

PARISH MAGAZINE
FEBRUARY 2022



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

30p



Parish Priest - Father Tony Davies

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Find us on [facebook.com/groups/SASATM](https://www.facebook.com/groups/SASATM)



CHURCH WARDENS

David & Ruth Taylor: 31 Wisbeck Road. Tel: 01204 396409

OFFICERS AND ORGANISERS

email addresses can be completed by adding "staugustinestm.org.uk"

PCC Secretary: Katherine Taylor Tel. 01204 531053 - email: pccsec@

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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Mothers' Union: Elsie Hollinrake Tel: 07486 982586 - email: mu@

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

Parish Paper: Mike Cheetham - email: magazine@



Dear friends

This February covers almost perfectly the period between Candlemas and Ash Wednesday. Candlemas acts as a pivot, when we cease thinking about Christmas and Epiphany and turn our eyes towards our Lord's Passion, Death and glorious Resurrection, events we prepare to celebrate during the season of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday.

Lent itself is the season *par excellence* for repentance, that turning around and back towards God which is such a hallmark of the season. But this shift in focus after Candlemas is also an opportunity for us to look ahead, not only liturgically, but also in our own everyday lives.

The most significant change in our circumstances (if I can use that expression) comes at the end of our earthly lives, when - by God's grace and through the saving death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, we enter the glorious presence of God himself. I am sure we will address this further during Lent and Holy Week.

For now, I would simply ask whether we have considered those who will be left behind. Have we made a Will? If not, who-gets-what is far more complicated; it may cause disagreements and fallings-out among our relatives, and may even involve the State. There are also stories of faithful and regular communicants being given a humanist service at the crematorium, with no Christian content at all. Fill in one of the forms at the back of church, and make sure your next-of-kin and parish priest know what you want for your funeral.

"Dry January" may have made something of a comeback this year after the imposed austerity of 2020, and alcoholic excess isn't something we might necessarily associate with readers of this journal in any case! But perhaps there are other excesses in our lives, if we're honest with ourselves, which could do with being restrained for the benefit of our health or sanity!

Do we consume more food than is good for us? Are we engaged with social media more frequently than is good for us, getting us cross, angry and worked-up? Are we slouched on the couch for too long, instead of moving around and getting a bit of exercise?

The last two years, with its lockdowns and encouragements to work at home, has lulled many of us into a more sedentary lifestyle, and encouraged more isolated activities - such as binge-watching on iPlayer or Netflix, and engaging more with others via social media.

Others still will be considering more life-changing events at this time of year - which University to attend; whether or not to change jobs; whether or not to move house. These are big and important decisions, and I would ask your prayers for those having to make them.

Whoever we are, and whatever we do, it is good from time to time to prayerfully take a good look at our lives, and ask God to show us those areas in our life that need tweaking. God only ever desires what is good for us: listen to him.

With my love and prayers

Fr Tony

SUPERMARKETS SAY “NO”

Real Easter Eggs are no longer on sale in supermarkets. This was because they use Fairtrade chocolate and include the Easter story in each egg, so cannot reduce costs and so compete with the likes of Cadbury for shelf space.

Therefore, we hope you will go the extra mile and buy Real Easter Eggs directly from the manufacturers (The Meaningful Chocolate Company), using the form that will soon appear at the back of church.

All Real Easter Eggs come with an Easter story in the box. The stories range from simple guides to 24-page activity book versions

Calendar and Intentions for February 2022

Tue	1	feria: Those receiving the Blessed Sacrament in their homes this month
Wed	2	PRESENTATION OF CHRIST (CANDLEMAS): The Parish and the People of God
Thu	3	S Anskar: The Church in Denmark
Fri	4	feria: Those suffering from Covid-19 and Long Covid
Sat	5	S Agatha: Those who suffer for their faith in Christ
SUN	6	5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: The Parish and the People of God
Mon	7	feria: The work of General Synod, meeting this week
Tue	8	feria: Bolton Deanery, its churches and congregations
Wed	9	feria: The Churches Together in Tonge Moor
Thu	10	S Scholastica: Religious communities and vocations to the religious life
Fri	11	feria: Those developing and administering Covid vaccinations
Sat	12	feria: The mentally ill and those caring for them
SUN	13	6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: The Parish and the People of God
Mon	14	SS CYRIL AND METHODIUS: The peoples of Europe
Tue	15	feria: The Bishop of Beverley, and all Bishops of The Society
Wed	16	feria: The work and mission of the Mother's Union
Thu	17	feria: The fire, police and ambulance services
Fri	18	feria: The work of The Society and Forward in Faith
Sat	19	feria: Those taking part in our Messy Church today
SUN	20	7TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: The Parish and the People of God
Mon	21	feria: The Bishop of Manchester and his staff
Tue	22	CHAIR OF S PETER: The Unity of Christ's church
Wed	23	S Polycarp: The strength to be faithful in our witness to Christ
Thu	24	feria: The work of ACS and Vocations to the Sacred Priesthood
Fri	25	feria: Our local Councillors and Borough officials
Sat	26	feria: The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham and its Priests Associate
SUN	27	8TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: The Parish and the People of God
Mon	28	feria: Our local tradespeople

PARISH DATES

Wed 2nd	Candlemas: Said Mass 10.30am (St Aidan's) Sung Mass, 7.30pm
SUN 6th	Parish Mass 10.30am, with Admission to Communion Before Confirmation 7.00pm: Living in Love & Faith course (Parish Hall)
Tue 8th	7.30pm: Deanery Synod meets via Zoom
SUN 13th	12.15pm: Holy Baptism 6.30pm: Evensong & Benediction 7.00pm: Living in Love & Faith course (Parish Hall)
Mon 14th	1.30pm: Crafts Group (Parish Hall)
Sat 19th	11.00am: Messy Church, until 1.00pm
Mon 28th	1.30pm: Crafts Group (Parish Hall)
Wed 2nd	ASH WEDNESDAY - Lent begins

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

HOLY BAPTISM

January 2nd Luke Andrew Jack Daniel Taziker
Rose Charlie Taziker

CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

December 22nd Allan Elvis Settle (34)
January 13th Mary Mullen (86)

with a prize competition worth £200. They are Fairtrade, Palm oil free and plastic free.

To encourage as many people to take part as possible, if we spend over £79 by 14th March, we can get FREE DELIVERY!

Understandably, The Real Chocolate Company does not have the large marketing budgets of Cadbury so they rely on people to spread the word that The Real Easter Egg exists. Please use your networks, friend them on Facebook and follow them on Twitter.

Fr Tony

MANCHESTER BLUE TALK

Save our Ocean - Protect our Future.

An important Conference is to take place in Manchester Cathedral in collaboration with the Consulate of Portugal and the United Nations, on Tuesday 29th March 2022, at 2.00pm.

Our Oceans cover 70% of the surface of the Earth and they are our planet's largest biosphere. They produce 50% of the oxygen we breath, and absorb 25% of all carbon dioxide emissions. They are not only the lungs of the planet but also its largest carbon sink and one of the most important allies to combat climate change.

The Oceans provide key natural resources; produce food; nurture biodiversity; are a source of energy; and act as buffers to reduce damage from storms. And they are an amazing place for tourism and recreation, as your Vicar can attest!

The science is clear: the ocean is facing unprecedented threats that must be addressed. The 2nd United Nations Ocean Conference, co-hosted by Portugal and Kenya, comes at a critical moment as the world is strengthening its efforts to mobilise,

create and drive solutions to realise the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Find out more about what can be done to save the oceans by booking a place at the Conference by going to <https://bluetalk.eventbrite.co.uk>

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN TONGE MOOR

Our joint service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity took place at St Andrews' church on Sunday 23rd January: the parish had five representatives at the service.

During the course of the evening, the Covenant between our various churches in the area, first signed in January 2018 was ratified and re-signed as a mark of our commitment, as Christian brothers and sisters, to work as closely as possible in the service of the Gospel in Tonge Moor.

The Covenant reads: "We, the churches in Tonge Moor, seek a deepening of our communion with Christ and with each other. We wish to encourage one another to worship, pray and reflect together and in so doing to be able to share the treasures of each other's traditions. We look to respond to the needs of our community and to be able to live and share the gospel with all people within our unity in Christ."

Fr Tony

LOOKING AHEAD

The great Christian season of Lent begins at the beginning of March, with Ash Wednesday on the 2nd. There will be a said mass with homily at St Aidan's at 10.30am and a Sung Mass at St Augustine's at 7.30pm: both will include the Imposition of Ashes,

Love

Love may not make the world spin around, but it certainly makes a lot of people dizzy.

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Life

In the midst of married life, we are in debt.

**

The Boasting Boys

Three boys are in the schoolyard bragging about their fathers. The first boy says, "My dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a poem, they give him £50."

The second boy says, "That's nothing. My dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a song, they give him £100."

The third boy says, "I can beat you both. My dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a sermon. And it takes eight people to collect all the money!"

Those who want to get married

A minister was preparing to marry a local couple within a couple of weeks. At the close of the morning service, he saw them both in the congregation, and wanted to ask them to come forward, but he couldn't think of their names. So he said: "Will those wanting to get married please come to the front?"

Immediately, nine single ladies, six single men, three widows, and four widowers walked up the aisle.

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Say it with flowers

A man stopped by his local florist shop to buy flowers for his new girlfriend on Valentine's Day. He asked the proprietor, "You know the expression, 'Say it with flowers'?"

"I do indeed!" the florist enthused. "How about three dozen of my finest roses?"

The man hesitated. "No, make it just a half dozen roses. I'm a man of few words."

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Fire of love

Here's to love, the only fire for which there is no insurance.

--

marking our desire to return to God's ways at the beginning of this penitential season.

A new feature this year is that for our Lent Groups we are joining with our new friends on our Mission Community. They are being hosted by St Matthew's, Little Lever, and will take place on Wednesday evenings during Lent, beginning at 7.30pm. The general theme is "Prayer", and will be led by various clergy from the parishes making up our Mission Community, including me.

For those who would drive to somewhere more local, there will be little difference in driving to St Matthew's; for those without transport, there will transport available to take you and bring you back - just have a word with me, or another driver you know to be going.

In the not-too-distant future, it is extremely likely that we and St Matthew's will share the same parish priest. This is one of - I hope - many occasions on which we can get to know each better.

Fr Tony

FEAST OF CANDLEMAS

The Feast of Candlemas, also known as The Presentation of Christ in The Temple, falls on Wednesday 2nd February, and formally closes the longer, and lesser, season of Christmas. On this day the crib scene under the Lady Chapel altar is removed.

The Gospel retells the account of Mary and Joseph bringing the child Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to offer thanks offerings for his birth. We hear how old Simeon greets the Holy Family with joy, recognising in the infant Jesus God's Salvation, which is to be "a light to enlighten the Gentiles". This proclamation gives the Feast its name, and is the origin of the tradition of blessing the candles that will be used in the church during the coming 12 months.

Join us for this special Feast of the Lord, and rejoice together in the Salvation which God the Father has “prepared in the sight of every people”. There will be a said mass with homily at St Aidan’s at 10.30am, and a sung mass at St Augustine’s at 7.30pm.

Fr Tony

100 CLUB NEWS

The tenth monthly draw was in the Parish Hall on Sunday 2nd January 2022.

First Prize Number 37 – Vivienne Brennard - wins £25
Second Prize Number 95 – Andrew Settle - wins £15
Third Prize Number 14 – Aidan Anderson - wins £10

The eleventh draw for this term will be on Sunday 6th February 2022, in the Parish Hall

If you are not a member contact David or Ruth Taylor to be allocated a number just £12 a year. Also to renew and/or take on a new number.

Church Announcement

There is the story of a preacher who got up one Sunday and announced to his congregation: *“I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building program. The bad news is, it's still out there in your pockets.”*

When is it okay to kiss someone?

When they’re rich. - Pam, age 7

The law says you have to be 18, so I wouldn’t want to mess with that. - Curt, age 7

If you kiss someone, then you should marry them and have kids with them. It’s the right thing to do. - Howard, age 8

Is it better to be single or married?

It’s better for girls to be single but not for boys. Boys need someone to clean up after them. - Anita, age 9

How would the world be different if people didn’t get married?

There sure would be a lot of kids to explain, wouldn’t there? - Kelvin, age 8

And the #1 Favourite is.....

How would you make a marriage work?

Tell your wife that she looks pretty, even if she looks like a lorry. - Ricky, age 10

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No age is good to get married at. You got to be a fool to get married. - Freddie, age 6

How can a stranger tell if two people are married?

You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids.

- Derrick, age 8

What do you think your Mum and Dad have in common?

Both don't want any more kids. - Lori, age 8

What do most people do on a date?

Dates are for having fun, and people should use them to get to know each other. Even boys have something to say if you listen long enough. - Lynnette, age 8

On the first date, they just tell each other lies and that usually gets them interested enough to go for a second date. - Martin, age 10

What would you do on a first date that was turning sour?

I'd run home and play dead. The next day I would call all the newspapers and make sure they wrote about me in all the dead columns. - Craig, age 9

CHURCH CLEANING

There is a small group of parishioners who give up a morning each month. Apart from the cleaning they have tea/coffee, biscuits and social chat as well,



The next date for cleaning is
21st February 2022.

Meeting at 10.00am.

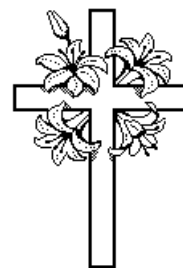
Many hands make light work!

The date/time could be subject to change, but usually decided by the Sunday, the day before, and is coordinated by Lilian. Schofield 01204 303137. Check with the church's Facebook group.

Did you hear about the restaurant owner who was sued after one of his chefs lost a finger in a food mixer accident? Apparently, he hadn't carried out a thorough enough whisk assessment!

EASTER DRAW

We are planning to hold the 2022 Grand Easter Draw, to be drawn after the 10.30 Mass on Easter Day 17th April. In past years we have offered a first prize of £100 Cash. We would be happy to have contributions towards this and any other pledges/donations of prizes, to enable us to get the Tickets printed.



Please let David or Ruth Taylor know how you can contribute towards the Draw



BEATITUDES!

The last Messy Church had us finding out about The Baptism of Jesus

The next session has us finding out about
A sermon on a mount.

Find out more

Saturday
19th February
2022
11am – 1pm



St Augustine's Parish Hall

- Whatever your age – come and enjoy being creative!
- Join us for activities, crafts, and a short period of worship then a simple meal.
- There will be no charge for this event.
- Children will need to be accompanied by an adult at all times.

If you haven't already, please sign up for a serious Bible study to begin 4 Feb 2022, something you can sink your teeth into - [Ephesians: Discipleship Lessons](#) -- in 7 or 16 lessons. Sign up now. **The Ephesians study starts on 4 February 2022** (though you can start later if you wish).



<http://www.jesuwalk.com/ephesians/>

The Rules of Marriage

Here are the real-life answers from a group of children:


How do you decide who to marry?

You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the chips and dip coming. - Alan, age 10

No person really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you're stuck with. - Kirsten, age 10

What is the right age to get married?

23 is the best age because you'll have known the person FOREVER by then. - Camille, age 10



The Joyful Heart
Newsletter -- since 1996

Dr. Ralph F. Wilson
Joyful Heart Renewal Ministries
www.joyfulheart.com

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Bring a Sacrifice of Praise

This morning, as part of my regular morning devotions, I took down my guitar from its hook on my bookcase, prayed, "I come to you with thanksgiving and praise today," and began to sing some Scripture set to music that I learned in the 70s and 80s:

- "He Has Made Me Glad" (Leona Von Brethorst, 1976, from Psalm 100:4)
- "I Will Bless the Lord at All Times" (author unknown, from Psalm 34:1-4)
- "A Shield about Me" (Donn Thomas and Charles Williams, 1980, from Psalm 3:3)

Over the past few years I've developed a list of (currently 57) Scripture songs, from which I often sing as part of my worship each morning. (You can download my current list at <http://www.jesuswalk.com/hebrews/scripture-chorus-list-210620.pdf>)

I hope Hebrews 13:15-16 entitled, "[Bring a Sacrifice of Praise.](#)" encourages you in your worship.

Mid Lent Social



Saturday 19th March 2022 1.00pm
 St Augustine's Parish Hall



Sing-a-long




Celebrating everything Irish




Quiz



Tickets £2.50 including Sausage & Colcannon lunch



Buy a ticket from Ruth or Elsie at Church
 Or phone 07812956731

Pax Dei quae exsuperat omnem sensum

God's hand take the Plough out of the sky,
And furrow my mind with the Northern Lights,
Tossing the stars on either side as glistening
Drops of earth.
Then sow the seeds of peace – to grow,
To bloom.

Jocelyn Darbyshire



**Parish Pilgrimage
to the Shrine of
Our Lady of Walsingham
2022**

(Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the first Tonge Moor Pilgrimage in 1947 and continuous annual pilgrimages since.)

Mon 29th August - Fri 2nd September

Full board £375 Half board £350

- * initial deposit £30.00 required to secure a place
- * 2nd deposit of £50.00 required by Easter Day
- * balance by 31st July of £295 (F/B) or £270 (H/B)

Payments may be made in installments or in full.
Cheques payable to 'Walsingham Fund'

Sign the list at the back of church, take an envelope for your initial deposit and return it to either Elsie Hollinrake or Linda Parkington as soon as possible as places are limited.

Thought for the day

Why are eggs packed in a flimsy carton when batteries are packed in such a way that a chainsaw is needed to open them?

another single question throughout the event. Both outcomes are satisfying.

Thirdly, do realise that when you are asked to divide into small discussion groups, it means that the conference leader has run out of ideas about what to do next. Do not, at all costs, volunteer to be chairman. It only means that when you have to report back - and if the leaders use the word 'plenary', then by all means contemplate strangling them also - you will be involved in sticking sheets of paper on to walls, which will then rip off the wallpaper when you try to remove them.

You will also have the embarrassment of finding that every felt tip pen you try to use will be empty, and what you thought were the conclusions your group had arrived at will be volubly contradicted by all the other members.

No, if you are ever obliged to attend another course, take a good book, enough claret to cover every evening away, and develop a debilitating illness that, while enabling you to attend every meal, obliges you to retreat to your room for the rest of the day. You will leave having learned as much on whatever the topic was as your colleagues, but you will return refreshed and eager to make the next booking.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

BOLTON BUS PRESERVATION GROUP

presents
An Evening Slide Show
of
UK TROLLEYBUSES
and
BUSES TO THE SEASIDE

to be held in
St Augustine's Church Hall

Monday 7th March 2022

7.30pm
Admission £5.00
Including refreshments

All proceeds to the continued work of the BBPG



Walsingham News

During 2022 the Anglican Shrine is celebrating a Year of Jubilee, marking the 100th anniversary of the setting up of the Image of Our Lady of Walsingham in the Parish Church and the restoration of pilgrimage to England's Nazareth. Specially commissioned commemorative items will be available throughout the year, starting with a new enamel badge at £10.00 and a book with full-colour photographs from the garden and Rosary themed reflections at £24.99. If anyone would like to have a badge or book sooner rather than later, just speak to either Elsie or Linda. We would be happy to bring them back for you either from this



month's Partnership Weekend (18th - 20th) or Linda's planned visit after Easter. Both the badge and the book are available, with postage costs, through the Shrine's web-site.



Readers of the *Walsingham Review* may remember the 'Saving a Sign'

Appeal, dealing with the urgent repair of the sign hanging from Stella Maris over the Holt Road. We gave a contribution from our Cell funds and it's good to see the restored sign has now been returned.

The sign by the west end entrance to the Shrine Church has also had a facelift, in readiness for the Jubilee Year.



Once again, thank you to all who bought the calendars and notelets, printed in aid of the Priory of Our Lady's Charity of the Year. Along with buying cards, craft items, small knitted toys, candles and rosaries we played our part in raising the massive total of £2443.53 which the Priory sent to *Tariro*. As from Advent, the new charity is *Children in Distress*, which is dedicated to helping suffering children in Romania.

Sr Carol has sent copies of the Priory's recent newsletter for our Cell members and parish. Please let me know if you would like one. Prayers for the whole Society of St Margaret and particularly Srs Angela and Carol in the Walsingham House, and those discerning a future within it, are much appreciated.

On how to survive a residential conference

The Rectory
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

I am glad you enjoyed your conference, but please do not be deluded into thinking that conferences are there to teach you anything. Conferences exist to provide another entry on your CV, to give you time off while flattering yourself that you are working, and to make the person leading it feel that their life is not wholly pointless.



As it happened, I was also invited to the same one, the one entitled 'Learning how to say no.' But I refused to attend, thereby proving that I didn't need it anyway.

There are certain useful points you need to learn for conferences. First, about half the attendees will have been together only the previous week attending another conference in another part of the country. They will be eager, enthusiastic, and overflowing with management platitudes. Avoid them at all costs. Should one of them say to you: 'expect the unexpected' you have my permission to strangle them. They won't have expected that!

Secondly, when you are all asked to go through that ghastly process of introducing yourselves to everyone else, make it up. I think the last time I was obliged to do this I became a butcher specialising in exporting offal to Saudi Arabia. All your clerical colleagues will then panic that they have turned up for the wrong course and the leader will make sure that you are not asked

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.*

The very first Valentine card, 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 14th 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.

Subscriptions to the Society of Our Lady of Walsingham are now due from those who don't pay directly to the Shrine. The rate is £20 for an individual & £35 for a married couple. We look forward to receiving payment in either cash or cheque after the 7.30pm Sung Mass on the Feast of Candlemas or soon after. Cheques should be made to 'Walsingham Fund' and if you're not handing over cash directly on 2nd February, it would be helpful to put it in an envelope with your name on and marked Walsingham Subs.

The Cell programme for the year is now available and we look forward to meeting regularly again. As is our tradition (as the saying in Walsingham goes) we follow masses on the Feasts of Our Lady with light refreshments and we look forward to having some social time together - much missed over the last two years. We also look forward to our special 75th Anniversary Pilgrimage to England's Nazareth at the end of August. We would love to take new pilgrims with us, to be part of this special year. (Details are to be found elsewhere in this magazine.) Don't wish, when the photographs are up and there's (hopefully) a report in this magazine, you'd joined us! Elsie is the person to speak to about costs and arrangements but any regular pilgrim should sell it to you!

Linda Parkington



Last month we hosted the Parish Festive Meal and our thanks go to Percival's for the lovely meal we enjoyed. I would also like to thank Ruth for coordinating the evening.

M.U. Thursday prayers this month will be on 10th February on YouTube.

This month we meet on Wednesday 16th February starting with Mass at 2.00pm followed by a Crafternoon Tea. We do hope you will be able to join us.

The Mothers Union Theme for 2022 is Transformation now. We will be looking at how we did things in the past, how we do them now and how we can do things in the future. At a future meeting we will agree how our branch can do this.

There will be craft afternoons on Mondays' 14th and 28th starting at 1.30pm in the Parish Hall.

MU 2022 subscriptions are £25 and are due. Payment can be made by cash, cheque or bank transfer. Please see Ruth Taylor or myself for details.

Elsie Hollinrake

14th Feb: Valentine's Day

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 -14th 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.

St Valentine's Day, a poem

Saint 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.*