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Volume 31 Issue No 2

October, November, December 2019

**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](http://www.rcrainham.co.uk)  
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Deacon James Coleman - Telephone 01634 306558

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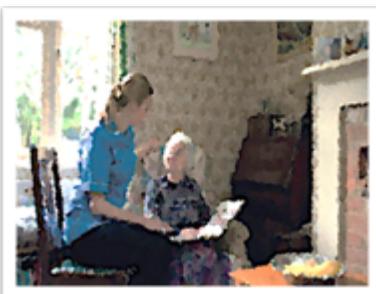
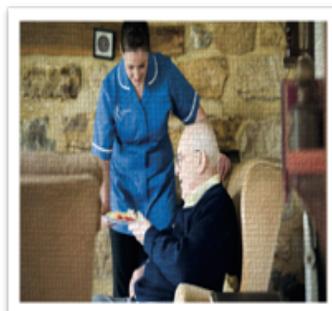
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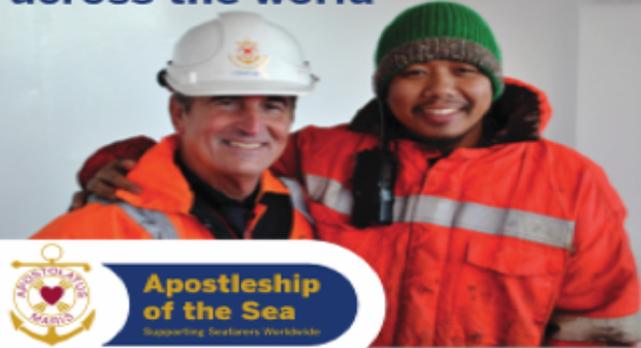
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### WALKING FOR HEALTH

Meeting at 10.15am every Wednesday inside Twydall Library, starting at 10.30am for a 45 minute flat walk suitable for beginners. For further details please contact:

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**Some Children See Him**  
**By Alfred Burt**

Some children see Him lily white  
The infant Jesus born this night  
Some children see him lily white  
With tresses soft and fair

Some children see Him bronzed and brown  
The Lord of to earth come down  
Some children see Him bronzed and brown  
With dark and heavy hair (with dark and heavy hair!)

Some children see him almond-eyed  
This saviour whom we kneel beside  
Some children see him almond-eyed  
With skin of yellow hue!

Some children see him dark as they  
Sweet Mary's Son to whom we pray  
Some children see Him dark as they  
And, ah! They love Him so!

The children in each different place  
Will see the Baby Jesus' face  
Like theirs but bright with heav'nly grace  
And filled with holy light!

O lay aside such earthly things  
And with thy heart as offering  
Come worship now the infant King  
'tis love that's born tonight!

**Editor's Note:**

*Thank you Florence for your very interesting article, Ellen Stringer has certainly had a very full and active life and must have seen many changes in the world and in Rainham too. Thanks also to Clifford for letting me use his write up on the Battle of the Somme.*

*I haven't had much in for the magazine so luckily, as Christmas is coming up, I've managed to find quite a few bits and pieces. Please do think about writing something for me if you can. I'm sure some of you must have some interesting tales to tell or will have been somewhere nice on holiday. We also have a lot of organisations in the parish.*

*The copy date for the next magazine will be the end of December.*

*I hope you all have a very happy and holy Christmas and my best wishes for the New Year.*

**Alma Payne**  
**Editor - Parish Magazine**  
**E-mail:** [almapayne1@gmail.com](mailto:almapayne1@gmail.com)  
**Tel:** 01634 362896

**UCM** - The UCM Carol Concert will be taking place next week at St Augustine's Church, Parkwood. Mince pies and tea/coffee are served in the interval and it makes a lovely start to Christmas. This will probably be out a bit too late to publicise it but thank you to those of you who have already bought tickets and given your support during the year.

The Medway Singers always put on a brilliant performance and those who come along have an enjoyable evening and usually come again. The UCM encompasses both parishes so I would like to stress that this is a joint venture for Rainham and Parkwood. Our charity for this year is 'Mary's Meals' so we would like to be able to raise as much as we can for such a deserving cause.

## **A Century worth celebrating**

Ellen Mary Stringer celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on 13 October 2019. Her parents belonged to 'The Farming Community of Rainham' where her father was manager of a fruit farm, Kent was then known as 'The Garden of England' because of its fertile soil and mild climate allowing orchards of fruit and hop gardens to be so successful. Ellen enjoyed helping with the work. She remembers sitting on the balls of hops being carried by horse and cart to the Oast Houses in Rainham for drying and pressing. Picking was done by locals but further afield in Kent London families were recruited to do so and enjoy a holiday in the process.

Ellen was Christened and Confirmed in St Margaret's Church, where her father was an active member. She had a brother called Frank who worked in the Dockyard and a sister Florence married to Arthur who had a daughter Rosemary. Sadly all have died.

After graduating from Gillingham County Grammar School Ellen trained as a nurse at Hammersmith and West Middlesex hospitals in London. She later did a midwifery course at St Bart's Hospital. During the war she remained in London, helping with the nursing, midwifery and social care needed following the devastation to health and housing there. She was also allocated to the Midlands to look after those affected in that area. She then did a 'Teachers Training Course' in High Wycombe College to prepare her for the next plan of action. She went to Canada where she did community care in the rural areas with teaching and supervision and also worked in Hamilton Maternity Unit.

She returned to Kent owing to her father's ill health and death. Also that of her mother, she looked after both. Her next move was to Sheppey General Hospital, where owing to her experience she was in charge of the Midwifery Unit and remained there for many years until her retirement. The consultant was Mr Smelts and later Mr Mathews. A colleague of hers there was Sheila Judge, a midwifery sister, farmer, horse woman and author. Sheila wrote A History of Sheppey dating back to Viking times – very interesting and available in the libraries. Also another little book called 'Tales of Old Sheppey' as she saw changes aplenty on the way.

Following retirement Ellen carried on helping in the Rainham community with care of neighbours and friends and was very active in St Margaret's Church while health allowed. She belonged to many organisations, some of which were:

The Trefoil Guild for Guides  
NHS Fellowship – retired NHS staff  
MMs – retired midwives

She had to make significant changes to life over the last years. Give up driving her car/move from her bungalow in Orchard Street/live in sheltered accommodation in Longford Court and then to Newington Court where 24 hour help is possible. None of these were easy for such an independent person but each move became necessary. However, she is grateful to God for the life of Health and Happiness she has had and good family and friends along the way.

***Florence Classey***

The Battle of the Somme was a battle of the First World War fought by the armies of the British and French Empires against the German Empire. It took place between 1 July and 18 November 1918 on both sides of the upper reaches of the River Somme in France. The battle was intended to hasten a victory of the Allies and was the largest battle of the First World War on the Western Front, more than one million men were wounded or killed, making it one of the bloodiest battles in human history.

The First World War remains characterised by imagery of the trenches of the Western Front. Yet the sea was Britain's lifeline and the supremacy of the Royal Navy was crucial to national survival. The Battle of Jutland, which brought together the two most powerful naval forces of the time in the largest battle of the First World War. Over 100,000 sailors were involved on 250 ships in this 36 hour battle in the North Sea which started on 31 May 1916. More than 6,000 Royal Navy and 2,600 German sailors lost their lives.

In war, those fighting on opposite sides are not as different as they might like to imagine. Mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, brothers and sisters all mourn their loved ones. The grief felt by families, is, in many respects, the same the world over. The men in opposing trenches felt the same fear and pain.

**Clifford Mickleburgh**



### **Marriage Care** (Catholic Marriage Care Ltd)

'Marriage Care' is a voluntary organisation offering counselling help to anyone experiencing difficulties in their relationship. Our counsellors are carefully selected, trained and supervised.

As well as counselling Marriage Care also help prepare couples to marry. We provide Marriage Preparation courses. For an appointment or booking please ring 0800 389 3801 or enrol on our website: [www.marriagecare.org.uk](http://www.marriagecare.org.uk)

Medway Marriage Care are holding Marriage Preparation Days for engaged couples on Sundays 19 April, 31 May and 26 July 2020.

For those couples unable to attend one of the Marriage Preparation days Marriage Care are also able to offer marriage preparation by the FOCCUS method at any time during the year. For further information please e-mail Alma Payne on: [almapayne1@gmail.com](mailto:almapayne1@gmail.com) or telephone 01634 362896. Volunteers are always needed.

**Teacher:** *How old is your father?*

**Pupil:** *He is 6 years.*

**Teacher:** *What? How is this possible?*

**Pupil:** *He became father only when I was born.  
(Logic!! Children are quick and always speak their minds.)*

**Teacher:** *Maria, go to the map and find North America.*

**Maria:** *Here it is.*

**Teacher:** *Correct. Now, class, who discovered America?*

**Class:** *Maria.*

**Teacher:** *Glen, how do you spell 'crocodile?'*

**Glen:** *K-R-O-K-O-D-I-L-E*

**Teacher:** *No, that's wrong.*

**Glen:** *Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.*



**From the Registers:**

**Baptisms:**

01.09.2019	Darcey Elizabeth Jackson
01.09.2019	Evan Hywel Hodgson
08.09.2019	Henry Jenkins
08.09.2019	Max Jenkins
24.09.2019	Johnny Saunders

**Funerals:**

26.09.2019	Norah Arden
04.09.2019	John Patrick Nash
06.09.2019	Egle Fedora Zentilin
30.09.2019	Michael Ward
01.10.2019	Margaret Mary Furlong
23.10.2019	Anthony Rudyard Baldwin Walker
15.11.2019	Elsie Valerie Parkes

**Anniversary List:**

02.10.2018	Mark Reilly	04.10.2017	Mary Cruttenden
08.10.2015	Mary O'Neil	24.10.2015	Michael Taylor
16.10.2016	Colette Carmel Wilson		
26.10.2014	Doug Springate	29.10.2015	Thelma Brier
30.10.2014	Eileen James	01.11.2016	Peggy Hitch
04.11.2015	Iris Barratt	09.11.2016	Stefan Nastaly
10.11.2014	George Thermer	16.11.2014	David Durham
17.11.2016	Anthony Andrews	21.11.2018	Hannah Flynn
23.11.2014	Bob Keywood	25.11.2015	Sheila Link

**Anniversary List: (Continued)**

28.11.2016	Peter Peck	28.11.2016	Mary O'Toole
28.11.2017	Gillian Smith	28.11.2017	Bridie Curran
29.11.2017	Doreen Tromp	04.12.2015	Jacqueline Edgson
06.12.2014	Margaret Nugent	06.12.2014	Patricia Stynes
06.12.2016	Margaret Nicholson	10.12.2017	Denis Moley
11.12.2014	Lydia Watts	11.12.2015	Thomas O'Neill
13.12.2015	John Rooney	17.12.2015	Catherine Donnelly
18.12.2018	Frank Doherty	19.12.2015	Margaret Hardy
19.12.2018	John Carrick	20.12.2015	Nigel Price
20.12.2015	Angela Purcell	20.12.2017	Denis Barrett
20.12.2017	Peter Kelly	22.12.2016	Deborah Fleming



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

**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 morning.*

## The Second Ten Commandments

Thou shalt not worry, for worry is the most unproductive of all human activities.

Thou shalt not be fearful, for most of the things we fear never come to pass.

Thou shalt not cross bridges before you come to them, for no one has yet succeeded in accomplishing this.

Thou shalt face each problem as it comes, for you can only handle them one at a time anyway.

Thou shalt not take problems to bed with you; they make very poor bed fellows.

Thou shalt not borrow other people's problems.

Thou shalt not try and relive yesterday for good or ill, it is gone forever. Give the past to God and concentrate on the present.

Thou shalt be a good listener, for only when you listen do you hear ideas different from your own.

Thou shalt not be bogged down by frustration, for 90% is rooted in self pity and will interfere with positive action.

Thou shalt count thy blessings, never overlooking small ones, as many small blessings make a big blessing.



## Christmas Services



### Sunday 15 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

Carol Service 11.30pm followed by First Mass of Christmas.

### 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.



**Breakthrough:-** There is no one who wouldn't give his heart  
in which his God may live.  
Where he will dwell on regal throne, to hear  
our cries and ours alone.  
Ours to have our right to hold, cradle to  
grave, our strength untold.  
But where has all his glory flown, what fate  
befell his golden throne?  
For there instead, a rugged cross reminds  
firmly of our loss.  
A cross to which all hearts are nailed, the  
bruised reed in hands impaled.  
Then as we waken from our dream, in a  
single flash, the past which seems to deny  
at times the power of God  
Proves beyond any doubt, the path he trod  
For on the cross an open door,  
with outstretched arms forever more.  
God's glory because God's love  
restored, never fading, never flawed  
A shaft of grace within my heart brings its  
own vision to impart  
A peace that far outshines the sun, for I  
have learnt to say **THY WILL BE DONE**

**Contributed by Olive**



**The Story of Silent Night** (Adapted from old records and manuscripts)

The best known and best loved of all our many Christmas songs, "Silent Night" was written in Oberndorf, a tiny village in the Bavarian Mountains, on Christmas Eve 1818. Oberndorf, had been completely isolated by a severe blizzard, but still the inhabitants cheerfully prepared for the Christmas festivities. Then to their dismay, they discovered that their only organ, in the little church, had broken down.

Franz Xavier Gruber, the village schoolmaster and church organist, knew how disappointed the people would be for music was the heart of all their celebrations. So Gruber went to Joseph Mohr, the assistant priest, and suggested that he write a special song for the Christmas celebration, that could be sung without any preparation. Mohr agreed to do his best - to find the words that express the true meaning of Christmas. Towards evening he went to the home of the schoolmaster, with the lovely words of the song "Silent Night". Then Gruber composed a melody to fit the words.

On Christmas morning, the beautiful carol was sung for the first time. A guitar was the only accompaniment, and the words, "Silent Night Holy Night: all is calm, all is bright" sounded pure and clear in the Bavarian air.

The song was brought to England by Tyrolean singers, a hundred years ago. Many of their songs were forgotten, but "Silent Night" has remained. It is still sung in all corners of the world where people commemorate the birth of Christ.

Wishing you a very happy Christmas.



### **T'was The Night Before Christmas**

T'was the night before Christmas, when all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.  
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,  
In hopes that St Nicholas soon would be there.

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,  
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads.  
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,  
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap.

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow  
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below.  
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer.

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment it must be St Nick.  
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,  
and he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name.

Now, DASHER! now, DANCER! now, PRANCER and VIXEN!  
On, COMET! on CUPID! on, DONNER and BLITZEN!  
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!  
"Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
when they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,  
So up to the house-top the courses they flew,  
With the sleigh full of toys, and St Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof  
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.  
As I drew in my hand, and was turning around,  
Down the chimney St Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,  
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;  
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,  
and he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.

His eyes how they twinkled his dimples how merry!  
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!  
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,  
and the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth  
and the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.  
He had a broad face and a little round belly,  
that shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly!

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf  
and I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;  
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head  
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work  
and filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk.  
And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
and giving a nod, up the chimney he rose!

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,  
and away they all flew like the down of a thistle.  
But I heard him exclaim, 'ere he drove out of sight,  
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!"

***Clement Clarke Moore (1779 - 1823)***

