

St. Erconwald's Parish Magazine



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Cover Design: Election of Pope Leo XIV



Editorial:

Fr. Anthony



Welcome to the Pentecost edition of the magazine. Hope you and your families have been keeping safe and well. We offer a warm welcome to St. Erconwald's Parish to any newly-arrived parishioners.

Monday 21st April, Easter Monday, was a day of sadness as we learnt of the death of His Holiness Pope Francis. For me, two words summarise his life and his Pontificate: Mercy and Hope.

His first address on his election was to announce the mercy of God. This idea was also reflected in his motto both as a bishop and Pope. As a young man he happened to enter a church and go to confession. There he encountered both the mercy of God and his calling. So, he chose as his motto: 'Misericordia eligendo' - having mercy he (God) chose him.



This loving trust in the mercy of God for every person, a mercy never withdrawn – the Lord forgives and he forgets - led him to teach us about helping one another on our pilgrim way. He wanted the Church to be characterised by this same mercy, suspending ready condemnation in favour of walking, step by step, with each other. He invited us to live our lives more simply, caring for those in need and focusing our lives on following Christ's example

He knew that we can only make progress, we can only move forward through our struggle with our weaknesses. He taught that our pathway has to be that of loving mercy, received and given, because the mercy of God outweighs the burden of our faults.

At the beginning of his Papacy he was asked, 'Who is Pope Francis?' he instantly replied: 'A sinner.' His very last pastoral action was to visit the Regina Coeli prison in Rome, greeting the inmates and declaring that, but for the grace of God, he could have been in their place.

And from this deep trust in the mercy of God sprang his second characteristic: hope!

He declared this year to be a Jubilee Year during which we are to grasp again the wonder of the hope that we are given. Pilgrims into Hope is what he called us to be!



This hope is not simply an optimism that all will work out well in the end. Indeed, he called us to a renewed effort to protect those who were without hope, who could see no way forward. Constantly he spoke for those on the margins of society.



It seemed rather fitting that his pontificate concluded in this Jubilee Year of Hope and within the Octave of Easter. The fullness of this hope in the Lord is, of course, his promise of heaven. We pray that through God's mercy, the Lord will now welcome this faithful servant home, to a happiness that lasts, not for a season, but for all eternity. As we mourn our loss, may this be our consolation and our sure hope. May Pope Francis, beloved of so many, rest in peace. Amen.

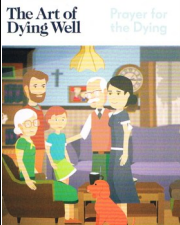
Once again, thank you for your support.

With prayerful wishes to you and your families.

Condolences for The Late Pope Francis

We would like to thank Rev. Scott and the many parishioners from the 'Churches in Wembley' who contacted us offering condolence and prayers for our Late Pope Francis RIP. Also, those who attended the Special Prayers for Pope Francis in the Church here on Friday, 25th April 2025. Your consideration, kindness and prayers at such a sad time was truly appreciated.

The Art of Dying Well is a web site of the Church in England and Wales that offers a helping hand to those grappling with issues surrounding death and dying. For more information visit: www.artofdyingwell.org



Our sympathies and prayers to the families of those departed: Margaret Walsh, Teresa Cummins, Kathleen O'Dea, Bridie Lally, Valentine Rosario, William [Bill] Keppler, Felix Biscette, Crystal Rosario and Elizabeth [Betty] O'Reilly.

Of your charity, please remember in your prayers the priests and religious who served our parish. Those in Houses of Care: Birchwood Grange, Brook House and Kenbrook. The relatives and friends of parishioners.

Lent and Easter 2025



As is the norm here in St. Erconwald's, we held our traditional pancakes breakfast in the Hall after Mass on **Shrove Tuesday**, 4th March. This as usual was well attended. It was nice for parishioners to gather together for a chat over pancakes and tea/coffee. On **Ash Wednesday** - a day of fasting and abstinence - the day that sets the tone for our Lenten Journey. The Masses were well attended with distribution of Ashes. Following the morning Mass, Ashes were taken to the Nursing Homes and to some of the Housebound in our Parish. As part of our Lenten programme Stations of the Cross were prayed before each weekday Mass and Friday Evening. On Wednesdays there was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and reflection on the theme: "We Dare to Hope".

Mass with Anointing of the Sick

Ellen Geary

On Tuesday 8th April, Fr. Anthony celebrated Mass with Anointing of the Sick. The theme of the celebration was based on Pope Francis' message for the 33rd World Day of the Sick in the Jubilee Year 2025, in which the Church invites us to become "pilgrims of hope". The word of God accompanies us and offers us, in the words of Saint Paul, an encouraging message: "Hope does not disappoint" (*Rom 5:5*); indeed, it strengthens us in times of trial.



The Sacrament of the Sick is one of the seven sacraments and many people attend the Mass. Those who received the Sacrament were anointed on the forehead and hands with the blessed oil as a source of hope, comfort, courage, strength and peace.

After the Mass of Anointing Fr. Anthony invited everyone to the Hall for Home-made Soup and Rolls, tea/coffee, cake and biscuits. There was a lovely atmosphere as people got to chat and enjoy lunch together.



A huge thank you to all the helpers.

Please keep in our thoughts and prayers all the sick and the house-bound. May the Lord Jesus bless, console and strengthen all the sick, and may Mary, health of the sick, Intercede for them.

First Reconciliation 2025



This year we have four children preparing for their First Holy Communion. In preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the children and parents had two meetings. Apart from the catechism regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the children were instructed also on how to prepare themselves for this sacrament and how to receive it. The sessions were all accompanied by a Power Point Presentation to help parents and children to memorise the five things they need to do in preparing themselves for the Sacrament: Think, Be Sorry, Tell Sins, Say Penance, Thank God [for forgiving us our sins]. The First Reconciliation was celebrated on Saturday 15th March with a Thanksgiving "Link Mass" on Sunday.

At the end of the Service the children were given a gift pack containing some sweets, a Good Shepherd plaque, a book mark and a leaflet with prayers. The children were also given a certificate to remember their First Reconciliation. We congratulate the First Holy Communion children and their parents for moving forward in their journey of faith.

Please keep the children, their families and the Catechists in your prayers.



Reconciliation Service



The Reconciliation Service was held on 11th April the Friday before we entered Holy Week. We were pleased to be joined by parishioners from neighbouring Parishes. As we entered the Church we were asked to take a purple / pink pull string "Gift Bag". We were asked to place it on the bench in front of us and to forget about it. [All would be explained later]. The examination of conscience took place as we mediated on the Way of the Cross. As is Father Anthony's custom we had a symbolic act to re-enforce in a physical way what had been happening during the service. A reminder that whilst we are all sinners, if we truly repent with the Lord's help and in his infinite mercy, we are forgiven and taken back into his fold. At the end of the Service, as a Symbolic Act, we had to process to the altar with the little "Gift Bag" and place it in a basket. The empty bag was to symbolise our souls now emptied of our sins.

We were to find out what happened to these bags at the end of our Lenten journey.

RICA 2025 and the Rite of Election at Westminster Christopher Dunn



Starting last November, in preparation for the new lectionary, we started our RCIA course. Over the next six months or so, my fellow candidates Wiktor, Fabian and I met with our sponsors and supporters most Wednesday evenings in the Parish Hall to learn, discuss and reflect on subjects such as Faith & Conversion, Prayer, 'Be-Attitudes' and Liturgy & Sacraments to list a few!

Each class was very informative and enjoyable – not a session went by without a joke or a laugh at some point! The amount of work that Father Anthony put into preparing each subject was evident by the amount of knowledge that we took away with us every week.

On Saturday 8th March we went to Westminster Cathedral for the Rite of Election.

With over 1200 people in attendance, it was the largest number of candidates and catechumens since before the pandemic. There were over 500 adults preparing to receive the Sacraments of Initiation, and like myself, another 250 candidates, already baptized, being received into full communion with the Catholic Church.



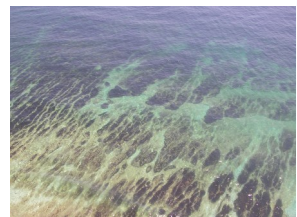
The service was led by Cardinal Nichols with his Bishops John Sherrington, Nicholas Hudson, James Curry and Paul McAleenan - all of whom we had the opportunity to speak with when we were called to the front of the congregation to speak with them during the service, and also afterwards on the piazza.



In his homily, Cardinal Nichols reminded us to be Pilgrims of Hope in this Jubilee Year. It was a very special afternoon and wonderful to see so many people coming together at the beginning of Lent for this important occasion.

Wit and Wisdom

- ◆ Now that I know all the answers, nobody asks me the questions.
- ◆ No one is ever old enough to know better.



The Triduum

Christopher Dunn

On Wednesday, after the morning Mass we prepared the Church and set up the Altar of Repose in the Hall for the celebration of the Triduum. This was achieved in record time thanks to the number of parishioners who came to help.



On 17th April, we gathered in Church at 8pm for the beginning of the Triduum with the celebration of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. This solemn service is particularly important to me, as it was at this same service last year that I decided to follow my desire to be received into the Catholic Church. Although solemn, I find it moving and beautiful, remembering the Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples. A surprising number of people came for this Mass, sadly due to Fire Regulation, admittance was not possible for all. As the Hall was set out for the veneration of the Blessed Sacrament we were unable to use it for the extra people. Apologies to those effected.

On **Good Friday**, we continued to hold three Services to accommodate the numbers. The morning and evening Services consisted of the Passion Reading – Stations of the Cross – Veneration – Holy Communion.

Walk of Witness



Following the morning Family Session, we gathered outside with the other Christian Churches in Wembley and went on our '**Good Friday Silent Walk of Witness**'. The procession starts outside St. Erconwald's. The big wooden Cross from our Church heads the "Walk" the congregation of ministers, and people of all ages, nationalities and abilities following behind. Travelling up one side and down the other of Preston Road towards the little Green in front of the Preston Pub. Gathered together there the "Walk" ends with a Service of Readings, Prayers and Hymns and a final blessing. The Cross is then returned to the Church, ready for the Solemn Liturgy and Veneration of the Cross at 3.00pm

A word of thanks to all the Ministers of all the Churches, Readers, Musicians, Stewards and First Aiders and all who helped with this Service. Special thanks to Cllr. Daniel Kennelly for organising with the Council to have the Green cleaned prior to the Service.





After the well attended *Walk Of Witness*, we gathered at 3.00pm to focus on the Passion of Christ - an important day of quiet reflection and fasting - where we remember the sacrifice of Christ through the liturgy and prayers. The Service was also live streamed into the Hall to accommodate the extra numbers.

On **Holy Saturday** morning following Morning Prayer the Parishioners set about getting the Church and the Hall ready for the greatest feast of the Church Year, Easter. With plenty of help soon the Easter Garden, floral displays on the altar, the vigil candles and the Hall set up for live streaming were all in place. Thank you to all who helped.



The Easter Vigil marked the celebration of Jesus' resurrection and the beginning of the Easter celebrations and included the baptism, reception into the Church, and Confirmations of Wikoria, Fabian and myself. It was a wonderful service beginning outside the front of the Church at sunset with the lighting of the new fire and the procession into the Church with the 2025 Paschal candle, with the Jubilee Logo. Once everyone's candle had been lit from the flame of the Easter Candle, the Easter Proclamation [Exultet] was sung by Monika. Followed by an extended Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of Baptism and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, where Wiktorina and myself made our First Holy Communion.

In all, it was a very special three day service for me, especially as Claudette was able to attend each day - something I know is also very important to her. The readers, Monica and the choir undertook the readings beautifully and it was amazing to see the Church so well attended on all three days.

I want to sincerely thank Father Anthony for his teaching and guidance through the RCIA course and for making me feel so welcome since I started attending St Erconwald's. Thank you to Bernie O'Reilly for her great support and encouragement as my sponsor, and to Anne-Marie McHarg for guidance.

And a special thank you to Claudette Roby without whom I would not have found my way to the Catholic faith, and whose direction and words of advice have been invaluable.

Finally, thank you to everyone at St Erconwald's for your welcome. I have received support and kindness for which I am very grateful.



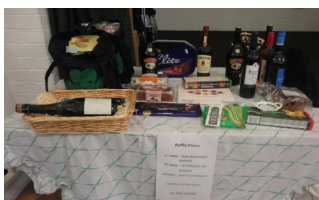
Saint Patrick's Day Celebration 2025

Elizabeth Patten



Due to circumstances beyond our control this year we were unable to celebrate St. Patrick's Day in the usual manner i.e. Bacon & Cabbage Celebration on the Sunday before the Feast Day. So, it was decided that we would celebrate it on the day itself which fell on a Monday. Unfortunately, this meant we could not include families due to work and school commitments, for which we are truly apologetic. The numbers had to be kept low as we had no kitchen facilities (the Nursery have sole use of the kitchen Mon – Fri.) It also meant a rethink on the food we served, so it was decided to do Irish Stew instead, served with soda bread and for dessert a selection of Irish Cakes and Biscuits.

We expected the numbers to be quite low due to the day being a Monday. How wrong can you be, we had 80 of our most senior parishioners, some of whom are housebound. It was a joy to behold to see old friends meeting up, catching up and having a wonderful time. The stew may have been served in disposable plates and the tea may have come in a paper cup but not a word of complaint was made. We had some concerns with the number of helpers available (due to work commitments) but again people stepped up to the challenge and we also had the help of those wonderful daughters and sons who had taken the time to bring their housebound parents to this most wonderful of celebrations. We are most grateful to you all.



Thank you to all who made our St. Patrick's Day Celebration so special this year. Those who helped set up and clear the Hall. Those who prepared the food – served the food-and washed up afterwards – sold raffle tickets. A special thanks to family members who took time to bring their parent/s and who stayed and

helped with the serving of food. It felt more like a house party this year. It brought gladness and joy to the heart to see those who have built up this Church meet up and chat over some really nice Stew and cakes. Thanks also to Tom who made up 105 sprigs of Shamrock for distribution after the Mass. Finally, a big thank you to Fr. Anthony for celebrating St. Patrick's Feast Mass and for all his help with the celebrations afterwards. May God and St. Patrick bless you all.

Confirmation 2025



On the evening of Tuesday 21st January we welcomed Ruslaan Afonso, Larissa Afonso, Lydia Daniel-Semere, Lucas Daniel-Semere, Aaron D’cunha, Rayden D’cunha, Alice Tohill-Hehir, Shona Tohill-Hehir, Leila Byfield, Chenoa Luiza Fernandes, Kiyaan Gunasekara, Ellisa Pereira, Sapphira Harry-Ukpaukure and Maya Gracia Marcis-Burog, and their parents as we started our Confirmation Preparation Programme.

This year we were very appreciative to have Holly Cook, a Youth Worker, to come again and help us on some of the sessions.

FLAME

This event was inspired by the Visit of Pope Benedict XVI in 2010, and organised by the Catholic Youth Ministry Federation of England and Wales. It is held every two years. This year it was held on Saturday 15th March in the OVO Wembley Arena. It is an event to help young people to discover or rediscover Jesus Christ. The theme this year was “Unstoppable”. The programme consisted of music, performance and testimonies of Bear Grylls, an adventurer and survival expert; and Isaac Harvey MBE, a disability advocate. They shared their faith, and how they overcome their challenges in life. To see over 11,000 people, mostly youngsters, taking part in this uplifting and inspiring event is very appropriate in the Jubilee Year of Hope!



Some of the Candidate’s responses: It made us “unstoppable” because we are closer to God by sharing experiences; A memorable and personal experience; I enjoyed the singing, musical performances and Adoration; First time I experienced the Adoration; Praising God through songs; The testimonies were very inspiring.

Retreat

The weekend Retreat took place on 28th – 30th March, at SPEC Retreat Centre in Pinner. It is set in 7 acres of land, with beautiful gardens, a chapel and a purpose-built round building with bedrooms, meeting rooms, kitchen and dining room. The Retreat leaders were two youth workers, Kylie and Julia. The theme was “God’s Chosen People”.





The programme was very compact and varied. Spiritual activities include Morning and Evening prayers, talks about the Holy Spirit and Holy Mass at St. Luke's church. There was also a session on the Holy Rosary and Catholic Social Teaching Workshop. Two sessions of particular interest were Visio Divina - Julia introduced a painting of the Last

Supper called 'The First Eucharist' by Juan de Jaunes (1562) and explained how to interpret the details and story behind the work. and Prayer Stations - each station had a theme the Beatitudes, Reconciliation, with provoking questions to help the candidates to reflect and put down their thoughts. This proved to be a very emotional session. On the social side, there were outdoor games, campfire, and watching the movie "Joseph King of Dreams".

A summary of the thoughts and reflections of the candidates:

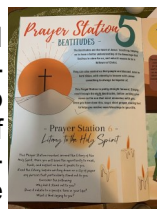
I really enjoyed this weekend, I found it as an opportunity to bond with the other candidates; Through games, working together in projects as a team, I feel closer to God and to the group; I enjoyed the liturgies and sessions, I found them very informative; It was fun and it provided a chance for



me to access a deeper understanding of my relationship with God; The retreat presented the teaching in a fun and engaging way; Good experience of the Mass in a nice church; Retreat was a great way of learning more about Jesus's teaching...to focus my mind on my faith.

MASS OF CONFIRMATION

Took place on Sunday 11th May at 11.30am. Bishop John Sherrington led the celebration. The Mass was well attended by parents, sponsors, families and parishioners. The candidates were very smartly dressed. They welcomed Bishop John and the congregation to the celebration. The Oil of Chrism and the Book of the Gospels were brought in procession to the altar. During Mass they took part in scripture readings, the bidding prayers, the offertory, and thanked Bishop John and the congregation and everyone who had helped them on their preparation journey. At the end of the Celebration they were presented with the certificates by Bishop Sherrington and a copy of "You Cat".





There was a very joyful party afterwards in the hall with refreshments and three beautiful cakes, two for the Confirmation candidates and a special farewell cake for Bishop John as he will be going to take up his new role as Archbishop of Liverpool. Bishop John mingled freely chatting with people, and had photos taken with the candidates and families. The hall was filled with sounds of congratulations and laughter.

In the last session on 13th May, after evaluation of the programme, we had pizzas from Domino and soft drinks for the candidates and parents. Fr. Anthony encouraged the candidates to participate in services of the parish. It is a nice round up of the programme.



Here is a summary of the thoughts and reflections of the candidates:

It made my faith in, and relationship with God stronger; I feel the Holy Spirit coming closer to me; My baptismal promises have been renewed; Means to be a witness of God and to spread/encourage others to get closer to Jesus; I have been given a second chance to correct my wrongs and to do good; I learnt more about the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit, the importance of prayer; I learnt about the saint whose name I have chosen; When I was anointed with the Oil of Chrism, I felt different and teared up.



We would like to wish our newly confirmed parishioners continued progress on their journey of faith.

Please keep the newly confirmed and the Catechists: Nancy Chu, Rose Yip, Holly Cook and Christopher Dunn in your prayers.



Compassionate Communication

Frank Arrojo

[Sudbury & Wembley Dementia Carers Support Groups]



Speaking at an event in Ealing last month reminded me how I needed to change the way I communicated with mum in the early years of her dementia. You may ask why?

Dementia can affect a person in many different ways. What is common is how – as in my mum's case – it affected her ability to think logically. In other words mum was no longer able to realise when she was possibly mistaken, correct her recollection of events, and she was unable to accept there was anything wrong with her.

The reason I needed to adapt is if mum couldn't control how her dementia was affecting her, I could somehow change my reaction to some of her behaviour. If I didn't do this it had the potential to lead to arguments, distrust, etc. But at the time I didn't actually realise I was doing exactly this, because my reason for changing was simply to get along with mum and for us to enjoy each other's company.

Nowadays when I meet a family carer – whether for the first time or not – I usually remind them of the need to get along with the person they love and support.

One such document I use when speaking with family carers is called "Compassionate Communication with the Memory Impaired". It explains in simple and easy to understand terms the "Do's" and "Don'ts" of compassionate communication. It's a document I wish I had when caring for mum, and here's an extract of that document.



Ooops! You must be kidding. You mean I can't reason???
Or argue??? Or remind???

Don't

- Don't reason
- Don't argue
- Don't confront
- Don't remind them they forget
- Don't question their memory
- Don't take it personally.

A little practice to keep your mind alert

call out the alphabet letters backwards one by one, slowly at first and then more quickly. Easy? Just try...it does help!

Do

Give short, one sentence explanations

Allow plenty of time for them to understand, then triple it

Repeat sentences exactly the same way

Avoid insistence. Try again later.

Agree with them or distract them to a different subject or activity

Accept the blame when something's wrong (even if it's fantasy)

Leave the room, if necessary, to avoid confrontations.

Respond to the feelings rather than the words

Be patient and cheerful and reassuring. Do go with the flow.

Practice 100% forgiveness.

Elevate your level of generosity and graciousness, however hard that may be.

I know from experience how hard this change is to put into practice, and you'll always make mistakes. But it provides a foundation from where to start, and in effect begin a "new" relationship with the person you support.

If you would like to find out more and support a loved one with dementia, look out for when the Dementia Carers Support Group meetings take place in the Church Newsletter.



Hmmm...accept the blame?
This is gonna be tough!



.... and they began to celebrate



The "Gift Bags" re-appeared in a display filled with eggs amongst the sheep [the symbolic act for the First Holy Communion children when they made their First Reconciliation – confession] around the Good Shepherd. The filled bags were a physical sign of the graces and gifts we had received from the Lord by our act of contrition and repentance. The "Memorial Book" was also part of the display, as we remembered our relatives and friends during the Easter Season.

The Popes of Avignon

Claudette Roby

Following the death of Pope Francis and the election of Pope Leo XIV, we have seen a lot of coverage from the Vatican, but



It was not unusual in medieval Europe for the papal court to reside outside of the persistently dangerous city of Rome - what happened here was that the constant bickering among various factions had made it impossible for the popes to reign in the Eternal City. Seven popes, all French, reigned in Avignon.



The archbishop of Bordeaux was the first elected. He took the name of Clement V. The French king Philip IV the Fair insisted that the pope reside in France and thus began the 70 years of 'Babylonian Captivity' in 1307. The city was the vassal of the Holy See - there were protests against this from all sides, the loudest was that of Petrarch, one of the greatest figures of the Italian Renaissance.



John XXII expanded papal power in the appointment of bishops. He was severe in condemnation and punishment of the Franciscan "Spirituals", while he himself was accused of heresy in the belief that the saints did not see God until the final judgment.

Benedict XII, a monk by creation. He insisted that the clergy live in clerical residence and monks in monasteries. He prohibited the flow of income from benefices. His Bull 'Benedictus Deus' decreed and reacted against John's belief about the saints. He began the construction of the papal palace.



Clement VI was a rich and powerful aristocrat. He judged the palace insufficient and unworthy. His architect built the 'New Palace' alongside in a fluid style. He bought the city of Avignon from Queen Joan of Napoli in 1348. He supported France against the English during the 100 Year War. His own personal life left much to be desired from the moral standpoint, as well as lavish in expenditure on pomp and ceremony.



Innocent VI was anxious to restore peace in the Italian territories of the Holy See. He promoted reform of the clergy and monasteries but because of his severity had Bridget of Sweden withdrawing her support and denounced him as a persecutor of Christ's flock. He hoped to return the papacy to Rome but died before he was able to do so.



Urban V. He retained his Benedictine habit and lifestyle, continued his predecessors reforms - he founded universities in Krakow and Vienna, and was a great patron of the arts. He left Avignon for Rome, returning just before his death.



Gregory XI. Perhaps influenced by the mystic St. Catherine of Siena, he realised it was necessary to return to Rome. The last of the Avignon popes, he devoted himself to the reform of religious orders.

Avignon earliest important sign of medieval prosperity and rebuilding is the ruined bridge - the Pont Saint-Benezat, also known as the Pont d'Avignon. The bridge was inspired by the world famous song 'Sur le pont d'Avignon' and now, after being rebuilt a number of times, only four arches remain after a violent storm.

The second great importance, from the 14th century, is the great Papal palace - one of the most imposing medieval monuments in existence. It became both an international capital and the focal point of Christendom.

Now, Avignon is a delightful, vivacious city - full of atmosphere, and at times, very hot!



On the whole, the presence of the popes in Avignon has been a blessing for the local people and the area. One blessing comes to mind - the growing and extension of the vineyards - everybody has heard of the famous Chateauneuf du Pape!

Papal Quiz:

1. Which pope is traditionally known as the Peacemaker?"

- a) Pope John XXIII; b) Pope Leo XIII; c) Pope Pius IX
d) Pope Francis

2. What is the name of the body that elects the pope?

- a) The Papal Council; b) The Sacred College of Cardinals;
c) The Vatican Commission; d) The Pontifical Academy

3. Which pope was the first non-European since Gregory III?

- a) Pope Benedict XVI; b) Pope John Paul II; c) Pope Francis; d) Pope Pius X

[Answers: page 27]

2025 Jubilee: Pilgrimage of Hope. Disability Focus Christine Davis



An invitation to join a group travelling to Rome arrived mid November and I thought 'why not?'

So on 26th April, the day of the funeral of Pope Francis, Simon and I joined a group of 47 at Heathrow. You may not know this but there is a network of friendship groups which focus on disability and it was wonderful to meet quite a few old friends at the airport.

We stayed in the town of Frascati (yes indeed, the wine producing area, there was a barrel of wine in the dining room from which to fill your glass) in accommodation for groups, complete with a chapel as well as plenty of outdoor space including an olive grove.

Rome was busy, very busy and there was a timetable for activities for the Jubilee Pilgrims amongst the increased number of visitors for the Pope's funeral and the upcoming Conclave as well as the regular tourists. We travelled to Rome by coach, through the rush hour, for our 10.00am slot, a prayerful walk along the route into St Peter's square and on to the basilica itself, entering through the Holy Door. This was actually a special moment, a moment of inner peace despite the throngs all around. Plenty of volunteers in *hi vis* vests worked hard to manage the flow and this was just early in the day. Well done to the volunteers.



Afternoon Mass was to be in St Peter's but had been relocated to St Paul's Outside the Walls. It was the mourning period for the late pope so St Peter's was redesignated for that purpose. At St Paul's was another Holy Door of Pilgrimage which we entered, again, prayerfully. Whoever planned the distribution of Holy Communion among the packed congregation should be congratulated, it all went very smoothly.



I cannot praise enough the culture of the Italians towards the disabled. At the tomb of Francis in St Mary Major Simon was whisked to the front of the long queue. What a privilege to be there so soon after the late pope's funeral!

A final thought! Keeping a group together in a busy place is hard, we have all seen tour guides holding umbrellas or sticks or pictures etc aloft to keep their groups together. I offered an umbrella (I wasn't expecting rain, it was to be used in bright sun as a shade) but it wasn't wanted. Later on, the leader, who happened to be a priest, explained that by using an umbrella he was asking his group to take responsibility for what was his mission as shepherd of the flock, not letting a single sheep get lost. I'm still pondering that image.

Annual Mass for Matrimony



On Saturday 17th May, the focus in our diocese was with over 430 couples, who gathered at Westminster Cathedral to renew their marriage commitment. When all the anniversaries were combined this equated to 14,8290 years of witness to the vocation of marriage. Bishop James Curry was the celebrant and provided an affirming and thoughtful homily.

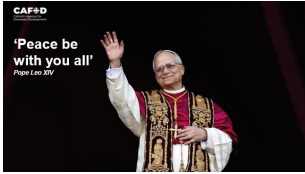
During the Mass, all the couples gathered had the opportunity to renew before God their commitment to live their marriage in holiness, praying that they might "remain faithful in our love for one another, that we may be true witnesses to the covenant you have made with mankind."

Congratulations to Agatha and Selwyn Ferrao who are celebrating 40 years of marriage, and to all those who are celebrating the anniversary of their marriage.



A Welcome to Pope Leo XIV

CAFOD Team



Robert Prevost was elected as Pope on 8th May 2025, chose the name Leo XIV and celebrated his inauguration Mass in St Peter's Square on 18th May 2025. Much has already been written about the issues he is likely to focus on and it is likely that these will include many of those which are core to CAFOD and its work.

Welcoming the appointment, Christine Allen, Director and Chief Executive of CAFOD said:

"Pope Leo's grassroots experience, especially his years as a missionary in Peru, combined with his role as a senior Vatican official, means he brings to the papacy not only extensive expertise but also deep compassion and an understanding of the issues the most marginalised communities are facing."

"The Pope occupies a unique position, because he will be both a global leader, capable of skilled diplomacy on the world stage, while acting as a shepherd, guiding his flock and providing the moral leadership the world so desperately needs."

"In his first week, Pope Leo has emphasised peace, unity and global solidarity. He called for an end to the war in Ukraine and a ceasefire in Gaza, offered the Vatican as a mediator in global conflicts, and urged journalists to serve truth and give voice to the voiceless."

"We've seen in Pope Leo's work and words his commitment to peace and bridging the gap between rich and poor, between the global north and the global south."

"Now, in this [Jubilee year of hope](#), he is calling on all of us to build bridges. *We have to face together the challenges of our time: to work for peace, to take urgent climate action, and to deliver debt relief for countries crippled by unfair debt payments.*"



"In a world marked by deep division and suffering, his call for unity, compassion and lasting peace is one we must all take to heart."

CAFOD
just one world

For more information

Click on the QR code and/or see

<https://cafod.org.uk/>

<https://cafod.org.uk/news/media/press-releases/cafod-statement-for-the-inauguration-of-pope-leo-xiv>

<https://cafod.org.uk/news/international-news/cafod-statement-election-of-pope-leo-xiv>

And for information about CAFOD's Global Debt Crisis Campaign [Jubilee 2025: The new Global Debt crisis and its solutions – CAFOD Shop](#)



Prayer for Pope Leo XIV

*Faithful God,
You guide us on the path of life
and your goodness is our constant companion.
Be with our new Shepherd, Pope Leo XIV,
in his service of the Church.
Fill him with the power of your Spirit,
the peace of your presence
and the compassion of Christ.
May he walk with you,
in wisdom and humility,
and lead us, together with all God's people,
to embody your love for the world.
Amen.*

First Holy Communion/Confirmation Fair 2025



The fair took place on Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th in the Parish Hall. A huge display of Cards, Prayer books, Confirmation and Communion Cards, Bibles, Medals and other gifts were on display.

Thank you to all who came and supported the Fair. A special word of thanks to all who helped set up the Fair and the removal of the items back to the Repository afterwards.



Monthly Values

We have continued to introduce a monthly value and to send home a value sheet with a shared family task. Over the spring term we have reflected on the following values in assembly and in class and home focused activities: January - Resilience; February – Loyalty; March - Compassion; April – Reverence.

Whole School and Year Group Masses

This term children in KS2 have been having Masses celebrated in their classrooms with their families and staff. This is a really special opportunity for Mass, and we are very grateful to Father Joseph, Father Tebin and Father Jose for coming to celebrate class Masses with our children and families.

Class assemblies

Five classes have had their class assemblies this term: Saint Joan of Arc and Saint Teresa; Saint Maximilian Kolbe and Saint George; and Saint John Paul.



Ash Wednesday



Father Jose and Father Tebin led liturgies in both schools on Ash Wednesday. The children were encouraged to try extra hard at something across Lent. During assembly some of their suggestions were to give up sweets or crisps or video games or to help more at home.

Stewardship of God's World

The School Council's focus this term has been on recycling. They invited us to all take part in the Great Big School Clean which ran from the 21st March until the 6th April. They encouraged our whole school community to reduce, reuse and recycle. They completed litter picking each week and worked hard to ensure that we look after God's World by caring for all of our resources and creation.

Prayer Leaders Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Prayer Leaders asked pupils to bring in one tinned item or dried food such as rice or pasta or something from Brent Foodbank's shopping list on our School Mission Day which was on Saint Joseph's Feast Day. This supports our Caritas value of option for the poor and vulnerable.



Catholic Life and School Mission Day- Saint Joseph's Day



We had a wonderful Mission Day on March 19th. The children went on a pilgrimage to the Prayer Room and hung their leaves of hope on our Hope Tree linked to our Jubilee theme of 'Pilgrims of Hope'. They also painted a portrait of their class saint with symbols on to represent their values and characteristics. Children also thought about and created symbols of Saint Joseph. In the afternoon we went to a special Feast Day Mass where Father Tebin celebrated Mass and reminded us all about Saint Joseph being the

Protector of the Church. Many thanks to Father Joseph for sending cakes for all of the children.

Reconciliation

Children in Year 4, 5 and 6 received the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Saint Joseph's Church as part of their preparation during Lent.



Stations of the Cross

All classes took the opportunity to visit our outdoor Stations of the Cross in our Prayer Garden. This gave them an opportunity for prayer and reflection.

Easter Liturgy

Year 5 led a wonderful Easter Liturgy in the final week of the term. It was a very moving and reverent re-telling of the Easter story through the Stations of the Cross. They reminded us of how our day to day actions link to the Easter story and how our actions can and should make a difference. Thank you to the pupils and staff for working so hard to share this with the pupils and wider school community.



Easter Hat Parade

The children enjoyed a wonderful Easter hat parade at the end of term. As always, their creativity was amazing.

Stewardship of God's Earth School Council Clothing Collection

The School Council's focus last term was on recycling. At the start of the summer term, they collected items of clothing to donate to support Great Ormond Street.



GREAT ORMOND STREET
HOSPITAL CHARITY

If you are interested in your child joining Saint Joseph's in Wembley, please contact the School Office to get further information or to book a tour of the school.

After a great Autumn Term where we maintained our outstanding OFSTED status the pace has not slowed down and we have been very busy.



We celebrated the **season of Easter with our Y3 assembly and our Chaplain's Stations of the Cross** which were both very spiritual and special events preparing us perfectly for the Easter season. Our Pupil Chaplains perform a vital role for us as they lead us with our prayer life and are wonderful role models for the other children in the school. Our

Y3 children are in the process of making their **First Holy Communions** and we will celebrate them all with a thanksgiving Mass at school on 25th June when you will be welcome to join us.

We have begun the **Jubilee Year with our Pilgrims of Hope focus** working closely with the other Catholic Schools in Harrow to produce our own logo that has been blessed and we processed through the streets of Harrow to celebrate being pilgrims together after Mass at St Joseph's Church in Wealdstone. It is a lovely way to join together and celebrate the strengths of our Catholic offer.



We have also joined **HCPT on their annual pilgrimage to Lourdes at Easter**. We took 10 children from our school and 3 members of staff and we joined thousands of others on the pilgrimage as we celebrated the life of St Bernadette and Our Lady of Lourdes. We have prayed for all of the community of St. Erconwald's at the Grotto.

This journey was followed by **our annual trip to Madrid**. We took 16 children to our link school in Madrid (Colegio Miramadrid) and they stayed in pairs with host families from the school who took great care of them and provided them with the experiences of a lifetime. We love our international travel and it has great benefits for our children, giving them first hand experience of a different culture and introducing them to the wide world out there for them to explore in the years to come. We want to create the leaders of the future and this is a great start for them!



We have a strong focus on making our **children fit and healthy for life**. We have been working with our health charter for a year now and it is well established.

Our main focus this year was to make our school a **personal device free zone**, which means that we do not allow our children to bring in smart phones or watches into schools. We have introduced this to all schools in Harrow and **our Borough will soon be a smartphone free zone** by the end of this academic year. If you have young children or grandchildren then you really should consider joining the national push to keep our children away from such devices until at least 12 or 14 years old. You can support this by reading the information on www.smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk and signing up if you so wish. Feedback here is very positive and parents say that the peer pressure element for them and their child has been removed and their children are far healthier.

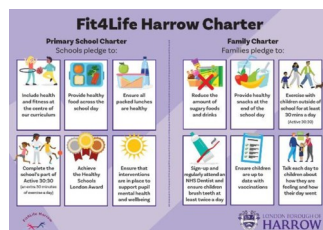


On Friday 5th June we held our **annual Grandparent's Day**. This is one of the highlights of our school calendar. We had 2 assemblies; one for our Infant children and their families at 1.15pm and a second for the Junior families at 2.15pm. Grandparents were welcomed into our classrooms and relaxed with tea/coffee and cakes.

The end of this term is always very busy with events such as Sportsday, St. Bernadette's Got Talent, our Y6 Show (The Lion King) and our end of term assemblies to name just a few.

We will be holding our own version of **the Lion King on Tuesday 8th and Wednesday 9th July at 6.00pm**. These are always of a very high quality and you are welcome to come along and join in the fun. Let us know if you are coming and we will reserve tickets for you. All contact information and dates are available on our website; www.st-bernadette.co.uk

I wish you all a very happy summer holiday when they do come and hopefully I will meet some parishioners from St. Erconwald's at some of our events. Take care.



Farewell and God Bless

With sadness we say goodbye to the Donetti family, Philip, Penny and Jonathan, as they move on to pastures new. They were always to be relied upon in a crisis. Philip has lived in the Parish all his life and has been an active member undertaking various roles over the years, whilst on the Finance Committee, Philip was tasked with overseeing the replacement of the old Church carpet to the current red one, fundraising by way of a Money Barometer. Philip also helped with the banking and in other supportive roles. Penny has been in the Parish for over 32 years. She has been a huge support to this Parish, 28 years as a volunteer, first with Sunday School, Church Cleaning (setting up the rota for this) First Holy Communion Preparation, Floral Altar Displays, Banking, Gift Aid, Preparation of Accounts and End of Year End Returns and more besides. For the past 2 ½ years, Penny has been employed by Westminster, as is the norm now, all Diocesan Bookkeepers are now on the payroll.

It is with much regret we see the Donetti family go, but we express our deep gratitude for all they have given to the Parish and their support to myself, Fr. Alan Ashton RIP and Fr. Bernard Crowe RIP. We wish them health, happiness, best wishes and prayers as they move to their new home. We hope like so many others who have moved over the years, that they manage to visit from time to time.



Unfortunately, we also have to say farewell and thank you to the Szumilo family, Monika, Niko, Aurelia and Emilia joined us just before the Pandemic and although with us a relatively short time, they have been of enormous help and support to the Parish. Say the name Monika and you think of music and guitar playing. We thank Monica for setting up the Choir, for her beautiful singing at Easter in particular and for leaving us with her recorded voice to lead us in our sung prayers of the Mass. It was a surprise to the congregation the first

time we heard her voice, as everyone was trying to see where Monika was but of course she wasn't there in person. Niko has also contributed to the music as without his help minding their daughters and carrying the guitar Monika would not have been as free to lead the choir. Niko also served on the Parish Council. We will be very sad to see you go but we understand the call of home and family back in Poland. Take our prayers, gratitude and best wishes with you. Do call and visit if you are ever back in England.

The choir needs new singers/musicians to continue Monica's good work. Please speak to a choir member.

Alternative Chelsea Flower Show

Hazel Wilson



Every year when the Chelsea Flower Show is on some of the shops, cafes and hotels in the area put on an amazing (free) display of flowers outside or inside their premises. A theme is chosen yearly and this year's theme is Flowers of Fashion. I Love to visit to admire the incredible vibrant colour combinations which are a beautiful sight to behold. A map showing where these fabulous creations are, can be obtained from a stall in Sloane Square. So, armed with the map I wandered around and could not resist taking photographs along with the many other enthusiastic members of the public. When my aching feet could take no more, I decided to have a break at one of the many cafes and restaurants available. Had an enjoyable sunny morning and look forward to next year.



Papal Quiz: 1 a; 2 b; 3 c

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Live-streaming: <https://www.churchservices.tv/wembley3>

MAKING A DONATION VIA OUR WEBSITE

<https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/wembleyprestonroad/donate/>

Via Dona [the company who supply our card readers].

<https://portal.mydona.com/assets/webPay/index.php?cid=268>

Donations, Mass Intentions and Repository payments can also be made via
new card readers in Church

[If you are a tax payer, please Gift Aid your donation]

This Parish is part of the Westminster Roman Catholic Diocese Trustee
Charity No. 233699

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SUNDAY MASSES

Saturday Vigil: 5.30pm; Sunday: 10.00am and 11.30am

WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday: 9.30am.

CONFESSIONS: Saturday 4.30 - 5.00pm

HOLY HOUR AND BENEDICTION: Wednesday 10.00-11.00am