

FEAST of FUN DAY

Sunday, 14th June

after the 11.00 Mass

Fun activities for all the family

BARBECUE



Tickets available soon

FR FERAS' WELCOME SPEECH TO THE YOUTH GROUP PILGRIMAGE

Your Excellency Bishop Michel Evans and Father Paul Maddison and the young people coming from England, in the name of my parishioners I welcome you in your home, in your beloved village Aboud. As I heard from Father Paul, it is your wish to spend more time with the people of Aboud. We are celebrating the Mass to ask for peace in the Holy Land and in our life, in the hearts and in our homes, " We are holding the cross with joy".

Today I'm asking you to pray for this intention: To realize the dream of Aboud Christian Community: to maintain their presence in the Holy Land especially in Aboud, where we are listening sometimes to some rumours that this country is not any more ours, or that we have to leave, but no! We have to continue to strengthen their hope and their faith by our presence in the parishes, by visiting the living stones where we can help them to know: we are not alone.

The three priorities of our Patriarch Foaud Twal are that we have to be present – as a living witness, we have to pray, we have to be as pilgrims in the Holy Land: so we can testify of our faith. To live with peace in our homes, to live with dignity as human beings in our land, to keep smiling in order to show that we are happy to live

Our Lady Mother of Sorrows, is the name of the Church, but we are sure that she is the one who is giving us happiness in our daily life.

Bishop Michael, by your visit and your constant support we can see that you put Aboud in your heart not just because you have to do so:

I'm sure that you put Aboud and its people in your heart because you are Bishop, you are looking for justice and peace and love. You are the good shepherd. And also Aboud puts you in each heart of its homes, be sure of our prayers, and please remember us all in yours too.

Father Paul, many times we were laughing, joking, but we all know that we are fighting for justice to be realized in our parishes. We are the defence force in the field to testify to the truth, we are in the front line with all the danger that entails, but you support us to hold the cross with joy and hope.

What we are asking from God today: to never lose hope!

God bless you all and you are the most welcome in Aboud.

Fr Feras

Received from a visitor:

Hello Father,

My wife and I attended Mass on Saturday, 21 March. We were visiting St Ives from Stockbridge, GA. I wanted to write to you and tell you how much we enjoyed your Mass and your Church in St. Ives. We liked the way you conducted the Mass, and your Homily. You have a very nice Church and parish community, and we felt welcome.

Incidentally, I lived in St Ives (14 Oak Tree Close) as a teenager age 13-15, during the period 1968-1971. My father was stationed at RAF Alconbury in the US Air Force. My family attended Mass on the base during that time. We have visited England many times since then, I am glad we found your very nice church in St Ives on this visit.

Thank you for making our visit very meaningful. We hope to visit England again in the near future.

Warmest wishes.

"walked with" those who are preparing to be received into full Communion with the Catholic Church. This usually takes place during the Easter Vigil Service.

As a parish we have had a steady stream of enquirers wishing to know more about our Faith and deciding to become Catholics since 2002 when we started to implement the process of the Rite. At this year's service two young women will receive the Sacraments of Initiation.

A recent article in The Tablet (7th March 2009) gives encouraging news of the success of the Rite.

"Provisional figures for joining the RC Church in England and Wales at Easter this year show striking evidence of growth and vitality. Westminster Diocese, being the largest, is in the lead with 850 individuals now finishing the RCIA including catechumens (those not previously baptised) and candidates (being received into full communion from other denominations)."

This is an increase of 200 over last year. But the trend is national with an overall increase of 20% when the final figures are counted.

The principal evangelists for the Catholic faith, it appears, are ordinary Catholic people who have quietly attracted others to enquire "what is the reason for the faith that is within them?" to adapt St Peter.

All the followers of Christ have the obligation of spreading the faith according to their abilities so we have the duty to talk about our faith and to encourage others to seek after the truth, but also to welcome and accompany our new parishioners "on the journey".

Elizabeth Barker
RE Coordinator.



If you read your newsletter carefully each week, no doubt you have wondered what happens on Tuesdays from September to May when you see the insert – 19.30 RCIA in Presbytery.

What do these initials RCIA mean?

Roman Catholics In Anger or maybe you are a bit more positive and think - *Roman Catholics In Action*.

Both seem plausible but the correct meaning of RCIA is Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. RCIA is often called "A Journey in Faith". This phrase derives from the Second Vatican Council which described the process of initiating adults as a "spiritual journey". The spiritual journey envisaged by the RCIA is one "that varies according to the many forms of God's grace, the free cooperation of the individuals, the action of the Church and the circumstances of time and place; a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful.

Who is RCIA for?

The Rite is the process to be followed in the sacramental initiation of adults and is also adaptable for the formation of baptised adults from other Christian denominations. It is also a necessary process for baptised adult Catholics who are preparing for Confirmation and/or Eucharist.

However, the whole Christian community has a responsibility to welcome those who are on a journey to initiation/reception and in this parish a number of parishioners have attended the course and

LOVE YOURSELF

Scripture tells us that you should 'love your neighbour as yourself.' St Mark and St Matthew attribute these words directly to Christ; St Luke has them said by a lawyer and confirmed by Christ. St Paul emphasises the rule in his letter to the Romans.

What intrigues me about this admonition is the real meaning of the last two words, 'as yourself.' We are told to love ourselves and offer that same love to our neighbour, but nowhere else in Scripture is this concept of self-love explained more fully, or even mentioned. There are many references to the sin of pride, the dangers of conceited self regard and the need for humility, and these all seem to condemn the idea of 'loving yourself.' There must therefore surely be at least two interpretations of this small but crucially important phrase. The sinful interpretation is described in detail and condemned clearly enough, but the idea that God requires you to love yourself is never mentioned except in this single context of providing a pattern for neighbourly behaviour. So, what does it mean, to 'love yourself' in a way that does not lead you into the trap of pride?

As always one great problem is the loose way we use the word 'love' which has come to cover everything from the sublime to the ridiculous. I find that I have to try and work out what is actually meant in any particular situation, carefully avoiding the word 'love' until I have my definitions clear. Perhaps a sensible place to start is to wonder what we mean by 'yourself.'

'Yourself' has three components. The most important is of course your spirit, the presence of Christ within you. Then there is your mind, an overall concept embracing your personality, your intelligence, your talents, your capacity for thought and reason. Finally there is your body, the physical structure in which the spirit and the mind can move and function while you are alive on earth. However much science learns to analyse, manipulate and even replicate some part of these elements, they remain the gift of God about which in truth we understand only a very small part. We will probably never

understand more than a fraction of the spiritual, mental and physical complexities of 'ourselves'; we can only accept God's gift and wonder at it. Given such a gift we should be profoundly grateful for it, but we should also take great care of it, treasuring it, marvelling at the beauty of it all.

I like the idea of 'treasuring' oneself as a useful way of avoiding the ambivalence of the word 'love'. God commands us to treasure ourselves as His most precious gift and do everything possible to defend and protect ourselves, avoiding anything which might damage soul, mind or body. If we treasured ourselves we could not abuse ourselves with such things as drugs, excessive alcohol or a farmyard approach to sexuality. We could then more easily adopt the same attitude towards other people, treating them as something precious, avoiding anything which might harm them - 'treasuring' them, as we 'treasure' ourselves.

If this was the whole story there would be no need for the warnings about pride, selfishness and all the other things which cause people to treat themselves and their neighbours badly. So, what is the problem? I suggest the answer is in the idea of comparison.

If we walked this earth alone we would accept 'ourselves' as something given, like the sun and the sea. But since there are other people we are tempted to look at them and make comparisons. Comparisons generate models - ideas about perfection and standards to be achieved. Human nature being what it is, a huge industry develops, setting standards, inventing models, and the whole structure provides a powerful base from which to make money and exercise power. Our view of our bodies is particularly vulnerable to this distortion; we may mock the African lady, her neck extended by so many brass rings, but her sophisticated Western sister turns to the cosmetic surgeon, the dietician and the exercise guru for exactly the same reasons. We forget that the model, the so-called ideal, is an entirely false and meaningless human fabrication which arrogantly denies the perfection of God's creation and the uniqueness of all His creatures. By yearning to conform to a human model we are in effect criticising God for His imperfections, and we strive for false values, often to the detriment of our health and above all of our self-esteem.

me with his music. I felt a peace come over me. I turned round and dropped the note, somewhat begrudgingly into the hat, as I realised I now wouldn't be able to buy the shoes I wanted. The man stopped playing and looked up at me with a big smile. "Thank you sir" he said. "God bless you." His words stuck with me. How could God bless me and help me I wondered? As I was already in the shopping centre, I decided I would stay and look around. I purposefully avoided, however, going past the shoe shop. Something seemed to draw me back there, however, and out of curiosity I decided to go and see if the shoes were still there. And they were - still on the same shelf - with their price tag of £19.95. I checked, hoping that they might be reduced, but they weren't. I began to walk out again, a bit disappointed because inwardly I suppose I had been hoping for some sort of miracle. Then the inner voice came back. None of this made any logical sense but in hindsight I realise this was the Holy Spirit, who was urging me to go up and ask the cashier to do a price check on them!

She looked at me a bit strangely, as I asked, as the price label was very obvious, but she politely obliged. As she scanned the shoes the expression on her face changed. "This must be your lucky day sir... these shoes have been reduced to £9.95!" I could hardly believe it and was filled with an incredible joy that I couldn't contain as I realised God's love and mercy to me. It was a lesson too, teaching me to trust God is in all things and that charity to others is always important even when you are in need yourself.

As we go into difficult times and the recession hits, we need to remember the important principle Jesus teaches us that "It is in giving that we receive" and to trust in God for our needs not our bank balances.

First appeared in Good News magazine and reprinted with their permission.

I am a subscriber to this bi-monthly magazine, which has many interesting articles as the one you have just read, but it is also a great source of the teachings of the Catholic Church. More information from the website: www.ccr.org.uk or from me, Elizabeth Barker 01480 383608.

GOD PROVIDES IN TIME OF NEED



I remember the first time I experienced God's providence in a powerful way was in the mid 1990s. I had had a well paid job, but was now unemployed and surviving on unemployment benefit. Things were very difficult and my debts were mounting. I had always believed that the miracles in the Bible really happened, but somehow I was not convinced that they could apply to my life and my circumstances.

It was spring and my shoes had large holes in the soles. I would get embarrassed when I sat down in case people saw these and when it rained my socks would get wet. It was a really hard and challenging time for me. I was desperate to buy some new shoes. I had seen some reasonably priced ones in a local shoe shop and was determined that when my benefit payment arrived I would buy these.

The day arrived and I went to Milton Keynes shopping centre. I still remember the weather that day. It was dry with a clear blue sky and I was feeling better than I had done for a while. As I walked along the road I came across a busker playing the clarinet. I stood there for maybe five or ten minutes. As I listened I forgot my poverty as the beautiful soothing music wafted in the air.

Then, remembering my purpose to buy my much needed shoes, I began to walk away. As I did so a little voice, which felt like God inside me say, "Spiro, he gave you what he had and brought you peace but you didn't give him anything in return." I stopped and searched my pockets for some change, but the only money I had on me were the two £10 notes I needed to buy my shoes.

I didn't know what to do. I felt a struggle going on within me. I wanted to be generous, but I had so little. Then the thought came to me that I should give him one of the £10 notes. It seemed crazy but also somehow fitting when I thought of the peace that he had given

Those who come near to the model become vain and proud, as though they had personally achieved something wonderful. Those who have no chance of approaching this false perfection can fall prey to jealousy, self-loathing, a despairing sense of inferiority. A similar trap is laid in the area of the mind, where yearnings and aspirations for higher things can be elbowed aside by a demand for recognition, fame or notoriety.

Great evils spring from this arrogant idea of comparing God's gifts and making a human judgement of their quality. The worst effect of the false world of comparison is that it interferes with our ability to regard ourselves as God would wish us to. If we are lured into feeling dissatisfied with the appearance of our bodies or the limitations of our minds we begin not to value them. They become a liability, not a treasure. Far from being grateful to God for His gifts we speak disparagingly of them and long to improve them. And if we are led to feel pleased merely because some element of ourselves conforms to the worldly model, our pride and our vanity make us think that we are better than our neighbour. Instead of treasuring him, we despise or pity him.

Here then are the two meanings of the commandment to 'love yourself.' What the world seeks to have us do is to make comparisons between our gifts and those given to other people, so that God's values are set aside in favour of our own, and the way is open to vanity, pride, jealousy and despair. What God requires is that we should treasure His intensely personal gifts of soul, mind and body, unique to each one of us, be deeply grateful for these gifts, and defend them against evil. It is for us, as creatures of free will, to decide which path to take.

John Bishop

BAPTISM

If you wish your child to be baptised, the parish runs a baptism preparation course and details can be obtained from the parish office. You may join the course before your baby is born.

Do you enjoy...

Meeting new people? Drinking coffee or tea? Helping with shopping?

Are you friendly, supportive, a good listener?

You can do all the above and help people in your local community at the same time.

If you have a couple of hours to spare a week, why not volunteer?

We are a registered charity providing volunteer support to people with life-limiting and progressive illnesses. The scheme provides practical, social and emotional support to individuals in their own homes.

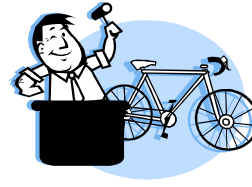
Last year, 2008, we helped a total of 97 Clients with a range of tasks such as

- sitting with client
- taking children to the park
- preparing lunches
- referring on to other support agencies such as Crossroads and Citizens Advice Bureau
- walking the dog
- taking the client shopping

Hospice at Home urgently requires male and female volunteers within your area.

For further information on how you can help, please contact Beatrice on 01954 230205.

Margaret Sayers



The Holy Land Group
announces a

SPRING AUCTION

Saturday 9th May
at 8pm

Free Admission!

Everything welcome - except
clothes and shoes -
from jewellery to jigsaws, bottles to
books, china to cakes.

'Promises' also welcome
e.g. babysitting, shopping, car
cleaning etc

Squero San Trovaso where craftsmen have built and repaired gondolas for over five hundred years. But who was San Trovaso? This is year thirty-one and time to find out.

The church was built in 1028 and rebuilt in the Palladian style after a fire in 1584, but is not particularly distinguished. In a city where there are more churches than there are bridges fame can be elusive, and particularly in the Dorsoduro which is dominated by Longhena's masterpiece, the huge church of Santa Maria della Salute. Nonetheless San Trovaso has its share of treasures, including Giambono's 'St Chrysogonus', and three paintings by Tintoretto. His 'Last Supper' is a fascinating exercise in the use of perspective, newly discovered at the time, its energy and detail providing a powerful contrast to the calm restraint of the more famous version in Milan. In the church's Capella Clara are three remarkable marble reliefs probably carved in 1470, showing angelic musicians and in the centre the instruments of the Passion. The chapel is dedicated to a French princess and was restored nearly twenty years ago by the French Committee for Saving Venice. First impressions of the interior are rather gloomy; maybe the January light does not do it justice. All very interesting, but who was St Trovaso?

It seems there was no such person as St Trovaso. The name is derived from the names of two Saints, Gervase and Protase, and the Church is dedicated to them, along with the Rio, the bridge, the Taverna, the Ristorante and the Squero. They were the twin sons of Vitalis, a Roman soldier, and his wife Valeria. The whole family was martyred in Milan during the Roman persecution, probably under the rule of Nero. Perhaps Milan is the place to find out more, but if you should visit Venice, among all its splendours spare a thought for those unknown to many Venetians, Saints Gervase and Protase, the composite San Trovaso.

Barbara Bishop

A TRAVELLER'S TALE



While living overseas I have had the privilege of attending Mass in many different countries and would like to share a few of my experiences with you.

During our five years in Tanzania, my children and I usually went to a large modern church in Dar es Salaam where there was a Mass in English on Sundays, but sometimes we went to Mass in the small village church in Kawe, which was closer to our home. Here the Mass was entirely in the local language, Kiswahili. There was no organ but the hymns were sung in wonderful close harmony to the accompaniment of African drums. It was an amazing and magical sound!

Many years later my husband and I spent a few months living in Nairobi, Kenya, and the Masses I attended there were also very special; I remember the congregation singing with great enthusiasm, moving and swaying to the rhythm of the music. During the Mass members of the congregation formed a procession to bring the lectionary to the altar for the readings, and for the offertory, and they didn't simply walk down the aisle - they moved with the rhythm of the music - almost a dance down the aisle as everyone sang. On one memorable occasion the procession was led with great dignity by a Maasai youth in purple robes, bead jewellery and carrying a spear. He danced to the altar and then stood to attention next to the priest as he read the gospel - an unforgettable sight!

More recently, I have been going to Mass regularly in a small town in Italy. Here I have appreciated the enthusiasm with which so many feast days, both large and small, are celebrated with processions, fireworks, flags and lights decorating the town - as well as with the more spiritual novenas and special Masses. I loved the Holy Week and Easter services - from the solemn, silent procession through the streets on Good Friday to the joyous procession on Easter Sunday

when crowds process from the main Church, the Chiesa Madre, to return their own saint's statue back to their own parish churches. During the Easter Vigil service I became aware of a growing sense of anticipation among the packed congregation, when suddenly the enormous curtain which had been suspended above the main altar, across the sanctuary, dropped to the floor, to reveal a large statue of the risen Christ. Loud and prolonged cheering erupted from everyone in this large church, bringing a great and very real sense of joy! At the end of the service the statue was carried in procession down the aisle and out into the piazza, where I could hear an enormous cheer and clapping from the crowds as they too had sight of the Risen Christ. As I came out of Church the town band was playing and there were fireworks, and I decided I had never experienced such an exuberant celebration of the Resurrection!

I am sure these experiences enrich and invigorate my faith. I am aware and appreciate that I am privileged to have been able to participate in the Mass in different countries with different cultures and languages; it is a wonderful paradox that the Mass can be at the same time so comfortably familiar, but also so inspiringly different.

Angela Middleditch

GETTING MARRIED?

It is a requirement of Diocesan Law that couples give at least six months' notice of their intention to marry. In order to facilitate the adequate preparation of couples for marriage, it is very useful if notice can be given one year in advance.

SAN TROVASO - WHO HE?



Driving along the causeway to the city of Venice for the first time can be a slight anti-climax. A long bare road with water either side, the straight criss-cross metal of port machinery in the distance and the regular thick black wooden piles driven into the water are unexpected. It is no oil painting. Cars are left at the Tronchetto, a large car park

at the edge of the city, and from there a water taxi will speed across the lagoon and there she is - La Serenissima. St Mark's Square, the Doge's Palace, the Bridge of Sighs - Canaletto did not lie. After thirty years when one is older and a little wiser the excitement is the same but the method of approach is different. A vaporetto full of Venetians chugs along the Grand Canal and just before it docks at the Accademia bridge the Rio San Trovaso slices through the Dorsoduro district. Leave the vaporetto here, cross in front of the Accademia art gallery, turn into a short narrow alley past the side of the Taverna San Trovaso and there is the Rio San Trovaso. A few more steps, across the San Trovaso bridge, and turn right for the gates of the Villa Maravegie, and this is my home for two weeks every January. Cases left in the familiar room are unpacked until the first walk is taken down the Rio. This means walking back past the bridge, the Taverna, and the Ristorante San Trovaso, all on the left side of the canal. On the right is the Church of San Trovaso, its south face fronted by a small piazza, and its north side looking across a grassy space to the waters of the Rio. The two facades are identical, providing separate entries for the two opposing factions in the area, the Nicolotti and the Castellani. For centuries the families have been at war, violently until the end of the 19th century, but now expressed only in sporting contests, particularly in the regattas. At the end of the Rio is the