

St. Augustine and St. Aidan
Tonge Moor and Hall i'th' Wood

PARISH PAPER
“Lockdown Edition” - May 2020



Dear friends

What a week that was! This year's Holy Week was the first since my early 20s that I have not observed with more than one other person. It was very strange indeed celebrating Palm Sunday without a procession; celebrating the Maundy Thursday Liturgy, with its emphasis on Jesus' commandment of service, without the foot washing ceremony; and celebrating the Easter Vigil without the faithful gathered around the New Fire.

And yet. And yet. When the mass is celebrated, the church is always full to the rafters: the angels and saints and the whole company of heaven join our worship below as, in our worship, we are joining with theirs above.

More than that, my eyes and Pam's eyes were not the only ones observing what was taking place; we were not the only ones sharing in those liturgies. Through the wonders of the internet, members of the congregation were able to take part, too - albeit at a distance. All-in-all, despite (perhaps because of?) all the differences, this year's celebration of Our Lord's death and Resurrection was as wonderful and glorious as ever.

Technology has allowed us all to continue to fulfil our Christian obligations to attend mass, at least on Sundays and Holy Days of

Obligation, and make our communion: perhaps you have been among them?

Social distancing, and the need to close our churches for public worship, has meant that we cannot at present gather together and receive the Sacramental Body and Blood of our Lord, as we have been used to doing heretofore. But the Church, in her wisdom, recognised long ago that there would be times when the faithful might be prevented, by circumstances well beyond their control, from receiving the Sacraments.

The concept of Spiritual Communion was developed to enable the faithful to make their communion and so meet their obligations as members of the Church, the Body of Christ in those situations, such as the one we find ourselves in today. Through YouTube metrics, I have an indication of those sharing in the masses, and - by contrast - those are not. It is very interesting, and I may share it with you all when the pandemic is over.

As Christians, we are a Body bound together in our common faith in the Risen Lord Jesus, a faith we celebrate each Sunday as we gather with our fellow-Christians - physically or virtually - to hear the Word of God and share in the life-giving Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Do look on the parish website regularly: it has updates on how the pandemic is affecting our life as a parish as well as the weekly mass sheet (with time of masses etc), and downloadable forms of Morning and Evening Prayer which can also help give shape to the day. And bookmark and subscribe to the parish's YouTube channel so that you can easily access our masses. (<http://tiny.cc/SATMYouTube>)

Finally, keep safe and stay well. If I or anyone else in the church family can help you in any way, do get in touch with me and I will do what I can to arrange that help.

With my prayers and best wishes

Fr Tony

EDITORIAL

'April is the cruellest month...' with these words T.S. Eliot opened his modernist masterpiece, *The Waste Land*, in 1921.

It was the aftermath of World War I and the Spanish flu pandemic. Millions had died. His poem brims with the pain, the trauma, the disillusionment and the death of that time.

Now it is April 2020. Eliot could never have imagined that nearly 100 years on, April might well become our 'cruellest month', when trauma and death stalk our land as the coronavirus pandemic is forecast to peak.

These are times unparalleled in any of our life experiences. In the words of the Psalmist, the 'foundations are being shaken'.

And yet - as Christians we can lift our eyes from the turmoil and look up.

*'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea...
Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; He lifts His voice, the earth melts.
The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.
He says, "Be still, and know that I am God..."*
Psalm 46

Let us all take refuge in Him, as we seek His grace to cope with the many challenges which daily life is throwing our way at present.

WELCOME TO #MORETHANSUNDAY

A Year of Discipleship: encouraging us all to live out our faith every day of the week - not just on Sundays!

Theme 10: Witness

Each month a theme is outlined and action is suggested for the month, along with a podcast featuring local people who have particular insight to share.

'Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.'
1 Peter 3:15

Reflection

He bounded up to me in the tinned fruit aisle, his face radiating excitement. 'What do you reckon?' he said. 'I'd say two-nil to England!' His job may have been stacking shelves in Sainsbury's, but his heart was clearly on that evening's European Cup game. It never occurred to him I might not be as interested in the football as he was. Enthusing to a complete stranger about the football didn't strike him as odd.

We all talk naturally and enthusiastically about whatever grips us, whatever we're passionate about: music gigs, holiday destinations, sports, favourite foods. But something seems to happen when it comes to talking about our faith. Many of us become tongue-tied and hesitant. Even those of us who have been involved in church all our lives can be nervous of talking about what and why we believe, and the difference faith makes to our everyday lives.

Why the nerves? Speaking personally, I guess it's sometimes a fear of being out of my depth. What if my friend asks me hard questions about why God allows suffering, or about the dodgier moments of church history? What if they expect me to know my Bible inside-out? Or I may feel a touch of impostor syndrome: I don't feel I'm a terribly good Christian, so who am I to represent the faith to the world?

Wouldn't it be better if an expert did the talking about faith: somebody who knows their Bible, has thought about all possible objections, and has a great prayer life?

I wonder if it might help lower anxiety levels if we can separate out two ideas: being an evangelist, and being a witness. Being an evangelist is a special calling. Some people are called by God to be sharers of the good news and are clearly gifted at doing it, whether in public events or one-to-one conversations. Being a witness, on the other hand, simply means being open to talk about something I've seen or experienced for myself.

Being an evangelist is a calling for a few. Being a witness is something any of us can do.

At its simplest, being a witness means having a down-to-earth reply if a colleague or friend asks why I have a faith: 'I find it brings me inner peace', 'My church is such a loving community', 'My faith motivates me to make a difference in the world', 'The life and teachings of Jesus inspire me'.

Being a witness is simply me talking honestly about my own journey, in my own words. It's not preaching, and it's definitely not an invitation to an argument! It's me saying: 'Well, all I know is... it's made a difference to me'.

The way most adults find faith is through getting to know a Christian. The journey to faith nearly always begins with friendship. And an essential aspect of any friendship is me sharing naturally what matters to me, what makes me tick.

All I need to do is keep it simple, and keep it honest. That's being a witness.

Mike Starkey

LET'S TALK ABOUT WITNESS

This podcast was recorded before the Coronavirus outbreak, but we feel that its message - of sharing our faith courageously - is still hugely relevant in these difficult times.

Listen to the podcast on Witness: <http://tiny.cc/podcast-10>

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- Write down your faith story for yourself and thank God for what He has done.
- If you feel able, share your story with a Christian
- If you feel able, share your story with a non-Christian
- If you feel able, share your story on social media - make sure to add #MoreThanSunday to your post.

WHY JESUS WALKED ON WATER

A tourist, planning a trip to the Holy Land, was aghast when he found it would cost £50 an hour to rent a boat on the Sea of Galilee. "Goodness," he objected to the travel agent. "In England it would not have been more than £20."

"That might be true," said the travel agent, "but you have to take into account that the Sea of Galilee is water on which our Lord Himself walked."

"Well, at £50 an hour for a boat," said the tourist, "it's no wonder He walked."

1ST MAY - MAY DAY: UNBRIDLED MERRIMENT

May is the month when the ancient pagans used to get up to 'all sorts'! The Romans held their festival to honour the mother-goddess Maia, goddess of nature and growth. (May is named after her.) The early Celts celebrated the feast of Beltane, in honour of the sun god, Beli.

For centuries in 'Olde England' the people went mad in May. After the hardship of winter, and hunger of early Spring, May was a time of indulgence and unbridled merriment. One Philip Stubbes, writing in 1583, was scandalised: 'for what kissing and bussing, what smooching and slabbering one of another, is not practised?'

Henry VIII went 'maying' on many occasions. Then folk would stay out all night in the dark rain-warm thickets and return in the morning for dancing on the green around the May pole, archery, vaulting, wrestling, and evening bonfires.

The Protestant reformers took a strong stand against May Day, and in 1644 May Day was abolished altogether. Many May poles came down - only to go up again at the Restoration, when the first May Day of King Charles's reign was 'the happiest Mayday that hath been many a year in England', according to Pepys.

May Day to most people today brings vague folk memories of a young Queen of the May decorated with garlands and streamers and flowers, a May Pole to weave, Morris dancing, and the intricacies of well dressing at Tissington in Derbyshire.

May Day is a medley of natural themes such as sunrise, the advent of summer, growth in nature, and - since 1833 - Robert Owen's vision of a millennium in the future, beginning on May Day, when there would be no more poverty, injustice or cruelty, but harmony and friendship. This is why, in modern times, May Day has become Labour Day, which honours the dignity of workers. And until recently, in communist countries May Day processions were in honour of the achievement of Marxism.

There has never been a Christian content to May Day, but nevertheless there is the well-known 6am service on the top of Magdalen Tower at Oxford where a choir sings in the dawn of May Day.

An old May carol includes the lines:

*The life of man is but a span, it flourishes like a flower
We are here today and gone tomorrow - we are dead within an hour.*
There is something of a sadness about it, both in words and tune, as there is about all purely sensuous joy. For May Day is not Easter, and the joys it represents have always been earth-bound and fleeting.

WALSINGHAM NEWS



News from Walsingham, such as it is, comes from facebook postings from the Shrine and the Priory and the Shrine's web-site. Apologies to those who follow all or some of those, but we thought that as many of our readers don't, we would include some items from them for this edition.

The Shrine, like everywhere else is closed, but Shrine Prayers is being streamed through facebook at 6pm everyday with Fr Kevin and Fr Andreas doing alternate days. At the beginning of the 'Lockdown' this was done by Fr Kevin from the Administrator's Cottage but now those following at home can see the Image of Our Lady of Walsingham in the Holy House through the window at the back of the nave. She is back in her usual glory as is the altar, after the austerity of Lent and Holy Week.

Keith Tuck, who many of us know from leading the Shrine's Hospitality team, has posted some lovely photographs of the village taken on his daily walk. The messages with them have been to stay away and that they are missing us as much as we miss them. Everyday is a day nearer to a return to being open again. As I'm writing this on the first Wednesday after Easter, I am aware it is usually the 1st evening Procession of the year. Unsurprisingly, the National Pilgrimage at the end of May has been cancelled. So has the Youth Pilgrimage at the beginning of August. Of course this requires a huge amount of planning both at the Shrine and in parishes where the young people come from. Although they are hopeful that things may be functioning by then, in fairness to all a decision had to be made sooner rather than later. Somebody at Worksof Priory posted that their youngsters would be devastated with their leaders slightly less so!

Sr Carol at the Priory has posted something on their facebook page everyday. She's savvy with tech and there's been a great mix of comments with photographs and short video clips. Sometimes these are encouraging readers to take time in the day for prayer and reflection; sometimes they are explanations of what they do and why and sometimes they are secular with things in their garden or seen on her daily walk. The first sisters of the Society of St Margaret went into people's homes to look after those with cholera and other infectious diseases when no-one else would. Sr Carol writes, 'We may not be able to do that now, but we are busy contacting friends and Associates, being a listening ear to those who are frightened or lonely while of course our usual prayer life continues'. Although prayer is the basis for their life there, there are still other jobs to be done. While the Shrine is closed and anyone who helps them not able to go in, Sr Angela has become cook, while Sr Carol has become cleaner and gardener.

She also writes they are finding it very helpful to live to a very set routine, which is: 7am Office of Readings; 9am Morning Prayer; 12

noon Midday Office; 4.30pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament; 5pm Vespers and 7.30pm Compline. They are unable to have their daily Mass but are having Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for half an hour before Vespers. Intercessions which would normally be included in the Mass are said then instead, as is the reciting of the Litany of the Holy Name. In addition to their set times of prayer with the Offices they keep 1½ hours of private prayer a day. Sr Carol likes to be able to start the day with half an hour prayer early in the morning, in a dark silent chapel. All their prayers are now said in private but locals will still hear their bells ring out before each Office.

On the day before Passion Sunday, Sr Carol posted, 'Strange knowing that I will be one of the few Sacristans this afternoon veiling statues and icons for Passiontide. Keeping all those unable to go into their churches at this time in our prayers'. On Palm Sunday she posted, 'We don't normally watch the TV but we have tonight, to listen to the Queen'. On Good Friday afternoon she walked the Holy Mile barefoot, reciting the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, praying for the sick, health care and other essential workers, those finding life difficult, all Associates and Sisters and the departed. On Easter Day on her walk she met a local man, not someone who goes to church. He was under the impression that Easter had been cancelled, so she was able to enlighten him otherwise! Finally, it was good news indeed that Sr Angela had been for a considerable walk up the Green Way to Great Snoring and back, an indication of how much better she now is. Thanks to Sister Carol for permission to include her posts in our 'Parish Paper'.

My week in Walsingham at the beginning of April was, of course, cancelled (or should I say postponed?) We won't know about our Parish Pilgrimage at the end of August until the Shrine re-opens but we are very hopeful... However, the candle burning in the Holy House for our Parish has been paid for through generous donations and proceeds from raffles at our Cell meetings.

Bishop Philip North, Master of the Guardians, has written a letter to pilgrims and some extracts from it follow. The full text is available on the Shrine web-site; search 'Letter to Pilgrims from the Master of The Guardians'.

Linda Parkington

Remember at Walsingham the praying never stops... The Mass is being offered privately and each night at 6pm a lone person will offer Shrine Prayers in the Holy House. That praying is for you. Walsingham is precious to us because it is a place where prayer is offered and answered and the praying will always continue.

The truth to which Walsingham bears witness is unchanging. Because of Mary's bold and daring obedience, God is with us in Jesus. And having come to be with us, he has no intention of leaving. No matter what may befall our nation or what you personally may have to endure, Jesus is with you. He who bore pain on the cross bears also the pain of all who will suffer from this virus. He who rose again in glory guarantees that hope and love will always triumph over fear and darkness. Nothing can ever undermine that truth.

This will not last. By being separated for a while from England's Nazareth, we will come to love it even more. And one day we will return to Mary's home and drink from her well and join in with her intercession, a band of pilgrims united by our unfailing hope in the Word made Flesh.

So keep praying! Pray for our nation, pray for our Shrine, pray for your loved ones and pray for that day when we can go to Walsingham once more.

We may not be able to hold our meetings at present, but the work of Mothers Union continues. If you go to the mothers union web page the resources are continuously being updated and include articles for faith, prayer, activities and craft. Midday prayers are streamed Monday to Saturday on the Mothers Union Facebook page.

Our branch has already set up a staying connected contact chain to help support one another and make sure everyone is well.

We are sorry to have been told of the death of Rose Pollitt. Our sympathy and prayers go to June and all the family. Rose always delighted in serving at our M.U Mass and will be missed by us all.

A Memorial Service for Rose will be held in St. Augustines when circumstances allow.

CALLING ALL TALENTS

Do you have something fun – or educational – or instructive – or interesting – you would like to share with our church family? We have the technology to allow us to come together for a bit of light relief amid the restrictions we're all subjected to at the moment.

It could either be live – if you're brave – or recorded. Something that's recorded could easily be put onto our Facebook Group, so that only members can view it, and restrict those who can view it on YouTube (for those not on Facebook). With a modicum of preparation, the same can be put in place for a live event.

Have a think, and let's see if we can continue to come together as a church family for social activities as well as worship.

Fr Tony

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

March 26th Roger Morris (73)
31st Raymond Coward, Pr (78)
April 7th Rose Pollitt (98)
16th Keith Robinson (73)

PARISH DATES

As of the date of publication, the country is still in lockdown due to the Coronavirus, and the Archbishops' direction that clergy may not worship in their churches (although this is permitted under the government's guideline) is still in place. However, mass is still being said - at 10.30am on Sundays and at the usual times on weekdays - and these can be accessed on the parish's YouTube channel - <http://tiny.cc/SATMYouTube>: please subscribe to it and bookmark it. And changes to the government's (and Archbishops') directions will be posted on the website - <http://www.staugustinestm.org.uk/>

SUN 3rd 10.30am: Mass
Wed 6th 10.30am: Mass
7.30pm: Walsingham Cell - Rosary
Thur Licensing of Jonathan Moores as Interim Team Leader
of the Leverhulme Team
SUN 10th 10.30am: Mass
Tue 12th 7.00pm: Mass (followed by PCC) **Note slightly later
time**
SUN 17th 10.30am: Mass
6.30pm: Evening Prayer and Benediction
SUN 24th Ascension Sunday - 10.30am: Mass
Wed 27th St Augustine's Feast of Title - 10.30am: Mass
SUN 31st Pentecost - 10.30am: Mass

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE FROM UNCLE EUSTACE

The Rectory
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

It seems that the basics of parish ministry are no longer taught in theological colleges. Don't you know anything about consulting your diary in public? When you are asked if you are free on a certain date, accepted practice is to open it so that the enquirer cannot quite see. You then shake your head sadly, saying you are committed to blessing a new tea urn, or on some other vital ecclesiastical activity that day. Then you regretfully give your apologies. You do not open the thing in full view of your enquirer, so he can see the blank pages! Really, it serves you right that you are now committed to going on Scout camp.

The last time I agreed to pay the Scouts a visit was when I found that there was a splendid restaurant only a mile away from their camp. I arrived and parked my car by the side of the river where they were all canoeing, wound down the car window and made encouraging noises for some minutes before explaining I had to find a garage for petrol.

Several hours later, after an excellent lunch, I drove to where they were now rock climbing, wound down the car window and made encouraging noises for some minutes before explaining that I had a standing committee to return to that evening. It was a splendid day.

You, however, will experience the charms of two days under canvas. Whatever site for your tent you choose, it will be the one that floods first. The early hours will undoubtedly find you wading about in water in the pitch dark, retrieving your sleeping bag and clothes - which you will then have to wear for the rest of the day. Watch out for the food, as well: all camp food contains grass and usually sheep droppings. This will make you ill, though for some reason Scouts thrive on it.

Whatever the weather and whatever activities you do each day, you will end up wet, chilled and bruised. At least your evenings will be warm, for you are bound to spend them at Casualty, with youngsters suffering from sprained ankles or dislocated shoulders.

My only advice is to use those hours in Casualty to practise the art of opening your diary in a way that only YOU can see it.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

THINKING ALOUD – THE FINAL NEWS FROM BUILDING BRIDGES

I'm very aware that, if you are anything like me, your time and energy is taken to adapting to our new reality caused by the coronavirus/ COVID 19 situation. However, the Building Bridges project will still end in April and so it felt right to tell you a little about what has been and is continuing to happen in the background as we moved towards that time.

The Building Bridges Management Group met for the last time on Monday the 16th of March at FUSION. Here the relevant proposal was made, to dissolve the Building Bridges Project on the 30th of April 2020, and agreed. Even though we had lots of apologies because of the developing situation we were still quorate and so the necessary agreements were made as to how to distribute the resources gained throughout the lifetime of this project, please see the minutes if you would like more detail.



I updated the group in all that I had done, as we had agreed in our exit action plan, whilst Christine reassured the others that the Church Elders had developed their own action plan to pick up the actions they felt the church still needed to complete.

However, this was not a time of sadness as we also spent time celebrating the activities which were continuing or developing as part of the legacy of the Building Bridges project. We heard about Lunch and Leisure, we were also gratified to hear about the beginnings of Generations Arts and Crafts.

Sue Kilby sent us this update, so we heard from a group participant as I have very little involvement with this group:

'Generation Arts and Crafts has attracted a core of ten people. We enjoy a variety of crafts - glass painting, mosaic, crocheting, knitting, painting, card making - and have had professional crafters lead us.

The group has become very supportive of each other and has forged new friendships. My mum (86 yrs) loves the group and

mixing with some of the younger members of the group. We welcome new members, and are looking to build up our resources. If anyone has suitable items, please get in touch.'

Enough funding for this group to continue to meet and develop until Christmas has been given by one of the Building Bridges Project Partners, the Tonge with the Haulgh Big Local Partnership.

Finally, we heard a little about the first Tonge Together get together when 16 people came together to explore whether there was an appetite to develop some sort of network to support the continuation of partnership working and information sharing in Tonge with the Haulgh. Of course this will be very fluid as things evolve, and of course may be delayed because of these exceptional times but people clearly wanted some sort of network to evolve in the future. Therefore, you may want to 'watch this space' to see what develops over the next year. Once again initial seed funding to explore this has been given by a Building Bridges Partner, the Tonge with the Haulgh Big Local Partnership.

Finally, from a more personal note, where is Dave and I in all of this?

Currently Synod have agreed that we can stay in the Manse until July, and the National Church will continue to be pay us a stipend until then. However, in that time I am hopeful there may be another project, another 'Call' to test, and there may be work to undertake on behalf of Synod, although that may change with the situation as it stands currently. However, if the work from Synod does not materialise I will continue to sort and delete data on my computer, ensuring it is easily accessed on the external hard drive I will leave behind, whilst also dismantling the home office and, eventually the house.

Of course I had planned to complete some of this in the next month but I feel that those plans will be put on one side as I continue to find ways to support you all, to the best of my ability, in these trying times.

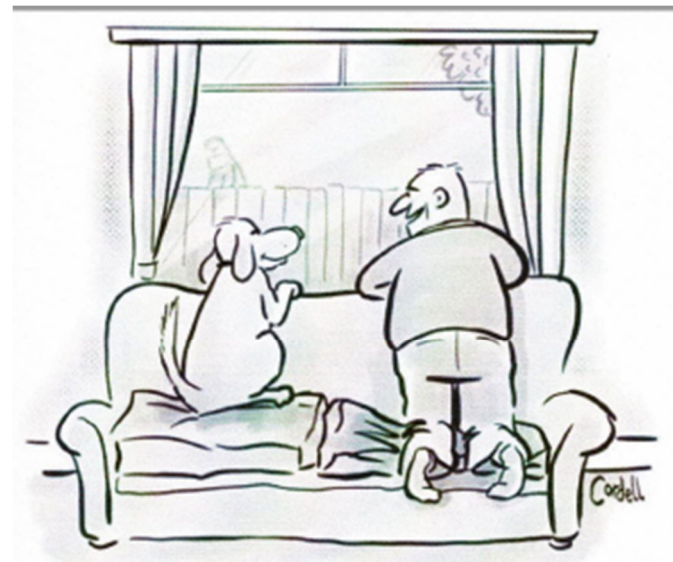
Hopefully we will talk soon, take care of yourselves, stay safe
Alison

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CORONAVIRUS ADVICE

A paper setting out advice from Bolton Council during the current pandemic can be found in the "Coronavirus2 section of the Parish website.



"Until now, I never understood why you got so excited when someone walked past the house."

CALENDAR AND INTENTIONS FOR MAY 2020

Fri	1	feria: Our local tradespeople
Sat	2	S Athanasius: Teachers of the faith
SUN	3	4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER: The Parish and the People of God
Mon	4	THE ENGLISH MARTYRS: The persecuted
Tue	5	feria: The residents of Care Homes in the area, and their carers
Wed	6	feria: Our Walsingham Cell
Thu	7	feria: The Parish of St Stephen and All Martyrs and the Leverhulme Team
Fri	8	feria: Those who work on the Intensive Care Units at the Royal Bolton Hospital
Sat	9	feria: Those who sharing in our masses at home
SUN	10	5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER: The Parish and the People of God
Mon	11	feria: Those companies co-operating to produce more PPI equipment
Tue	12	feria: GPs working or living in our parish
Wed	13	feria: The work of Forward-in-Faith and The Society
Thu	14	S MATTHIAS: The work of missionaries
Fri	15	feria: The Churches Together in Tonge Moor
Sat	16	feria: The vulnerable in our parish who are self-isolating
SUN	17	6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER: The Parish and the People of God
Mon	18	feria: All who are feeling anxious or depressed during the present lockdown
Tue	19	S Dunstan: Vocations to the Religious life
Wed	20	feria: The work and mission of the Mothers' Union
Thu	21	feria: Our postal workers
Fri	22	feria: Our Government and the Loyal opposition
Sat	23	feria: District Nurses working or living in our parish
SUN	24	ASCENSION OF OUR LORD: The Parish and the People of God
Mon	25	S Bede the Venerable: The People of England
Tue	26	S Philip Neri: Confessors and their penitents
Wed	27	S AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY: The Parish and the People of God
Thu	28	feria: The providing meals to the vulnerable
Fri	29	feria: Those companies co-operating to develop vaccines to Covid-19
Sat	30	feria: The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham and its Priests Associate
SUN	31	PENTECOST: The Parish and the People of God