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CATHOLIC PARISH OF RAINHAM PARISH MAGAZINE



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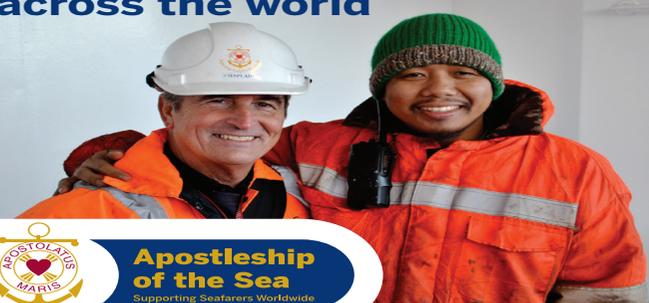


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News from St Thomas' November 2018

I can't believe that we are nearly 1/3 of the way through the academic year! Where has the time gone? Preparations for Christmas are well under way and the excitement from children and staff is palpable! At the time of writing, the PTA are preparing for our Christmas Bazaar this coming Saturday. We are looking forward to seeing the craft stalls, the cakes, raffle and, of course, a visit from Father Christmas himself. In fact, we are extra lucky as he will also be visiting our children in class on Friday. We hope that we will see lots of you there!

In school, the infants are preparing for their nativity play which is a new one this year – "A Midwife Crisis". The performances will be on 12th and 13th December with a dress rehearsal performance for the rest of the school on 11th. Keep a look out for the children in the local newspaper as a photographer is coming to take their pictures.

The juniors have not been left out of the Christmas performance fun either. Next Tuesday (2nd December), the juniors will be taking part in our Christmas concert. There will be singing, recorder, violin, guitar, flute, piano and double bass performances. All the children have worked extremely hard for this and are looking forward to the shows.

2018 is a very significant year in this country with it being the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI. During the week leading up to Remembrance Day, we had a week of WWI and remembrance themed activities. We had the children making poppy wreaths (which were then presented at church), planting a poppy garden, a remembrance service and a visit from the Guildhall Museum in Rochester. Some of the children also researched their own family links to WWI. We found out some very interesting stories! The week was a great success and thank you to everyone involved.

On 22nd and 23rd November, the juniors went on their annual school trip. This year, it was to Hampton Court palace. The children loved seeing the kitchens, the chapel, the gardens and the deer in bushy park! They also had a workshop about Christmas through history which was fascinating and they also got

got to make crowns. The children were all very well behaved and we all had a lovely day. A big thank you to all the helpers who came but most particularly for Mrs Bell who organised everything.

On 16th October, the PTA organised a performance of Pinocchio for the children to enjoy. What a treat! The staff has said what high quality it was and how much all the children enjoyed it. Thank you to the PTA who funded it. Also, the PTA organised a quiz on 13th October. I'm told it was a wonderful evening and a good time was had by all. An amazing £432.98 was raised.

Our school is great for raising money for charity and we are so proud of this part of our school ethos. On 16th November, our GIFT team, led by Mrs Tong, organised a sweet sale in the computing suite after school. The place was absolutely packed throughout and the children raised a wonderful £82 for Children In Need. Also, the school council, led by Mrs Thomas, organised a pyjama day to get some more toys and games for wet play. The children loved the day and now have some beautiful new toys and games.

Our school takes Christmas very seriously and as such we ask for your prayers for our Christmas preparations and for our children and their families and staff during the upcoming holidays. On behalf of all of us at our school, we would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Theresa Stanton



Ode to Myopia

*My face in the mirror isn't wrinkled or drawn.
My house isn't dirty – the cobwebs are gone.
My garden looks lovely, and so often does my lawn.
I think I might NEVER put my glasses back on.*

(Author unknown)

????? PUZZLE PAGE ?????

NAME THE CAROLS & POPULAR SONGS:

For example: A I A M = Away in a Manger

(HINT - The best way might be to think of some carols and then see if they are there)

1 J B

2 G K W

3 T T D O C

4 R T R N R

5 O L T O B

6 W S W T F B N

7 D D M O H

8 I T B M W

9 I S T S

10 S N

The Inquisitive Mind of a Child

Why are they selling poppies Mummy?
Selling poppies in the town today.
The poppies, child, are flowers of love,
For the men who marched away.

But why have they chosen a poppy, Mummy?
Why not a beautiful rose?
Because, my child, men fought and died
In the fields where the poppies grow.

But why are the poppies red? Mummy.
Why are the poppies so red?
Red is the colour of blood, my child,
The blood that our soldiers shed.

The heart of the poppy is black, Mummy.
Why does it have to be black?
Black, my child is the symbol of grief.
For the men who never came back.

But why, Mummy are you crying so?
Your tears are giving pain.
My tears are my fears for you my child.
For the world is forgetting again.

Anonymous



Armistice Day is held annually on 11th November, it is also known as

Remembrance Day

***They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them***

Remembrance Day [sometimes known informally as Poppy Day owing to the tradition of the remembrance poppy] is a memorial day observed in Commonwealth member states since the end of the First World War also known as, The Great War, to remember the members of their armed forces who have died in the line of duty. Following a tradition inaugurated by King George V in 1919 the day is also marked by war remembrances in many non-Commonwealth countries. Remembrance Day is observed on 11th November in most countries to recall the end of hostilities of World War I on that date in 1918. Hostilities formally ended "at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month", in accordance with the armistice signed by representatives of Germany and the Entente between 5:12 and 5:20 that morning. ["At the 11th hour" refers to the passing of the 11th hour, or 11:00 am.] The First World War officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on 28th June 1919. There is also Remembrance Sunday every year, which falls on the second Sunday in November.

The tradition of Remembrance Day evolved out of Armistice Day. The initial Armistice Day was observed at Buckingham Palace, commencing with King George V hosting a "Banquet in Honour of

The tradition of Remembrance Day evolved out of Armistice Day. The initial Armistice Day was observed at Buckingham Palace, commencing with King George V hosting a "Banquet in Honour of the President of the French Republic" during the evening hours of 10th November 2019. The first original Armistice Day was subsequently held on the grounds of Buckingham Palace the following morning. During World War II, many countries changed

the name of the holiday. Member states of the Commonwealth of Nations adopted Remembrance Day.

The anniversary is used to remember all the people who have died in wars – not just World War One. This includes the Second World War, the Falklands War, the Gulf War and conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The first two-minute silence in Britain was held on the 11 November 1919, when George V asked the public to observe a silence at 11am.

King George V made the request "So the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice so that we might live in peace."

Since 1928, the Last Post has been sounded every evening at 8pm under the Menin Gate memorial in Ypres, Belgium to remember those who died so that we might live in peace. Only during the Second World War was the ceremony interrupted. Every year thousands of secondary school children travel to Belgium and France to visit the Commonwealth War Graves. They are moved by what they see and appreciate why we remember them.

***When you go home tell them of us and say
For your tomorrow we gave our today***

Clifford Mickleburgh



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.

A Christmas Carol Mystery

There is one Christmas carol that has baffled a lot of people. What in the world do lords a-leaping, French hens, swimming swans and of course a partridge who won't come out of the pear tree have to do with Christmas?

The original text of this carol is thought to have been first published in English in 1780 and it was either said or sung to a different tune to the one we know today. Some think it is just a Christmas memory game for children, others think it has a more hidden meaning. From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not officially allowed to practice their faith openly with differing levels of religious toleration from those in power during the centuries. During that era it is thought that someone wrote this carol as a catechism [a religious instructional text] for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning while each element in the carol has code words for a religious reality which the children could easily remember.

The **Partridge in the pear tree** was Jesus Christ.

The **two turtle doves** were the Old and the New Testaments.

The **three French hens** stood for Faith, Hope and Love.

The **four calling birds** were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

The **five golden rings** recalled the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament.

The **six geese a-laying** stood for the six days of Creation of this beautiful world.

The **seven swans a-swimming** represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit: Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership and Mercy

The **eight maids a-milking** were the eight Beatitudes [blessings during the Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew's Gospel].

The **nine ladies dancing** were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self Control.

The **ten Lords a-leaping** were the Ten Commandments.

The **eleven Pipers piping** stood for the eleven faithful Disciples [Judas didn't make the Grade].

And the **twelve drummers drumming** symbolised the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed sometimes called the Rule of Faith.

Why twelve days of Christmas? It's the twelve days between Christmas day and Epiphany when the three wise men [Kings?] visited Jesus.

The truth about the origins of this carol are shrouded in the mists of time, as is any evidence on which to base an answer that would stand up to closer examination. One thing is sure, if you have not heard this interpretation before, when you hear someone singing about two turtle doves this Christmas, you will probably think and wonder?

Contributed by Clifford Mickleburgh



*The star the shepherds saw that night
that lit the way for them
Still shines to guide all those who seek
the Light of Bethlehem.
Wishing you and yours a blessed Christmas*



Christmas Services



- Sunday 16 December** International Carol Service at 12.15pm in St Thomas' Church.
- Christmas Eve** (24 December) Children's (Family) Mass of Christmas at 6pm, preceded at 5.30pm by 30 minutes of carols.
- Midnight First Mass of Christmas preceded at 11.30pm by 30 minutes of carols.
- Christmas Day** (25 December) 10.30am Mass of Christmas Morning.
- St Stephen's Day** (26 December) 10am Mass on St Stephen's Day will be a special Mass for altar servers awards. All available altar servers and their families are invited to attend.



From the Registers

Baptisms:

28.10.2018 Saoirse Elizabeth Taylor
 28.10.2018 Jack Anthony Brown



Funerals:

12.11.2018 Mark Anthony Gerard Reilly

Anniversary List:

01.11.16	Peggy Hitch	04.11.15	Iris Barratt
09.11.16	Stefan Nastaly	10.11.14	George Thermer
16.11.14	David Durham	17.11.16	Anthony Andrews
23.11.14	Bob Keywood	25.11.15	Sheila Link
28.11.16	Peter Peek	28.11.16	Mary O'Toole
28.11.17	Gillian Smith	29.11.17	Doreen Tromp
02.12.13	Mary Hammond	04.12.15	Jacqueline Edgson
6.12.14	Margaret Nugent	06.12.14	Patricia Stynes
06.12.16	Margaret Nicholson	10.12.17	Denis Moley
11.12.14	Lydia Watts	11.12.15	Thomas O'Neill
13.12.15	John Rooney	17.12.17	Catherine Donnelly
19.12.15	Margaret Hardy	20.12.14	Nigel Price
20.12.15	Angela Purcell	20.12.17	Denis Barrett
20.12.17	Peter Kelly	22.12.16	Deborah Fleming



**CHRIST is the MORNING STAR who, when the NIGHT of this WORLD is past brings HIS SAINTS the promise of The LIGHT OF LIFE and opens EVERLASTING DAY.
 Venerable Bede (673 – 735)**

A Strange World

Strange how a £10 note seems so large in Church, but so small in a Supermarket.

Strange how long one hour seems for Mass and yet so short for a soap.

What a thrill when the football match goes into extra time but how uncomfortable we feel if it's the sermon.

How hard to get interested in a few verses of Scripture, when we find it hard to put down a tabloid newspaper.

Strange how easily we adjust our schedule for a party, but not so easy for some Parish activity.

Strange how we can believe what we read in the newspapers, but we question the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Strange how we all want to go to heaven – provided we do not have to believe, say or do too much to get there.

It's a strange old world when you think about it – if you do think about it?



A Christmas Prayer

“Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of angels, the gladness of shepherds and the worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.

Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings and teach us to be merry with clean hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be Thy children and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus sake, Amen!

By Robert Louis Stevenson

#Ahoto2018

St Joseph's

When we signed up for the volunteering trip to Ghana, we honestly didn't fully understand what the trip would entail. Not only was it a culture shock but also an eye opener into the good we could do as a parish.

We were particularly touched by the work of the child-care centre (St Joseph's), the story behind it and the future plans for the centre. Watching as the women who work there totally commit themselves to an all-embracing care of the children. It was truly inspiring to be a part of. With there being originally over 22 children in full time care there, there are now only 7 wonderful children who live under the care of the centre full time. There is a hope that one day St Joseph's will no longer have children in their care full time but be used more as a respite care for families, allowing them to concentrate funds on supporting children at home with the family or on education. However, they still have far to go, these 7 children are all extremely intelligent and loving, something they may not have been able to express if it was not for this project. Having spent three weeks living with them we have seen that everyone working in child care has the same goal, to give these young children the life they deserve, no matter their background. It has a unique family set up which is full of love and happiness and we were all extremely honoured to be able to be a part of it.

St Elizabeth's

St Elizabeth's school for special needs has been set up in Ahotokuroom and is a step in the right direction for Ghana. The inclusive school offers a chance of a good education to children who would normally be forgotten about. The school not only gives the children an education, but the teachers put effort in to teach the children life skills such as cooking and cleaning which for many of them will help them in later life. In St Elizabeth's the children can stay at school until the age of 21 to ensure they are

able to manage their own lives. Some of the older children of St Elizabeth's have graduated and been given jobs working around the compound which is lovely to see. They help to keep the place they love clean and homely. Mohamed is one graduate of St Elizabeth's and not only does he put so much effort into everything he does, he also became our protector from any animals that might hurt us such as scorpions, taking them on with no fear, while us typical girls screamed for help.

The children in St Elizabeth's are so lovely and all had so much passion to learn new things on a daily basis, whether it be educational or a new game such as hopscotch. Ahotokurom is giving these children something that Ghana will not, acceptance of their disabilities while encouraging them to adapt and learn to do things that suit them. This is shown by the quote "disability, not inability" being painted on the walls in the classrooms.

Not only do the children have massive hearts, the teachers are amazing. Ghana's education system does not provide a training course for special educational teaching so for these teachers to take on children with such diverse disabilities is amazing and something that many English special educational schools wouldn't do. This makes St Elizabeth's a credit to Ahotokurom and something they should be extremely proud of.

St Claire's

Ahotokurom is a family unit that caters for everyone, from young children to the elderly. St Claire's is the old people's home that cares for those whose families can no longer afford to keep them at home. It is home to 17 residents who are cared for by the attentive carers that give up all their time to look after them. This kind of care can be found across Ahotokurom as everyone always puts others before themselves.

As a group, we didn't manage to spend a lot of time at St Claire's as most of the residents couldn't speak English, but those who could were a joy to talk to. One of the most memorable residents is James, a blind man whose passion is to preach the word of God. While we were there, every conversation ended with a prayer and he even said a special prayer for our safe journey home. He

loves to dance and was seen having a boogie while the music was playing during Mass every week. He is a man loved by all who know him and will be greatly missed by the group.

St Claire's is also home to the Priest of Ahotokurom and Atonkwa, Fr Philip. This man is an inspiration as, after a terrible accident, he became completely paralysed, but he has been fighting for recovery for over 17 years. His condition has improved massively, and he is now able to move the top half of his body and control his wheelchair. He still requires assistance medically when travelling across the compound and during Mass, but his fantastic carers and altar servers do an amazing job catering for his needs. For someone who has had such a traumatic past, he is a delight to speak to.

We realised while we were out there that St Claire's residents don't have many sources of entertainment so, after working out what games the children and childcare staff enjoyed, we introduced the older generation to the joy that is Bingo! From feedback we have received after returning to England, it has been a hit and they have continued to play as a community and they love it just as much as the children.

By Molly, Pippa, Natasha, Katherine, Molly & Emily
(To be continued in the next magazine).

Editor's Note:

Thank you to the youth and Clifford for your contributions to the magazine. More of the article on the trip to Ghana will be published in the next magazine. It sounds as if you all had a worthwhile and informative visit.

Some of you will have enjoyed the UCM Carol Concert and we are so pleased that you were able to come along and also very grateful to the Medway Singers for performing for us. We made in excess of £500 for CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young) which is our chosen charity of the year. It was a lovely event, and a magical start to Christmas. This concert is held each year for St Augustine's and St Thomas' Parishes and anyone else who wants to come along.

Copy date for the next magazine, end of December.

Alma Payne – Editor
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The Tablecloth:

The new Pastor and his wife were re-opening a church in the suburbs of Brooklyn. It was their first church and early October and they were elated by the possibilities this provided for them.

When they had seen the church for the first time they had stood stock still: it was an old building and needed much work to be done on it. They set themselves the target of holding their first service on Christmas Eve. They worked hard repairing the pews, plastering the walls etc and by December 21st the Pastor went to the church and was very depressed with what he saw. Water was coming through a hole in the roof and a large area of the plaster about six by two and a half metres had fallen from the wall at the highest point behind the pulpit. He mopped up the water and debris and realised that with no others to help him he would have to cancel the Christmas Eve service.

On his way home he looked at the items on display at a charity flea market and saw a wonderful, handmade, ivory coloured crocheted tablecloth; an exquisite piece of work with beautiful colours and a cross right in the centre. It was the exact size to cover up the hole in the wall; he bought it and went back to the church.

Meanwhile it had begun to snow and an old woman who had missed her bus had entered the warm church to wait for the next one. She sat in a pew and watched the Pastor who was up a ladder draping the tablecloth over the hole in the wall. Then he noticed that the woman was coming towards him as white as chalk. "Pastor" she asked "Where did you get this cloth?" The Pastor explained how he had found it and she asked him to look under the right-hand corner to see if the initials E.G.B. had been sewn there. He found them; they were the woman's own initials and she had made the cloth thirty-five years earlier.

The woman could hardly believe it when the Pastor told her the story of how he had gone straight to the cloth. She explained to

him that before the war she and her husband were well-situated people and when the Nazis came she was forced to flee: she would have been taken prisoner and would have seen neither her husband or her home again. Her husband had said that he would follow her a week later.

The Pastor wanted to give her the cloth, but she begged him to keep it for the church. A little astonished he insisted on driving her home: he felt it was the least he could do. The woman lived on the far side of Staten Island and had been spending only the one day in Brooklyn.

The service on Christmas Eve was wonderful; the church was full and the music and atmosphere were brilliant. At the end of the service the Pastor and his wife said goodbye to people at the door, and hoped that they would come again.

Only one old man who the Pastor knew from the neighbourhood remained in one of the pews, sitting and staring at the tablecloth. Asked by the Pastor why he wasn't leaving, he enquired where the tablecloth had come from, since it was so similar to one made by his wife a long time ago in Austria. How could two cloths be so similar? He told the story of how the Nazis had come; of how his wife had escaped for safety; of how he would follow her. But he had been taken prisoner and had seen neither his wife or home in thirty five years.

The Pastor asked him if he would make a small excursion with him. They drove to Staten Island, to the same house to which the Pastor had driven three days earlier. He helped the man up the three steps to the house where the woman lived; knocked on the door and experienced the most beautiful family reunion that he would have imagined.

*A true story told by Pastor Bob Reid – translated from the German
By Deacon Keith RIP*



Rainham Youth Club Fundraiser

The National Citizen Service (NCS) is a government initiative to create a more cohesive and responsible society through its young people working together to complete a social action project which benefits the local community. One of the four groups of young people decided to fundraise for a homeless charity called One Big Family and paired up with Rainham Youth Club to do so.

One Big Family is a charity which uses public donations to provide the homeless and vulnerably-housed people with a bed, food and warm clothing when the weather feels like zero degrees. For them it costs £10 to provide one person with a bed so the youth club decided to set their fundraising target at £300 to be able to provide 30 people with what they needed. This money was raised through a sponsored event planned and run by the NCS group.

The event was a homeless experience which took place in Cozenton Park on 24th November. This allowed the youth club members to get a first-hand look at the hardships of homeless life. They got to take part in fun activities such as shelter building, scavenger hunts and first aid training, but they also had to experience difficulties such as the typical British weather, the eviction process and eating cold soup. They all thoroughly enjoyed the experience and managed to collectively raise £383.50 thanks to their sponsors and donations from the parish. This meant that, with their other fundraisers, the NCS group was able to raise over £500 for One Big Family, a huge success that is greatly appreciated.

By Molly Christie



ANSWERS TO QUIZ

- 1 **J B** = *Jingle Bells*
- 2 **G K W** = *Good King Wenceslas*
- 3 **T T D O C** = *The Twelve Days of Christmas*
- 4 **R T R N R** = *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*
- 5 **O L T O B** = *O Little Town of Bethelhem*
- 6 **W S W T F B N** = *Whilst Shepherds Watch their Flocks by Night*
- 7 **D D M O H** = *Ding Dong Merrily on High*
- 8 **I T B M W** = *In the Bleak Mid Winter*
- 9 **I S T S** = *I Saw Three Ships*
- 10 **S N** = *Silent Night*

