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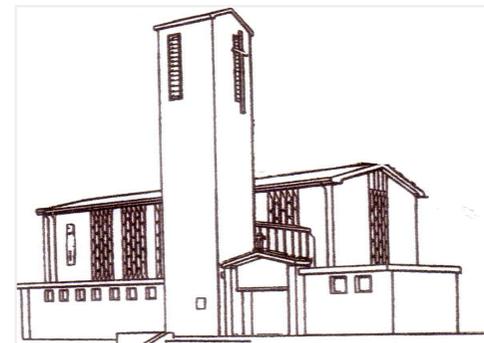
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CATHOLIC PARISH OF RAINHAM

PARISH MAGAZINE



St. Thomas of Canterbury Church
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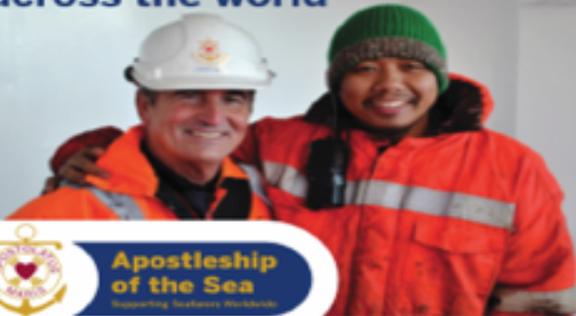
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Easter Even

There is nothing more that they can do
For all their rage and boast;
Caiaphas with his blaspheming crew,
Herod with his host.

Pontius Pilate in his Judgment-hall
Judging their Judge and his,
Or he who led them all and passed them all,
Arch-Judas with his kiss.

The sepulchre made sure with ponderous Stone,
Seal that same stone, O Priest;
It may be thou shalt block the holy One
From rising in the east:

Set a watch about the sepulchre
To watch on pain of death;
They must hold fast the stone if One should stir
And shake it from beneath.

God Almighty, He can break a seal
And roll away a Stone,
Can grind the proud in dust who would not kneel,
And crush the mighty one.

There is nothing more that they can do
For all their passionate care,
Those who sit in dust, the blessed few
And weep and rend their hair:

Peter, Thomas, Mary Magdalene,
The Virgin unreprieved,
Joseph, with Nicodemus, foremost men,
And John the Well-beloved,

Bring your finest linen and your spice,
Swathe the sacred Dead,
Bind with careful hands and piteous eyes
The napkin round His head;

Lay Him in the garden-rock to rest;
Rest you the Sabbath length:
The Sun that went down crimson in the west
Shall rise renewed in strength.

God Almighty shall give joy for pain,
Shall comfort him who grieves:
Lo! He with joy shall doubtless come again,
And with Him bring His sheaves.

by **Christina Rossetti**

1864



Rescued temples and the Coptic cathedral Aswan

In November, I went on a Nile cruise from Luxor to Aswan and back. It was a wonderful holiday.

People always ask if I saw the pyramids – NO. not a single one! They are in the area around Cairo – 400 miles further North. They date to the Old and Middle Kingdom periods of ancient Egyptian history – that is between 2,700 – 1,800 BC. Egypt then had a period, lasting 2 – 3 centuries, when it broke up somewhat and had foreign rulers.

Between about 1600 – 1500 BC the New Kingdom emerged with its capital at Thebes (modern Luxor) and Egypt ultimately controlled a large empire before starting to decline again after about 3 – 400 years. It was less powerful by the time Alexander the Great arrived in 4th c BC and led to the Ptolemys as rulers (including Cleopatra), followed by the Romans. It was conquered by Arabs in 7th c and was then ruled for many centuries by a series of caliphates.

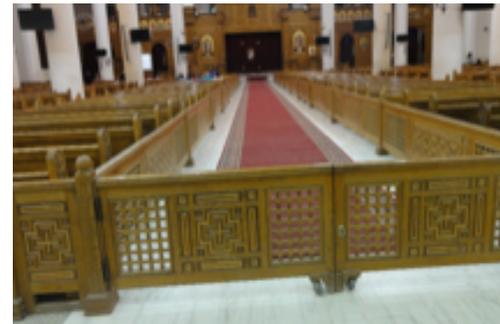
We visited at least 6 temples and several tomb sites including the Valley of the Kings. Everything we saw dated mainly between about 1600BC – 100AD. It's all huge and very impressive with colours 3,500 years old surviving in places.

The construction of the Aswan High Dam in the 1960s created the huge Lake Nasser. It is nearly 300 miles long by up to 10 miles wide and covers over 200 square miles. It is partly in Upper Egypt and partly in Sudan. It involved relocating 45 Nubian communities (50,000 people) and drowned many Egyptian and Nubian archaeological sites.

In the 1960s UNESCO rescued the two most impressive ones by carefully cutting up and dismantling them and then rebuilding above the new water level. The relocated temple of Abu Simbel (3 hours drive each way by coach across the desert from Aswan) is perhaps the most stunning. The statues of Rameses II fronting the main temple are well over 60 feet high – truly colossal. It fronts a specially

constructed artificial hill and faces Lake Nasser.

The beautiful temple of Philae, on an island in the Nile at Aswan, was first drowned by the original Aswan Low Dam built in 1906 by us British. From then on it was flooded for part of each year - gradually more so as the dam was raised higher. As part of the same operation in the 1960s UNESCO also relocated this to another, much higher, island nearby.



While in Aswan we visited the Coptic Cathedral of Michael the Archangel. It is a beautiful large modern building. It was started in 2006 and is not yet completely finished – eg stained glass not done and pillars that should be covered in marble are still plain. (Remind you of

anywhere? – but Westminster is more than 100 years older). It is mostly white inside and out so it is very light. Apparently there is a large crypt and for major feasts, when lots of people come, the upstairs is for women and the downstairs is for men (who are generally less numerous than women worshippers). When the congregation is smaller, men and women are just separated as one side or the other of the nave.

At the front there is a pulpit and three screens hiding the altars. This is normal in Orthodox churches. There were also lovely icons of the last supper, Our Lady with Jesus as a child and of various saints.

I have never been very clear about the Copts. It seems that the word is from the same origin as “E – **gypt**” and really just means Egyptian. It seems to tend to cover the inhabitants of Egypt that predate the Arab expansion of the 7 – 9th centuries. Maybe they deserve another article?

Maryline Stevenson

Lighting a Candle

Lord, this candle that I lit, may it be LIGHT from you to lighten my way through difficulties and decisions.

May it be fire from you to burn up my selfishness, my pride and all that is impure within me.

May it be FLAME from You to warm my heart and teach me love, through Jesus Christ our love.

Amen

Lord, I cannot stay long in your house.

This candle is a little bit of myself that I offer to you.

our Lord. Help me to continue my prayer in all that I do this day, through Jesus Christ Amen

Contributed by Yvonne Durkan (seen in the Cathedral)



Life without love is like a tree barren of blossom and fruit. And Love without Beauty is like flowers without scent and fruits without seeds

Life, Love and Beauty are one independent and absolute trinity, which cannot be separated or changed.

Khalil Gibson



CANCELLED

Cancer Research North Downs Walk

14 June 2020

Harrietsham Village Hall

Regrettably we have had to take the difficult decision to cancel THIS YEAR'S walk, in light of the recent escalation regarding coronavirus.

We had hoped to be able to go ahead with the walk but all advice and common sense dictates that we put the health of everyone at the forefront.

With apologies to you all for the disruption and disappointment.

Rotary Club of the Weald of Kent

From the Registers

Baptisms:

15.12.2019	Francis Gilbert
30.12.2019	Serah Jophy



Wedding:

30.11.2019	Joshua James Mann & Emma-Louise Allen
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Funerals:

23.12.2019	Paul Vella
20.01.2020	Frank Eric Stevens
21.01.2020	Barbara Marie Casey
23.01.2020	Alison Mary McManigan

Anniversary List:

January

01.1.16	Maureen Atkins	01.1.17	Patricia Singh
05.1.19	Bill Divine	06.1.19	Tom Bertuello
07.1.15	Mary Price	23.1.17	Jill Dowell
18.1.15	Maureen Waters	27.1.17	Mary McDowell
18.1.18	Stephen Plummer	20.1.19	Helen Mary O'Brien
20.1.17	Elizabeth Marie Mountain		
27.1.17	Ian Jenner	30.1.18	Norah Wood

February

09.2.18	Bernard Joseph Stebbens		
12.2.18	Joan Cullen		
13.2.19	Margaret Isabel Hanley		
18.2.16	Janet Laus	18.2.19	James McNama
21.2.15	Pauline Blaber	21.2.16	Violet Davison
25.2.15	Hanelore Klara Anita Cowham		

March

03.3.15	Mary Rachel Hanson	03.3.15	Eileen Lewis
25.3.15	Theresa Chapman		



*To LIVE in the HEARTS we leave behind
is not to DIE*

The Origins of Easter



The egg is an ancient symbol of new life and rebirth. In Christianity it became associated with Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. The custom of the Easter egg originated in the early Christian community of Mesopotamia, who stained eggs red in memory of the blood Jesus shed at his crucifixion. The Easter egg tradition may have celebrated the end of the privations of Lent. In the Medieval Europe, eggs were forbidden during Lent as well as other traditional fast days. During the strict Lenten fast of forty days no eggs were eaten.

Our Prayers (taken from a children's service)



Let us pray for children, those known to us and the ones we will never meet. May the blessing of the Christ Child be with them.

We pray for the children who put chocolaty fingers on everything especially your clean shirt, who love to be tickled, who stamp in puddles and ruin new shoes, who stuff themselves with sweets before dinner and can never find their shoes in the morning!

And also, we pray for those who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire, who have never run down the street in new shoes, who never know what a new toy is, and who are born in places we wouldn't be seen dead in and they probably will be. Be with them all this day Lord Christ.

We pray for the children who give us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions, who sleep with their dog and bury their goldfish, who hug us so tightly and who forget their dinner money, who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink, who watch their dads shave and who slurp their soup.

And also, we pray for those who never get dessert, who have no favourite blanket to drag around behind them, who watch their fathers and mothers suffer, who can't find any bread to steal, who do not have any rooms to tidy up, who have never seen their picture in a frame and whose monsters are really real. Be with them all this day Lord Christ.

We pray for the children who spend all their pocket money by Tuesday, who pick at their food, who love ghost stories, who shove dirty clothes under the bed and never wash the bath, who love visits from the tooth fairy even after they find out who it really is, who do not

find out who it really is, who do not like to be kissed in front of the school gates and who will fill your heart with joy and pride.

Marriage Care – Display for St Valentine's Feast



Medway Branch of Marriage Care will be holding Marriage Preparation Courses at The Millennium Centre, Rainham on the following dates:

Sunday 19 April 2020. Sunday 31 May 2020. Sunday 26 July 2020 – **these dates are now cancelled.**

To book onto a course please telephone or e-mail our National Appointments 0800 389 3801 or by e-mailing appointments@marriagecare.org.uk

ALL MARRIAGE CARE COURSES & COUNSELLING SESSIONS ARE NOW TRANSFERRED ON LINE ON LINE – PLEASE USE THE ABOVE DETAILS TO MAKE CONTACT

The Dogwood Tree

Many years ago, a dogwood tree grew on a hill outside Jerusalem.

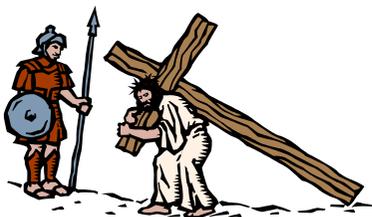


In those days, the dogwood tree was as tall and mighty as an oak, and this tree was the tallest of all the dogwoods, and extremely proud of its strength.

"Something wonderful is going to happen to me," it said to anyone who would listen. "I'll probably become the mast that holds the big sail on a grand ship, or the main timber supporting a great house." Unfortunately, the huge old dogwood was cut down to become the cross to which Jesus was nailed. The tree was horrified. All its dreams of glory were smashed, and it groaned in agony as two boards from its trunk were nailed together. Jesus took pity on the tree, even as he carried it to Calvary. "You will never be put to such use again," He told it. "From this day on, your shape will change, even as will the world. You will become slender and sway easily with the breeze. And instead of acorns, you will bear flowers in the shape of a cross... with two long and two short petals. In the centre of the outer edge of each petal, there will be nail prints... brown with rust and red with bloodstains to show the world how you suffered."

"Last of all, the centre of your flowers will **have to** be marked as though with a crown of thorns to remind people forevermore, that you and I spent our last moments together." And so it was. And so it is.

Author unknown



Sister Gillian Murphy's annual letter to Anne Stinson (for those of you who didn't know her Sister Gillian used to be in our parish and was much loved a teacher at St Thomas' School).

Dear Anne, dear friends,

Well, another year has passed, I hope that it has been a good one for you. It's been a fairly busy year in my new role in France, and trying to work out what Brexit will mean for me..... if and when it ever arrives!!! I can't face the prospect of having to change my driving licence and even retaking my driving test!!!

Apart from that I am beginning to settle in France but I still find myself saying: "At home, we do it this way ..." or "How do you do that here?" I'm still missing Marmite, Mint Sauce and Branston Pickle ... but I do stock up a bit when I go home!!!

I'm managing to get backwards and forwards to England a few times a year, and did spend a lovely couple of weeks in Bradford with mum. She loves donkeys so we went to the donkey sanctuary. After breaking her hip last October she made a good recovery but it has made her a bit more feeble, although her head still tells her she can do anything she wants. So it's a bit frustrating to tell her that she can't climb on the chair to do the painting or the cleaning!! For the first time in years I was at home for her birthday, and it was great to be with all the family.

I had not been expecting to go to Lourdes at Easter, but my friend Fr Denis who was in the middle of chemo decided that he wanted to go to Lourdes at the last minute without our group of children with disabilities. So he asked me to go with him. Although he was very

tired with the effects of his treatment we managed to have a lovely time and met up with lots of friends. Obviously, not having a group to look after we had lots of free time to do our own thing! Unfortunately, Fr Greg from Rainham days was not there this year. He does keep in touch and gives me news from time to time.

My day to day work consists of visiting communities and meeting with Sisters, attending meetings concerning finances, planning old people's homes and meeting with our younger sisters.

We had a meeting with the young sisters from Sri Lanka and Madagascar with some sisters from Togo, from another order. So you can see I am definitely the one with the white hair and the elder of the group. It was good to be able to lead them and to benefit from their youth and enthusiasm. By the time you get this letter I will be in Sri Lanka. I left on the 29 November and will be returning on the 29 December, so I'll be spending Christmas in the Southern Hemisphere for the first time in my life!! The country has been through a lot this year with the bomb blasts in the churches and hotels at Easter and now culminating in the election of the new President (brother of the previous President) who has a long and 'distinguished' army career ... so the military could become significantly more important in the country in the next few years. Anyway I'll just be glad to be back in Sri Lanka, meeting the Sisters and the people that they work with and appreciating the beauty of the country and the people.

As I write, this week I am in Spain, teaching young men who are thinking about becoming priests. It's great to be back in the classroom. Some of them are just like the 7 and 8 year olds I used to teach ... when they don't understand anything they have to take a walk to the bathroom!!! Anyway, it's been great fun and I'll be back in February and in May to do some more work with them.

Rainham remains very much in my heart and in my thoughts and prayers. I was very lucky to have been part of something so wonderful when I was a "Baby Sister"!

Must love and prayers

Sr Gillian



Editor's Note:

Thank you Marilyn for coming to my rescue with one of your articles, to Yvonne for her contribution and to Sister Gillian for allowing me to reproduce her Christmas e-mail to Anne Stinson. Some of you will remember the time Sister Gillian spent with us here in Rainham and the fun we all had!! It all seems a long time ago!

It becomes very difficult at times to find material for the magazine so please if you have anything interesting to write about do send it in.

I have made some amendments to the magazine since it was printed due to the on-going changes in circumstances.

It seems very strange not going to Mass and other outings limited, keep safe everyone.

Alma Payne

Editor - almapayne1@gmail.com

Telephone No: 01634 362896

**IN LINE WITH OTHER PARISH ACTIVITIES ALL UCM MEETINGS
& ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN CANCELLED
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**