus and rhubarb

4 What fruit has its seeds on the outside? **Strawberry**

5 Brandy. You can buy pear brandy, with a real pear inside the bottle. The pear is whole and ripe, and the bottle is genuine; it hasn't been cut in any way. How did the pear get inside the bottle?

The bottles are placed over pear buds when they are small, and are wired in place on the tree. The bottle is left in place for the entire growing season.

6 Only three words in standard English begin with the letters "dw" and they are all common words. Name two of them.

Dwarf, dwell and dwindle

7 Name the only vegetable or fruit that is never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form except fresh.

Lettuce.

8 Name 6 or more things that you can wear on your feet beginning with the letter "S."

Shoes, socks, sandals, sneakers, slippers, skis, skates, snowshoes, stockings, stilts

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