

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

## PARISH PAPER

### “Lockdown Edition 10” - February 2021

(Rev1)



My dear friends

This month sees the beginning of the Great Season of Lent. As mentioned elsewhere in this edition of the *Parish Paper*, this will be a Lent with a difference. Last year we went into complete lockdown halfway through Lent: this year (and at the time of writing) we will still be able to gather together for all our liturgies, but there will be changes to how those liturgies are celebrated. More about that later.

Lent is a time of preparation: preparing ourselves to celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ with hearts and minds renewed. That renewal of our hearts and minds is perhaps the central element of Lent, and is done not in our own strength, by the power and grace of God through his Holy Spirit.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Church has developed through the ages a number of aids to help us as we allow the Holy Spirit to mould our hearts and minds more into the likeness of Jesus himself, so that we are better able to recognise God's will in our lives, and have both the humility and strength to follow that will.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation has always been available to everyone in the Church of England, and I will be available to hear confession at the times noted in the Parish Dates below. If you haven't made your confession previously, or would like more information about it, please let me know and I will be glad to explain further this wonderful sacrament of inner healing. The sacrament

can also take place via Zoom at a time when both you and I can be sure of complete privacy at both ends.

The liturgy of Evening Prayer and Benediction will take place at 6.30pm each Sunday evening during Lent, giving us opportunity to rest in the loving presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, adoring Him who gave himself on the Cross for our salvation, and who continues to come to us in the Sacrament of the Altar.

Each Friday during Lent we will walk the Stations of the Cross, recalling various events during Jesus' slow progress from Pilate's palace to the Cross on Calvary, events which speak to us of God's love, and which invite us to reflect on aspects of our own lives and to draw closer to Christ.

Our Lent Course (this year taking place via Zoom) will help us understand better the nature of the Bible, compiled by God's worshipping communities under the guidance and influence of the Holy Spirit, containing many different forms of writings, but all reflecting on God's dealings and relationship with his People.

In this time of uncertainty, of separation from those we love, and even of loss, let us cling ever more closely to the One whose love and care for us is certain, and join together for as many of these events and liturgies as we can, drawing strength and comfort from He who is Love.

With my prayers and best wishes

*Fr Tony*

## CHURCH FLOWERS

Cath Hale has, for many years, led the faithful group who produce the amazing floral arrangements in St Augustine's at the key festivals of the Church's year, and who maintain the flowers throughout the year. Cath now feels the time has come to step down from that role, and I would like - on behalf of everyone in the parish - to thank Cath for her dedication to the group throughout that time: St Augustine's has been truly blessed.

If you - or someone you know - would be willing to help lead the Flower Group - it is very much a collaborative effort - please have a word with me or one of the Wardens.

*Fr Tony*

### **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (or of Confession) is one of the seven Sacraments of the Church, and - despite any suggestion to the contrary - has always been available in the Church of England.

Many Church of England people have come to find it an important part of their Christian discipleship and make use of it regularly; others come to confession as part of their preparation for the major festivals of Easter, Christmas etc; others still come to the Sacrament during times of crisis, and find strength and succour in the words of absolution.

All may; some should; none must: this has been and is the position of the Church of England regarding the Sacrament of Confession. We are approaching the beginning of Lent and the celebration of Our Lord's Passion and Resurrection during Holy Week.

We all sin and are in need of God's forgiveness (1Jn 1:8). If you would like to make your confession as part of your preparation for Lent and/or Easter, please either come to the Lady Chapel at any of the times set out in the Diary Dates elsewhere in this magazine, or arrange with me to do so via Zoom.

All confessions are made with complete confidentiality, since the penitent is making their confession to God: the priest (who has heard it all before and who is himself a sinner) is there simply to offer counsel and offer the words of absolution. Please speak to me if you would like to know more about this Sacrament.

*Fr Tony*

### **THE REAL EASTER EGG**

The UK's top supermarkets will not be stocking The Real Easter Egg in 2021. For the past ten years Tesco, Waitrose, ASDA and Morrison's have made room on their shelves for The Real Easter Egg.

However, the pandemic led to the supermarkets having a disastrous Easter as people stayed away from high streets. This year, supermarket buyers were told to cut brands, reduce the volumes and in some cases ask for stock to be supplied at a loss or cost price. It means there will be fewer brands, including the Real Easter Egg, on their shelves this Easter.

So, if you are one of the 80,000 people who usually buy a Real Easter Egg from a supermarket or via church, then spread the word:

Buy online at <https://meaningfulchocolate.co.uk/collections/real-easter-egg>.

For Easter 2021, there are seven types of Real Easter Eggs available, all with new content. Each egg has an edition of the Easter story included. The Original, Dark, Special Edition and our new White 2021 eggs are plastic free and all our chocolate is Palm Oil free.

All Real Easter Eggs come with an Easter story in the box. The stories range from simple guides to 24-page activity books with a prize competition worth £200. They provide an opportunity to share the joy of Easter with friends and family.

*Fr Tony*

### **ASH WEDNESDAY AND LENT**

Lent is one of the most important Seasons of the Church's year, as it prepares us to celebrate *the* most important: Easter. Throughout Lent we are encouraged and given the opportunity to examine our lives in the light of the Gospel and our calling by Christ, and to turn back towards God.

The Church offers us a number of ways both of expressing this repentance and of entering more deeply into the faith we profess.

However, due to the pandemic, you will not be surprised to learn that the way we do this has had to be adapted to the circumstances.

### **Ash Wednesday**

We will still gather together for mass, but to maintain social distancing the Ashing will be slightly different. Ash cannot be applied directly to the forehead in the sign of the cross. However, the suggested alternative recalls the ancient practice, whereby penitents dressed in sackcloth and sat in ashes, throwing the ashes over themselves as an expression of the dejection they felt in having sinned against God.

While not as dramatic, we will have ash sprinkled on our head as a symbolic acknowledgment of our sin, our need of God's loving forgiveness, and a sign of our mortality.

Those who share in the mass from home can, of course, sign themselves (or each other) on the forehead with the sign of the cross as the Ashing is taking place in church. The ash is made by burning a palm branch from a previous year's Palm Sunday observance. The ashes should be ground to a fine powder and mixed in a shallow bowl with a little water or olive oil. (Palm ash can also be bought online from a number of vendors.)

As the ash is applied to the forehead, recite: "Remember, man, that thou art dust, and that to dust thou shalt return". In church, this will be addressed to all present just before the actual Ashing, since the Ashing will be made in silence.

### **Stations of the Cross**

The Stations will still take place on Friday evenings in St Augustine's at 7.30pm. However, to maintain social distancing those attending are asked to remain in their places in the pews while the priest moves from Station to Station.

### **Evening Prayer & Benediction**

It is our practice here in Tonge Moor to sing Evensong (or say Evening Prayer) and have Benediction on each Sunday during Lent. Gladly,

this is something we can maintain during the pandemic (Government/church strictures permitting), so we will gather each Sunday evening in St Augustine's at 6.30m for this simple but beautiful act of worship and adoration.

### **Lent Course**

Due to the pandemic restrictions, we will be unable to meet with our brothers and sisters from other churches in Tonge Moor as we have done previously during Lent. However, I hope we will be able to meet together as a parish. Due to social distancing restrictions this will have to be via Zoom. I understand that this will exclude those without access to the internet, but as the alternative would be not meeting at all, this is the least bad option.

In our Lent Course this year we will be looking at the Bible, the foundational document of the Christian faith. Using the resources provided by the Pilgrim course, we will consider various aspects of the Bible over the course of 6 weeks, beginning on Wednesday 24th February and concluding on Holy Wednesday, 31st March: all sessions will begin at 7.30pm and conclude no later than 9.00pm. I will be unavailable for the second of these, on the 3rd March: if anyone would like to facilitate this session, please let me know.

If you would like a copy of the booklet, please let me know, stating whether you would like a pdf for printing at home or a hard copy.

*Fr Tony*

### **2<sup>nd</sup> February - the Presentation of Christ in the Temple**

In bygone centuries, Christians said their last farewells to the Christmas season on Candlemas, 2<sup>nd</sup> February. This is exactly 40 days after Christmas Day itself.

In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child - to 'present Him to the Lord'. At the same time,

she, as a new mother, was 'purified'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

So, where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day. The Church also fell into the custom of blessing the year's supply of candles for the church on this day - hence the name, Candlemas.

The story of how Candlemas began can be found in Luke 2:22-40. Simeon's great declaration of faith and recognition of who Jesus was is of course found in the Nunc Dimittis, which is embedded in the Office of Evening Prayer in the West. But in medieval times, the Nunc Dimittis was mostly used just on this day, during the distribution of candles before the Eucharist. Only gradually did it win a place in the daily prayer life of the Church.

## 14<sup>th</sup> February - Valentine's Day mystery

There are two confusing things about this day of romance and anonymous love-cards strewn with lace, cupids and ribbon: firstly, there seems to have been two different Valentines in the 4th century - one a priest martyred on the Flaminian Way, under the emperor Claudius, the other a bishop of Terni martyred at Rome. And neither seems to have had any clear connection with lovers or courting couples.

So why has Valentine become the patron saint of romantic love? By Chaucer's time the link was assumed to be because on these saints' day - 14<sup>th</sup> February - the birds are supposed to pair. Or perhaps the custom of seeking a partner on St Valentine's Day is a surviving scrap of the old Roman Lupercalia festival, which took place in the middle of February. One of the Roman gods honoured during this Festival

was Pan, the god of nature. Another was Juno, the goddess of women and marriage. During the Lupercalia it was a popular custom for young men to draw the name of a young unmarried woman from a name-box. The two would then be partners or 'sweethearts' during the time of the celebrations. Even modern Valentine decorations bear an ancient symbol of love - Roman cupids with their bows and love-arrows.

There are no churches in England dedicated to Valentine, but since 1835 his relics have been claimed by the Carmelite church in Dublin.

### - a poem

St Valentine's Day, many believe, was named after one or more Christian martyrs and was established by Pope Gelasius 1 in 496 AD. Valentine of Rome was martyred about 269, and this day usually 'belongs' to him.

The first recorded association of Valentine Day with romantic love (1382) is from Geoffrey Chaucer. He wrote, 'For this was Saint Valentine's Day, when every bird cometh there to choose his mate.' This poem was in honour of the first anniversary of the engagement of King Richard II of England to Anne of Bohemia. Valentine Day is referred to by Ophelia in Hamlet (1600-1601).

*To-morrow is St Valentine's day  
All in the morning betime  
And I a maid at your window  
To be your Valentine.*

The modern mention of Valentine's Day can be found in a collection of English nursery rhymes (1784):

*The rose is red, the violet's blue  
The honey's sweet, and so are you.*

*Thou are my love and I am thine  
I drew thee to my Valentine.*

**- a legend**

The Roman Emperor Claudius II needed soldiers. He suspected that marriage made men want to stay at home with their wives, instead of fighting wars, so he outlawed marriage.

A kind-hearted young priest named Valentine felt sorry for all the couples who wanted to marry, but who couldn't. So secretly he married as many couples as he could - until the Emperor found out and condemned him to death. While he was in prison awaiting execution, Valentine showed love and compassion to everyone around him, including his jailer. The jailer had a young daughter who was blind, but through Valentine's prayers, she was healed. Just before his death in Rome on 14<sup>th</sup> February, he wrote her a farewell message signed 'From your Valentine.'

So, the very first Valentine card was not between lovers, but between a priest about to die, and a little girl, healed through his prayers.

**16<sup>th</sup> February - Shrove Tuesday**  
**- Pancake Day**

Ever wonder why we eat pancakes just before Lent? The tradition dates back to Anglo-Saxon times, when Christians spent Lent in repentance and severe fasting.

So, on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, the church bell would summon them to confession, where they would be 'shriven', or absolved from their sins, which gives us *Shrove* Tuesday. At home, they would then eat up their last eggs and fat, and making a

pancake was the easiest way to do this. For the next 47 days, they pretty well starved themselves.

Pancakes feature in cookery books as far back as 1439, and today's pancake races are in remembrance of a panicked woman back in 1445 in Olney, Buckinghamshire. She was making pancakes when she heard the shriving bell calling her to confession. Afraid she'd be late, she ran to the church in a panic, still in her apron, and still holding the pan.

Flipping pancakes is also centuries old. A poem from Pasquil's Palin in 1619 runs: "And every man and maide doe take their turne, And tosse their Pancakes up for feare they burne."

Some people have noted that the ingredients of pancakes can be used to highlight four significant things about this time of year: eggs stand for creation, flour is the staff of life, while salt keeps things wholesome, and milk stands for purity.

Shrove Tuesday is always 47 days before Easter Sunday and falls between 3<sup>rd</sup> February and 9<sup>th</sup> March.

**17<sup>th</sup> February - Ash Wednesday**  
**- our sins**

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. But why 'Ash' Wednesday? The reason has to do with getting things right between you and God, and the tradition goes right back to the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites often sinned. When they finally came to their senses, and saw their evil ways as God saw them, they could do nothing but repent in sorrow. They mourned for the damage and evil they had done. As part of this repentance, they covered their heads with ashes. For the Israelites, putting ashes on your

head, and even rending your clothes, was an outward sign of their heart-felt repentance and acknowledgement of sin. (See Genesis 18:27; 2 Samuel 13:19; Job 2:8, 30:19; Isaiah 58:5; Jeremiah 6:26; Jonah 3:6)

In the very early Christian Church, the yearly ‘class’ of penitents had ashes sprinkled over them at the beginning of Lent. They were turning to God for the first time, and mourning their sins. But soon many other Christians wanted to take part in the custom, and to do so at the very start of Lent. They heeded Joel’s call to ‘rend your hearts and not your garments’ (Joel 2:12-19). Ash Wednesday became known as either the ‘beginning of the fast’ or ‘the day of the ashes’.

The collect for today goes back to the Prayer Book, and it stresses the penitential character of the day. It encourages us with the reminder of the readiness of God to forgive us and to renew us.

The Bible readings for today are often Joel 2:1-2, 12-18, Matthew 6:1-6, 16 - 21 and Paul’s moving catalogue of suffering, “as having nothing and yet possessing everything.” (2 Corinthians 5:20b - 6:10)

The actual custom of ‘ashing’ was abolished at the Reformation, though the old name for the day remained. Today, throughout the Church of England, receiving the mark of ashes on one’s forehead is optional. Certainly, the mark of ashes on the forehead reminds people of their mortality: “Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return...” (Genesis 3:19)

The late medieval custom was to burn the branches used on Palm Sunday in the previous year in order to create the ashes for today.

The Collect for Ash Wednesday is:  
*Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have*

*made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.*

## **24<sup>th</sup> February - Matthias the Apostle**

**- *the chosen one***

Have you ever been in the position where someone is desperately needed - and you fit the bill perfectly? It is almost as if all your miscellaneous qualifications that never made much sense before now make PERFECT sense. And you sense that you have been chosen by God for the task....

If so, then Matthias is definitely the patron saint for you! Matthias came into the picture shortly after the suicide of Judas. The early Church was missing an apostle, and so the remaining 11 apostles prayed for guidance on who to choose as a replacement for this key role.

The qualifications for the job were specialised: the person had to have been a follower of Christ from His Baptism to His Ascension, and a witness of the Resurrection. There were two possibilities: Joseph Barsabas and Matthias. How to choose?

Again, Matthias’ experience may mirror yours: the decision was out of his hands, and up to others. In this case, the apostles drew straws - and the ‘lot’ fell to Matthias. He had been chosen to replace Judas! The tragedy of Judas’ betrayal had led to an opportunity for service by Matthias - and he was well prepared for the task. Are you prepared for any task that God might suddenly open before you?

Like the other apostles, Matthias had been in Jerusalem and had received the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and he went on to do a good job. It is said he preached the Good News first in Judea, and then maybe in Cappadocia and by the Caspian Sea. It is thought he was martyred by the axe or halberd, and his relics eventually ended up being taken to Rome by the empress Helen.

Matthias is an encouragement to us to be faithful in small things - because you never know what the future might hold!

## **27<sup>th</sup> February - George Herbert** *- vicar and poet*

On this day the Church Calendar celebrates George Herbert. For those who are muttering 'never heard of him', just think of the hymn 'Let all the world/ In every corner sing', which he wrote, along with several other hymns which are still popular, even if they are well over 300 years old. In the course of his short life, he was a graduate of Cambridge University, a favoured politician of King James, a distinguished poet of the so-called 'metaphysical' school, and a much-loved parish priest at Bemerton, in Wiltshire.

He was born in Wales but grew up in a wealthy family in England. As a student he felt called to ordination, but when he had graduated, he was drawn instead into the government of the time. As a protégé of King James (yes, the one of the 'King James Bible') he could have pursued a career in government, but that youthful call persisted and after a while he turned instead to the ministry of the Church of England. It was an era when many clergy were absentee incumbents, paying someone else to do the parish work while they lived elsewhere, but Herbert set himself to be a true parish priest, noted for his pastoral care and practical support of his parishioners. The whole of his ministry was fulfilled in that one parish, until he died at 39 from what we would now call tuberculosis.

It is of course his hymns for which he is chiefly remembered today, though his Collected Poems are also regarded as jewels of English poetry.

## **CHURCHES TOGETHER IN TONGE MOOR**

This year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service, had the theme Abiding in Christ, was recorded via zoom on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January and is available on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tNaV38FlsM>

The next meeting is Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February and we will be looking at a Social Media Policy, Lent Study for 2021 and planning a service for Holy Week.

Do let us know if you want to be involved in the planning or taking part in any of these.

*Ruth Taylor*

## **A Recycling Plea**

Does anyone who shops with Amazon receive their goods in the flat cardboard folders with a sticky strip along the long edge which are printed size 'A3' (usually under the address label) and are designed to package a small book or A4 size magazine? If you do, and have no further use for your folders, please may I have them to recycle? The church has to keep documents relating to our accounts for several years, and these folders make ideal sturdy document wallets! If you can help, please would you leave unwanted folders at the back of either church for me? Many thanks in advance for your help!

*Sue Loftus*

## 100 CLUB NEWS

The tenth monthly draw was via a Zoom meeting at 12.00pm on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Pam and Fr Tony were in charge of the drum containing the numbers at the vicarage.

Ruth Taylor had list of numbers and names.

**First Prize Number 17 – John Harrison wins £25**

**Second Prize Number 51 – Diane Bloor wins £15**

**Third Prize Number 50 – Jean Pye wins £10**

**If you are not a member and would like to join it is just £1 a month, contact David or Ruth Taylor.**

The eleventh draw will be Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2021, probably again via Zoom, watch for details.

*Lance is a pretty uncommon name these days, but in medieval times people were named Lance a lot*



*Congratulations and all our Best Wishes to*

*Colin Johnson*

*who celebrates his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on*

*4<sup>th</sup> February 2021*



## Walsingham News

Due to the ever-changing Covid situation, the Shrine's plans for a limited re-opening for residential pilgrims during the first 3 months of 2021 are on hold. The Priests' and Deacons' Retreat is following the now familiar @Home format. Elsie and I will really miss attending the February Partnership Weekend and are hoping that something will be streamed or on-line which will allow us to at least share remotely with fellow members of the scheme. Sadly, there's not a lot they can do about one of the highlights - the Saturday evening Partnership Dinner!

Sister Angela and Sister Carol had a 'Holiday at Home' for a week as their plans to have a change from the Priory were affected by the National Lockdown. Sr Carol continues to post on the Priory's Facebook page most days with information, encouraging comments and photographs. Our Zoom Friday Compline group has now grown to eight and at the last count included two cats - not including the Priory cat, Prisca, who isn't a people cat and has always preferred social distancing...

Some of our regular pilgrims will remember Sister Mary Teresa, who was Mother at the Priory for a while. She died, aged 90, at the SSM Chiswick House where she had been receiving care for the last 5 years. Initially, it was hoped that she would be able to return to Walsingham but it became apparent that this would not be possible.





There have been many tributes on-line to her gentle but firm leadership and her ministry to countless pilgrims and Associates and friends of the Priory. A private funeral at Chiswick was on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January with a simultaneous Solemn Mass of Requiem at St Mary's. There will be a memorial service with burial of ashes in Walsingham sometime in the future when people are able to travel again. This rather lovely photograph of her was published in New Directions several years ago.

We are incredibly sad to have lost Brenda Whenlock (universally referred to as 'Auntie Brenda' by so many of us). She was one of our regular pilgrims in recent years, a member of the Society of our Lady



of Walsingham and a great supporter of our Cell of St Nicholas. A dozen or so of our Cell members were able to form a Guard of Honour at her Reception into church on Wed 13<sup>th</sup> January and then after her Funeral Requiem the following day. We know how much Brenda loved Walsingham and that the Shrine and its work were very dear to her. We are fortunate that Paula 'shared' her

with us and that we have some lovely memories of her. This photograph of us enjoying an ice cream in Sheringham was taken in 2018. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

A reminder for those who don't pay directly to the Shrine, we collect subs for the Society of Our Lady of Walsingham in February. Details were in last month's *Parish Paper* but a repeat that the rate of £10 for individuals and £15 per couple remains unchanged [*STOP PRESS - these have now increased to £20 and £35 respectively (Fr Tony)*]. It would be helpful to leave payments of cash or cheques (payable to the *Walsingham Fund*) in an envelope marked 'Walsingham Subs' with a Welcomer at Church or pass it on to someone who is coming to church. If this isn't possible, please contact us.

Fr Tony continues to offer Mass at the 10.00am on last Saturday of the month for the Shrine and its Priests' Associate.

*Linda Parkington*

## Christian Aid Report surveys Climate Breakdown

A new report by Christian Aid, *Counting the cost 2020: a year of climate breakdown*, has identified 15 of the most destructive climate disasters of the year.

Ten of those events cost \$1.5 billion or more, with nine of them causing damage worth at least \$5 billion. Most of these estimates are based only on insured losses, meaning the true financial costs are likely to be higher.

Among them is Storm Ciara which struck the UK, Ireland and other European countries in February costing, \$2.7 billion and killing 14. The UK's Environment Agency issued 251 flood warnings.

While the report focuses on financial costs, which are usually higher in richer countries because they have more valuable property, some extreme weather events in 2020 were devastating in poorer countries, even though the price tag was lower. South Sudan, for example, experienced one of its worst floods on record, which killed 138 people and destroyed the year's crops.

Some of the disasters hit fast, like Cyclone Amphan, which struck the Bay of Bengal in May and caused losses valued at \$13 billion in just a few days. Other events unfolded over months, like floods in China and India, which had an estimated cost of \$32 billion and \$10 billion respectively.

Six of the ten most costly events took place in Asia, five of them associated with an unusually rainy monsoon. And in Africa, huge

locust swarms ravaged crops and vegetation across several countries, causing damages estimated at \$8.5 billion. The outbreak has been linked to wet conditions brought about by unusual rains fuelled by climate change.

But the impact of extreme weather was felt all over the world. In Europe, two extra-tropical cyclones, Ciara and Alex, had a combined cost of almost \$6 billion. And the US suffered from both a record-breaking hurricane season and a record-breaking fire season adding up to more than \$60 billion in damages.

Some less populated places also suffered the consequences of a warming world. In Siberia, a heat wave during the first half of the year set a record in the city of Verkhoyansk, with temperatures reaching 38°C. A few months later, on the other side of the world, heat and drought drove the fires in Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil. While there were no human casualties reported from these events, the destruction of these areas has a great impact on biodiversity and the planet's capacity to respond to a warmer world.

Christian Aid says that: "These extreme events highlight the need for urgent climate action. The Paris Agreement, which set the goal of keeping temperature rise 'well below' 2°C, and ideally 1.5°C, compared to pre-industrial levels, has just turned five years old. It is critical that countries commit to bold new targets ahead of the next climate conference, which will take place in Glasgow, in November 2021."

### **New measures to protect children online**

The Government is to give the communications regulator Ofcom new powers to protect children and adults when they are using the internet.

An Online Harms Bill will be introduced later this year, with the intention of allowing Ofcom to block access to online services that fail to properly protect children and other users. Giants like Facebook and Instagram could also be fined large sums if they fail to take proper action against posts that were legal but still harmful. That would include pornography accessible to children, bullying, and disinformation, such as fake claims about vaccinations.

The Digital Secretary, Oliver Dowden, says that the legislation should be in force by 2022. He said: "A 13-year-old should no longer be able to access pornographic images on Twitter; YouTube will not be allowed to recommend videos promoting terrorist ideologies; and anti-Semitic hate crimes will need to be removed without delay."

### **Schools and term-term amid Covid-19 uncertainty**

As we launch in to 2021, with rapidly rising numbers of infections, it is all too easy to lose our bearings. So says Nigel Genders, the Church of England's Chief Education Officer.

He urges that rather than argue along the "usual political fault lines", or to follow newspaper articles putting the blame either on 'incompetent politicians' or 'radical school staff', according to their editorial bias, "there must be a better approach where we can take a step back and consider what is really in the best interest of the children, staff, and communities we serve.

"The Church of England provides a quarter of England's primary schools and more than 200 secondary schools, so I know first-hand, from school leaders the length and breadth of the country, how tirelessly schools work for the good of the nation's children and how committed they are to continuing that work in 2021."

## Do your days rush by at a hectic place?

Have you ever stopped to think that your mobile phone and emails have not given you *more* time? Just *more things to do* in the same amount of time.

We leave our messages in one place while we take our bodies elsewhere. Instead of doing one thing after another, we shoot out a variety of tasks, and then swoop down on them later, needing to deal with them all at once.

In a four-minute clip from a street scene from an old Orson Welles film and a similar clip from a more recent film, you will see an amazing difference. In the early film, the camera records 'real time' - people get out of their cars, walk across streets, wait for lights, speak to other people, enter a bank. In the more recent film, a similar sequence was reduced to a half a dozen quick cuts. Transition time was eliminated.

Modern life teaches us that 'down time' is wasted. Time is money. So mobile phones, emails, etc, enable us to 'waste' less time. The tempo of cultural life picks up, the heartbeat of daily life races, and our own body rhythms respond with adrenaline, cramped muscles and heart attacks.

To take time out for daily prayer, for a quiet walk that is not to the next meeting, for daydreaming or for Bible study becomes a cross-cultural act. Following Christ, waiting on Him, is a countercultural act.

One lovely biblical phrase is 'in the fullness of time, it came to pass'. This suggests four things: that time crests like a wave; that there is a right moment for things to happen; that it's not ours to plan that moment, but to recognise it; and that we are not the primary agents of what happens in the world.

So, feel free to accept God's offer of rest when you are weary; receive each moment of your life as a gift from God's hand; pray to discern what each new encounter you make requires of you, and freely entrust everything else to God's care.

## The Rectory

St James the Least of All



My dear Nephew Darren

I appreciated your recent concern when you heard one of our parishioners had slipped on a gravestone. Your desire to help was entirely commendable, and I do know that sending your own church's health and safety officer to give us some advice was kindly meant. But the 200-page report was not welcome. If we implemented even half of your officer's suggestions, life would become unbearably safe.

St James the Least of All has survived perfectly well for the last 600 years without gutter cleaning inspections, path degreasing and electrical safety certificates, so I think we may survive a little longer without them. As far as I am aware, the only disaster to hit us was when Cromwell's soldiers stabled their horses in the nave - which I suspect a few of our oldest members still clearly remember.

The shock the sidesmen sometimes get when switching on the lights occurs only occasionally, is relatively mild and soon over - and if it happens when preparing for the 8am Service, helps to wake them up. The weight of the Duke of Clumber's marble sarcophagus *is* slowly detaching the south aisle from the rest of the

church, but it is very slow - and the pews in that area are used only once a year when his relations visit from America to commemorate his death at Agincourt - which is probably just beyond remembrance of the oldest of our congregation.

Leaks from the ceiling in the north aisle are solved with a row of buckets - and even you must concede that the fungi on the oak beams look really rather attractive when the sun catches them. The sapling growing out of the spire is certainly an issue - although it looks so attractive in Spring when in blossom. As for our fire extinguishers, they were serviced when my predecessor-but-two was in office, and I have the certificate to prove it.

So, do thank your health and safety officer for all his work and tell him we will bear his recommendations in mind. Also tell him I was so sorry he slipped and broke his leg in our choir stalls while he was with us. But that bit of floor has been out of alignment since 1748, and it seems a shame to disturb it now. If only he had arrived encased in bubble wrap, it would never have happened. Perhaps you could put that on the agenda of your next health and safety meeting.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

## TIME TO SMILE

### Hymns for seasoned citizens

The Old Rugged Face  
Precious Lord, Take My Hand, And Help Me Up  
It is Well With My Soul, But My Knees Hurt  
Nobody Knows the Trouble I Have Seeing  
Amazing Grace, Considering My Age  
Just a Slower Walk With Thee  
Count Your Many Birthdays, Name Them One by One  
Go Tell It On The Mountain, But Speak Up  
Give Me That Old Timers' Religion

Blessed Insurance

Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah, I've Forgotten Where I Parked

\*\*

### Disperse them

A young clergyman, fresh out of training, thought it would help him better understand the harsh realities his future congregations faced if he first took a job as a policeman for several months. He passed the physical examination; then came the oral exam to test his ability to act quickly and wisely in an emergency. Among other questions he was asked, "What would you do to disperse a frenzied crowd?"

He thought for a moment and then said, "I would pass an offering plate." He got the job.

\*\*

### Seen on a birthday card:

Forget about the past,  
You can't change it.  
Forget about the future,  
You can't predict it.  
Forget about the present,  
I didn't buy you one.

\*\*

### Diabetic

A fellow nurse at my hospital received a call from an anxious young woman. "I'm diabetic and I'm afraid I've had too much sugar today," he said.

"Are you light-headed?" my colleague asked.

"No," the caller answered, "No, I'm brunette."

\*\*

## Fall down

One way to find out if you're old is to fall in front of a group of people. If they laugh, you're young. If they panic and start running toward you, you're old.

\*\*

## Miscellaneous observations on modern life

As any member of a church council will tell you, after all is said and done, there's a lot more said than done.

I used to eat a lot of natural foods until I learned that most people die of natural causes.

If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.

Good judgment comes from bad experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.

A closed mouth gathers no foot.

'Most cars on our roads have only one occupant, usually the driver.'  
(BBC reporter)

I really don't mind getting older, but my body is taking it badly.

Cleaning is just putting stuff in less obvious places.

\*\*

## Fox

I called the RSPCA today to report I had just found a suitcase in the woods containing a fox and four cubs. "That's terrible," she said. "Are they moving?"

"I'm not sure, to be honest," I replied, "But that would explain the suitcase."

\*\*

## Eyesight

A man went to his doctor to say that his eyesight was getting worse. The doctor asked the man to look out the window and to tell him what he saw. "I see the sun," the man replied.

The doctor replied: "Just how much farther do you want to see?"

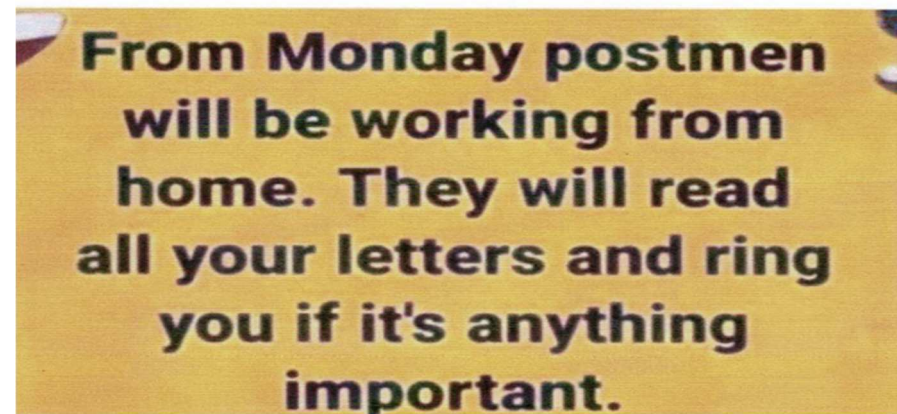
## Bishop

An exam for R.E. asked the following question: 'What does a Bishop do?'

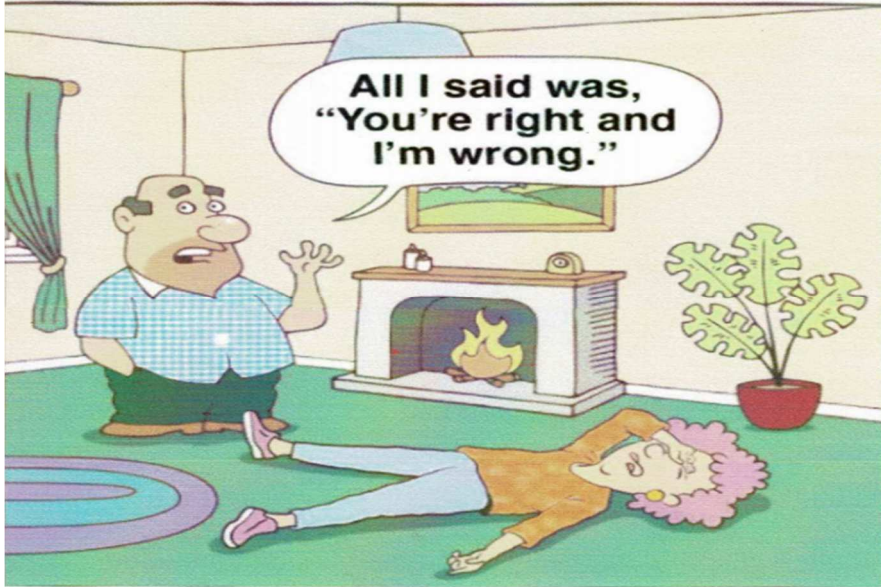
Came one answer: 'Move diagonally across the board.'

## Pray with grannie

A small boy went to church with his grandmother and joined her when she quietly slipped off the pew to kneel and pray. He even copied her example of burying her face in her hands. But after a few seconds his curiosity got the better of him. "Who are we hiding from, grannie?"







### PARISH DATES

Tue 2nd CANDLEMASS: Mass 7.30pm  
 Thur 4th Churches Together in Tonge Moor meet via Zoom  
 Tue 9th 7.30pm: Deanery Synod meet via Zoom  
 Sat 13th 10.45-11.30am: Confessions (Lady Chapel)  
 SUN 14th 6.30pm: Evening Prayer & Benediction  
 Wed 17th ASH WEDNESDAY  
     10.30am: Mass (St Aidan's)  
     7.30pm: Mass (St Augustine's)  
 Fri 19th 7.30pm Stations of the Cross  
 SUN 21st 10.30am: Mass with Bishop Glyn  
     6.30pm Evening Prayer & Benediction  
 Fri 26th 7.30pm Stations of the Cross  
 SUN 28th 6.30pm Evening Prayer & Benediction

## FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

### CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

January 14<sup>th</sup> Brenda Whenlock (77)  
 15<sup>th</sup> Neil Anthony Pomfret Teixeira (92)

## Lead Me to the Rock that Is Higher than I (Psalm 61)

Our world has been going through some hard days with Covid raging in many areas. Events in the US Capitol and impeachment are troubling. It is a jarring, disjointed time. But with God's help we'll see it through!



David was going through very difficult times when he wrote Psalm 61 which blessed me recently. I hope that my thoughts on these verses may encourage you.

I was feeling kind of bummed out this morning, depressed. I'm a pretty upbeat kind of person, but as I awoke I felt sad, upset, ill at ease.

I knew I needed to worship, to connect afresh with God. So I picked up my guitar and sang a praise chorus by Kent Henry, "Hear My Cry, O Lord," based on David's prayer in Psalm 61. As I sang, the words lifted me. By the time I had finished, God had encouraged my heart and given me fresh joy in him.

I encourage you to take out your Bible right now and **read Psalm 61 -- aloud**. Then let me share with you some of these stirring words with the hope that they will lift you too.

## Chased and Harassed



The Judean Wilderness ([larger map](#))

David is the author of the psalm\*. It could come from the time he evaded King Saul or had to escape his son Absalom. We can't know for sure. But I would imagine it is written in the several-year period when King Saul's army is trying to capture him and David has to hole up in the rugged rocks and mountains of the Judean wilderness southeast of Jerusalem. You may not be harassed by a king seeking to kill you, but I'm sure you can think of times in your life when you were stressed, overwhelmed.

### The Plea: Hear My Cry (Psalm 61:1)

David begins by calling on God, pleading for God to listen to him.

"Hear my cry, O God,  
listen to my prayer." (Psalm 61:1, ESV)

Most of the verses follow the familiar Hebrew poetic form called synonymous parallelism, where the second line repeats the first with slightly different words, often carrying the idea a bit farther.

David's prayer for God to listen is a common plea in the Psalms. You pray, you cry out to God, but wonder sometimes if he even hears you. It feels like the heavens are made of brass that no prayer can penetrate. Sometimes we feel far from God. We know from God's promises that this isn't actually the case, but nevertheless we feel that way sometimes. Denying our emotions isn't particularly healthy.

### Extremity -- My Heart Is Overwhelmed (Psalm 61:2)

In verse 2, David describes his sense of distance from God, his agony, his place of extremity.

"From the end of the earth I call to you  
when my heart is faint." (Psalm 61:2)

He prays here in far-away desperation -- "from the end of the earth." Modern versions translate verse 2b correctly as "when my heart is faint," but I really like the KJV translation: "when my heart is overwhelmed." I've felt utterly overwhelmed, way over my depth, struggling to stay afloat. So have you.

### Desire -- Lead Me to the Rock (Psalm 61:2c)

David has described his desperate situation. Now he expresses his desire.

"Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." (Psalm 61:2c)

The image is of David seeking refuge from his enemy by hiding in the craggy rocks of a mountain. He can see his pursuers coming and suddenly realizes the vulnerability of his current place of concealment. So he asks a local guide who knows this wilderness well to lead him to a rocky prominence that is yet higher up and more difficult to attack than his current position. And he scrambles up a hidden trail to the higher rock.

Of course, the Rock David desires and longs for is God himself. Many times in the Bible Yahweh is referred to as the Rock. The Hebrew noun *tsûr* suggests a massive rock. The word is used for boulders or formations of stone, the material that composes mountains. I think of mighty El Capitan in Yosemite National Park in my state of California. Rock symbolizes God's strength, his power, his unchanging stability, his limitless might. He is the Rock of My Salvation, the Rock Eternal, the Rock of Israel, the Rock of Refuge, the Rock from which we are hewn.

### Defence -- My Strong Tower (Psalm 61:3)

The image of God as our Rock leads naturally to thoughts of God as David's defence.

"For you have been my refuge,  
a strong tower against the enemy." (Psalm 61:3)

The rocky hideouts and caves in the mountains of the Judean desert remind him of Yahweh as his refuge (NIV, NRSV, ESV) or "shelter"

(KJV), the place where he flees for protection in a time of threat. Elsewhere, David refers to God as his "fastness, stronghold, or fortress," his "refuge."

In our passage David also pictures God as a "strong tower." Though villages lacked defences, larger towns built walls to resist raids from enemies and bandits. City leaders would often construct a high tower on the city wall or within it that they could defend against even a determined enemy due to its height and strength of construction. Lord, you are my strong tower!

## Intimacy -- Let Me Dwell in Your Tent (Psalm 61:4)

David asks to live under God's protection forever. But the way he asks it is wonderfully personal, intimate.

"Let me dwell in your tent forever!  
Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings! Selah. " (Psalm 61:4)

As we recall from Hebrew parallelism, David isn't making two separate requests in verse 4, but couching the same request in two different ways.

First he prays,

"Let me dwell in your tent forever!" (Psalm 61:4a)

David is in mortal danger. He asks to live in God's own dwelling, a recipient of God's hospitality and under God's continual protection. The verb "dwell" here is interesting. It suggests an alien who is not a blood relative being taken into a home -- a sojourner who is offered hospitality. "Tent" or "tabernacle" is a throwback to a time when Israelites lived in tents rather than houses, much like how we use the word "dial" even though an actual dial hasn't appeared on a telephone for decades. God invites the desperate into his own home.

The second line of this couplet carries the idea further.

"Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings!" (Psalm 61:4b)

It is a picture of warmth, intimacy, and protection, of a mother bird spreading out her wings to protect her chicks from danger in the

"shelter" of her wings. In a similar way, Scriptures tell us that there is safety "in the shadow of your wings." As Jesus mourned over Jerusalem's stubborn rejection, he called out,

"How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!" (Matthew 23:37)

The same Hebrew word translated "shelter" or "covert" in Psalm 61:4b is found elsewhere in the Psalms describing God as our Hiding Place, the secret place of the Most High where our enemies can't find us. Phil Wickham talks of "running to the Secret Place where You are." Michael Ledner affirms of God -- "You Are My Hiding Place." An old gospel hymn reminds us that

"Jesus is a Rock in a weary land,  
A Shelter in the time of storm."

But to take advantage of that secret place, that secure place in God, we must give up our sense of independence and personal bravado that we don't need anything. Rather, we can come to the Lord when we are fearful and feeling very vulnerable. We can snuggle into presence, draw from his strength.

## Commitment -- You Have Heard my Vows (Psalm 61:5a)

"For you, O God, have heard my vows;  
you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name."  
(Psalm 61:5)

Jewish saints often made vows or promises to God as part of their piety. Here, David has made vows to God of what he will do when he gets out of his situation. Has God heard your vows? Your commitments? Have you made a personal commitment of faith in him? In verse 8, David performs his vows before the Lord gladly. Promises and fulfilment are part of the pattern of a godly life.

## Heritage of the Saints (Psalm 65:5b)

David also speaks of the heritage of the saints.

"You have given me the heritage of those who fear your name."  
(Psalm 61:5b)



For people returning to the Promised Land, their heritage was the land they possessed from the enemy.

"Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you." (Joshua 1:3)

We cannot take our heritage for granted; we must possess and hold the land in faith.

For those of you who are part of a local church (and I hope this includes *you!*), you have a wonderful heritage.

- A rich community of faith.
- A rich cast of people before you to show you how to trust in God.
- A rich set of spiritual gifts in the community designed to minister to you and to mature you in Christ.
- A rich Word of God that you feast upon taught by a pastor or leader who cares about you.

And finally,

- A rich expectation of glory when Christ comes and Jesus takes you home.

### Prayer for the King (Psalm 61:6-7)

While David wrote verses 1 to 5 in a time of difficulty, verses 6 and 7 may have been added by a later editor, encouraging God's people to pray for their king:

<sup>6</sup> Prolong the life of the king;  
may his years endure to all generations!  
<sup>7</sup> May he be enthroned forever before God;  
appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to watch over him!" (Psalm 61:6-7)

The psalm includes prayer for the God-anointed king. But even if our ruler isn't a believer, we are called to pray for him or her (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

### Singing Praise (Psalm 61:8)

The psalm concludes with David's commitment to both sing praises and live out our faith day by day, trusting God and enjoying his presence.

"So will I ever sing praises to your name,  
as I perform my vows day after day." (Psalm 61: 8)

The Hebrew verb in verse 8a refers particularly to singing praise or making music with an instrument. Scripture commands us to sing -- I count this command in at least 37 different verses throughout the Old and New Testaments. Why? God has designed music in such a way that it touches our emotions deeply. And we humans are not just bodies and brains, but people with feelings and struggles and emotions.

I learned a number of years ago that if I begin my devotional time with singing, it lifts my spirit to God and helps me connect with him. So I aim for at least three songs. Otherwise, my Quiet Time can be quite cerebral and theoretical, but lack an emotional connection with God which helps me enjoy him as a Person. Verbal praise is good. Singing praise is even better.

Psalm 61 is a psalm of struggle and prayer and desire. But it is also a psalm of intimacy, of dwelling with God, of sheltering under the warmth and protection of his wings, of singing praises, of joyful commitment.

So sing, my friend! That way you can serve the Lord with a joy that comes from an intimacy with God. Find the secret place of the Most High and dwell there continually, until he calls you home into his very presence.

#### *Prayer*

Father, thank you for the wonderful gift of song that brings us into a sense of your presence. And thank you for that Secret Place where we can live with you -- safe, protected, cared for. Thank you. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

*Dr. Ralph F. Wilson*

*\* It is now generally accepted that the Psalms were not written by King David, but the encouragement offered in this article can still be taken to heart [Fr Tony]*

## Calendar and Intentions for February 2021

Mon	1	feria: The fire, police and ambulance services
Tue	2	<b>PRESENTATION OF CHRIST (CANDLEMAS): The Parish and the People of God</b>
Wed	3	S Anskar: The Church in Denmark
Thu	4	feria: The Churches Together in Tonge Moor
Fri	5	S Agatha: All who suffer for their devotion to Christ
Sat	6	S Paul Miki and Companions: The Church in Japan
<b>SUN</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: The Parish and the People of God</b>
Mon	8	feria: The work of local hospitals and hospices
Tue	9	feria: Walmsley Deanery, its churches and congregations
Wed	10	S Scholastica: Religious communities and vocations to the religious life
Thu	11	feria: All who work in Covid wards and Intensive Care Units
Fri	12	feria: Our local Councillors and Borough officials
Sat	13	feria: All involved in the administering of Covid jabs
<b>SUN</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: The Parish and the People of God</b>
Mon	15	feria: Confessors and their penitents
Tue	16	feria: The work of Forward in Faith
Wed	17	<b>ASH WEDNESDAY: The Parish and the People of God</b>
Thu	18	feria: The work of ACS and Vocations to the Sacred Priesthood
Fri	19	feria: Those who will walk the Stations of the Cross this year
Sat	20	feria: The Bishop of Beverley, and all bishops of The Society
<b>SUN</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1ST SUNDAY OF LENT: The Parish and the People of God</b>
Mon	22	<b>CHAIR OF S PETER: The Unity of Christ's Church</b>
Tue	23	S Polycarp: Faithfulness to the Gospel
Wed	24	feria: Our PCC and Church officers
Thu	25	feria: Our local tradespeople
Fri	26	feria: The mentally ill and those who care for them
Sat	27	feria: The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham and its Priests Associate
<b>SUN</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>2ND SUNDAY OF LENT: The Parish and the People of God</b>

### CHURCH WARDENS

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### OFFICERS AND ORGANISERS

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Treasurer: Sue Loftus Tel 01204 302051 - email: treasurer@

Walsingham Cell: Elsie Hollinrake Tel: 07486 982586

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Child Protection: Margaret Mullen Tel: 01204 695964 - email: safeguarding@

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Sunday School: Ruth Taylor Tel: 01204 396409

Mothers' Union: Elsie Hollinrake Tel: 07486 982586

Organist: (St Augustine's) Mike Cheetham Tel: 01204 391963

Organist: (St. Aidan's) Peter Pemrick Tel: 01204 527699

Parish Hall Bookings: Sandra Anderson Tel: 01204 383158 - email: bookings@

Wednesday Morning Coffee Shop: John Harrison Tel: 01204 792691

Caretaker - St Aidan's Hall: Andrew Settle Tel: 01204 450321

Parish Paper: Mike Cheetham - email: magazine@