

A representative from the Steering Group Committee attends the bi-annual Diocesan Council of Laity meetings in Norwich, to participate in the pastoral planning of the Diocese with Bishop Michael and parish representatives from across East Anglia.

The next meeting of the of the Diocesan Council of Laity will be held on Saturday, 10th May and the second meeting for 2008 will be held on 8th November.

A Council of Laity group for the Cambridge Deanery was established in January and will meet four times a year in St Ives.

Ellen Kemp
Chairman, Parish Steering Group

HOLY WEEK 2008

Holy Monday – 17th March

10.00 Holy Mass
 19.30 Parish Reconciliation Service

Holy Tuesday – 18th March

19.00 Holy Mass

Spy Wednesday – 19th March

10.00 Holy Mass
 10.30 Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
 19.30 Chrism Mass – St John's Cathedral, Norwich

Maundy Thursday – 20th March

19.30 Mass of the Lord's Supper
 Followed by procession to the Altar of Repose.
 Watching until midnight.

Good Friday – 21st March

11.30 Ecumenical Procession of Witness starting at "Crossways" Church, Ramsey Road
 15.00 Liturgy of the Passion
 19.30 Stations of the Cross

Holy Saturday – 22nd March

21.00 Vigil Mass of Easter

Easter Day – 23rd March

08.00 Holy Mass
 11.00 Holy Mass

Letter from Aboud

Dear Friends

Thank you for your Christmas prayers and greetings; we remembered you and all your loved ones in our prayers here over the festive season. On the 1st January we started our New Year with a Mass at midnight where we prayed that 2008 would bring us all, both you and us, many blessings.

The Confirmation group from St Ives have very kindly invited me and some of the young people from here to come to your parish in the summer to celebrate with you and to enjoy the English countryside. We too are welcoming a group from St Ives here to celebrate the Mass with us on Sunday 9th March; something we are all looking forward to.

The children you sponsor in the school are all doing well, growing fast and learning lots of subjects, not least English, which is a favourite. They join me in sending best wishes and thanks to all of you for your continued support.

The Holy Land Committee from St Ives sent some more money for us to renovate several more houses in the village. Putting in a nice bathroom and kitchen, or double glazing and heating – people forget that it gets very cold here in the winter – makes such a difference for our more elderly residents. To know that such wonderful work is being done through your generosity is a real sign of the links that exist between us.

The problems still cause us to have difficulty moving from place to place, accessing our lands and visiting family and friends; we pray and hope that one day peace will come. In our suffering though, we remember all of you and continue to thank God for the blessing you are to us. We can carry the cross with joy thanks to your prayers, help and support.

Please know that the parish of St Ives has a very special place in our prayers and its people have a very special place in our hearts. Hoping that Lent and Easter bring you much joy.

Fr Firas Aridah
Parish Priest – Our Lady of Sorrows – Aboud, Palestine

Solidarity? Isn't That A Trade Union In Gdansk?

"Man... cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self." – Gadium et Spes, John Paul II

Each week in the parish newsletter, I read the latest appeal: come to the Annual General Meeting, submit a church door design, submit an article for the parish magazine, join the Society of St Vincent de Paul, become an extraordinary Eucharistic Minister or Lector...

And each week I stop to think, "Should I do that?"

Usually I think about it for a moment, then set it aside and forget about it until the following week. Yet, maybe this momentary decision to participate or not participate is more significant than it seems. Pope John Paul II offers one framework through which to examine this choice more closely.

Before he became pontiff, Pope John Paul II was Karol Wojtyla, a noted personalist philosopher. One of the ideas he developed was a Theory of Participation. This theory forms one of the overarching themes of his entire pontificate: understanding the dignity of the human person.

In "Person and Act", Wojtyla identifies 'alienation' as the greatest dilemma of mankind. Growing up in Poland during World War II, he witnessed the realities of alienation under Nazism and Communism: the alienation of the Jews in the Polish ghettos, the alienation of Catholic priests who were imprisoned and murdered, the alienation of average Poles working in labour camps and being treated as subhuman. But he understood that alienation exists in more mundane ways: a husband and wife who no longer speak with courtesy towards one another, a child singled out by his peers for being different, the loneliness of an ageing person.

According to Wojtyla's Theory of Participation, participation is the antithesis of alienation. There are four possible ways each of us chooses

Parish Steering Group

The committee of the Parish Steering Group comprises the parish priest, two representatives from each of the three Sunday Masses (Saturday 5 pm/Sunday 8 am and Sunday 11 am), two members of the Youth Group and the Chairman of the Parish Finance and Buildings Committee.

The role of the Steering Group is outlined in the Constitution - available on the parish website www.sacredheart-stives.org; and the website also has a photo board of committee members should you wish to contact one of them with a query or concern. The photo board is also on display in the south porch.

Minutes of the Steering Group meetings are available in the south porch and on the website.

The Steering Group meets bi-monthly (next meeting 28th April) and holds two open meetings each year (spring/autumn). The next open meeting, open to all parishioners, will be held on Sunday, 18th May at 4 pm in the Parish Hall.

Issues addressed by the committee in recent months have included:

- Provision of music at 11 am Mass, especially an organist. Currently a music scholar kindly provides this service for the church. However, he is not a parishioner and will be leaving the district in the autumn to start university.
- Revised parish boundary.
- Provision of weekly Eucharistic Services (10 am Thursdays).
- Preparation of parish leaflet to be distributed to new housing developments in the area.
- Keeping abreast of the development timetable for the new town of Northstowe (9,500 new houses to be built near Oakington and Longstanton) which will be incorporated into the parish boundary in due course.

policy is framed to attend to both imperatives, not just the one. Those who train teachers could be required to balance their efforts. Teachers could be encouraged to train the citizen as well as the mind, without fear of censure and reprisals from the fringes of the human rights lobby. Good parents could be encouraged to join with good teachers to ensure that the ships are as beautiful as the cargoes they carry, and religious leaders, those in charge of youth organisations, and the many other sources of well-intentioned support could be brought together in a co-ordinated way to make the profound social changes which we so desperately need.

Policy change at national level is a desperately slow and uncertain business. Local exemplary action can be more immediately effective. How wonderful it would be if we could come together in St Ives - teachers, parents, youth leaders - and find a way to influence the situation in our own community, to make a difference, and perhaps to provide an example for others to follow. Wonderful - assuming, of course, that anyone agrees with me.

John Bishop

Spring Concert
by "Tapestry"
Sunday, 20th April at 3 pm at The Church of the Sacred Heart, Needingworth Road, St Ives
in aid of projects in the Holy Land
Tickets £5 including tea and cakes
Tickets on sale after most weekend Masses and from Parish Office:
Tel 01480 462192 .



to participate in the life of society. We can respond with: conformism, non-involvement, opposition or solidarity.

“Conformism” means going with the flow, but it denies us the opportunity to make a genuine contribution of our own ideas or efforts toward the shared good of our community. Even if the common good is achieved, we cannot appreciate the value of our own work. We may superficially submit ourselves to the pressures of others, but we are effectively withdrawing from the community.

“Non-involvement” or “avoidance” means we do nothing, so we deny others our ideas and efforts. It indicates distrust to our community, because we will not share ourselves with others. We become apathetic or disinterested in matters other than our own.

“Opposition” or “resistance” involves resisting unjust customs or laws. Opposition can be an authentic response when it is used to liberate the full humanity of others.

“Solidarity” or “collaboration”, however, is the primary authentic attitude we can choose to participate in community. Through collaboration, our individual freedom is used to serve the common good, and the community sustains and supports each of us to grow into the fullness of our potential “human maturity”.

Each decision we make, each choice to act or not act, as well as how we act, is a moral decision. Each freely made moral decision and its consequent act makes us who we are. Each act forms us. With each morally good act, we become good. By choosing to participate in acts for the shared good of ourselves and others, we fulfil ourselves and participate in the humanity of others.

On a global scale, some of the places we see alienation might include the war in Iraq, the atrocities in Darfur, the oppression of women under the Taliban, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, child abuse or pornography.

Often we feel these problems of alienation are too huge for us to make a difference. We ask ourselves, “What can I do? I’m just one person”.

Instead, perhaps we can focus on our own daily lives, asking, “How do I choose to participate in my community?”

What choices do I make each day, as a spouse (in the community of my marriage), as a parent (in the community of my family) or as a parishioner (in the community of my faith)? Do these choices help me realise my own fulfilment as well as helping others?

Here are some hypothetical responses to consider:

Do I respond with Conformity?

As a spouse: I let her buy what she wants so I don’t have to listen to her complain...I put up with his (blank) because I don’t like confrontation.... I wish he wouldn’t do that, but what’s the point of bringing it up, he won’t change.

As a parent: I only bought my child this Nintendo/cell phone/latest toy because all the other children have them and he would feel left out... I’m not sure if that’s good or bad, but everyone else let’s their children read it/watch it/go there, so it must be ok.

As a parishioner: I go to Mass, but wonder ‘Do I really need to go? What am I getting out of this? Am I going because my parents made me go as a child? Do I really believe any of this or is it just a bunch of nonsense to appease the superstitious? Is this just the remnant of an unenlightened society?’

Do I respond with Non-involvement?

As a spouse: I don’t feel like cleaning the house, my wife will take care of it if it bothers her enough... I don’t need to kiss him goodbye every morning; he knows I love him...I’d rather watch my show than sit and chat.

of the ship, the character of the child, hardly figures in public policy. Good teachers, seeking to instil character, are often in despair because whatever they might achieve in school is so often destroyed by the influences at home and in society generally. Good parents, struggling to raise good citizens, are often in despair because their efforts are set at naught by what goes on in school. There are abundant national policies and initiatives aimed at producing the cargo but the quality of the ship is left to a wide range of influences, some good and some bad, without any coherent over-arching policy, and little support or encouragement for those trying to build. Despite this skewed emphasis there emerge from the educational process many well educated, good citizens, but there also emerge a growing number of educated hooligans, lacking any moral training or sense of self-worth, and the social consequences are alarming.

Binge drinking, teenage pregnancy, disrespect for authority and the law, lack of moral sense - these are all symptoms of a one-sided educational system which neglects character building without which academic and other achievements can never come to beneficial fruition. Attempts to control the problem from the supply side are doomed to fail. Those who sell drugs, pornography, trash magazines, alcohol, the farmyard view of sexual behaviour, are simply responding to the market. They are mindlessly making money; they have no interest in what they are peddling except that it is profitable. As long as the demand is there they will exploit it and even the most dictatorial controls will not stop them. If the demand dries up they will quickly turn their energies to other ways of making money without a backward glance; they are profiteers, not missionaries.

The market will probably always be there, but it could be so drastically reduced in size and impact if the educational process found the right balance between character and achievement, if precious cargoes could be carried away in beautiful ships.

It might take a long time to recover a situation which has been deteriorating ever since the misguided educational policies of the fifties, but we could at least try. We could demand that national

Beautiful Ships, Precious Cargo

The merchant, carrying his precious cargo, comes to the port in search of a ship to take his goods across the sea. There are many ships to choose from, ugly ships, ships with rotting timbers, ships unfit for serious travelling. The merchant passes them by; he seeks a beautiful ship, well built, reliable, seaworthy, a ship to which he can entrust his cargo with confidence.

Near the docks the shipbuilder has launched his latest ship, her lines graceful, her timbers sound, her keel and rudder stout and powerful. He seeks a suitable cargo; there are many people wanting to send evil-smelling rubbish abroad, but he is not prepared to soil his beautiful ship with rubbish. He seeks a precious cargo, a cargo of a quality to match his ship.

The two men come together. The merchant admires the beautiful ship. The ship builder looks with respect at the precious cargo. The deal is done, the ship is loaded, and the great voyage begins.

Beautiful ships - precious cargoes. The two go together, complementary, each enhancing the other, each equally important.

As with ships and cargoes, so with young children. Their precious cargo is academic achievement, the development of skills, the flowering of artistic talent, the fulfilment of physical promise. Their beautiful ship is their sense of self-worth, of self-respect, of respect for other people and for the law, their ability to contribute to society. The cargo and the ship are complementary, each of equal importance. The most wonderful talent will not survive if it sets sail in a rotten hulk. The finest character, however noble, will not achieve its potential if its powers are undeveloped, its talents unfulfilled.

In our society this partnership between the ship and the cargo, the character and the achievements, struggles to find a balance. The precious cargo is the main focus of attention, with schools being judged almost exclusively on academic achievement. The soundness

As a parent: I'm sure the teachers will let me know if there's a problem... I don't have time to help out at school... I don't have time to sit and read to you right now... I don't have the energy to play a game now, dear... My child doesn't need to go to RE anymore; he's already received First Communion.

As a parishioner: Do I really need to go to Mass every weekend? ... Church is boring; they just do the same thing every week...What's the point in going; they just want my money...I can read the Bible on my own... There are plenty of other people at Church; surely one of them can do this...I have too many other commitments.

Do I respond with Opposition?

As a spouse: It hurts my feelings when you speak to me in that tone of voice... I would feel more supported by you if you helped around the house more... I know you work all week and are tired, but it would mean the world to me if we made a 'date night' together once a month.

As a parent: I know all your friends have a television in their own room, but I prefer that we watch TV together as a family... I'm sorry you're angry that I won't let you stay out until midnight with your friends, but I don't feel comfortable with that.

As a parishioner: I think the Church's teaching on contraception is unrealistic, so I do what I think is right... I think that the Church's teaching on divorce is uncompassionate, so I won't go...I personally think abortion is wrong, but who am I to tell other people what to do?

Do I respond with Solidarity?

As a spouse: Let's talk to the children about this together.... I'll clean downstairs if you clean upstairs.... I'll help you fix the fence/organize the garage/weed the garden... Let's get a sitter and go somewhere special for dinner tomorrow...Thanks for taking out the rubbish, sweetheart!

As a *parent*: I'm sorry your friend hurt your feelings; sometimes people can be mean.... Let's read a story together.... Come outside and we can kick the ball around.... I'd love to sit and watch this movie with you.... If you have a question about your homework, I'll be right here.

As a *parishioner*: Maybe I should find out more about why the Church teaches that; I'll go to that Adult RE course next week.... I guess it wouldn't hurt to ask my friend if she'd be interested in RCIA...Yes, I can help with the rota... Sure, I'll help the RE teacher next weekend... I'll bring my family to the Youth Group dinner; it'll be fun...The church really needs a new coat of paint and a new door; I'll throw in ten quid for the paint fund...You know, instead of going out so often for lunch, I'll bring a packed lunch and put that extra fiver in the collection basket on Sunday...we could give something every week or month to the Holy Land Fund to support the parish in Aboud...

The choice to participate in the life of society, or not, extends past marriage, family and Church. It arises with every person we encounter, in every word spoken and in every action taken. We can start at home but take it to work, school, the town council, where we shop, where we dine and onwards. It can be as simple as a kind word or as involved as going out of our way to help someone.

Maybe we cannot stop the alienation of war in Iraq by ourselves, but we *can* stop the easily overlooked 'moments-which-foster-alienation' that creep into our marriages, our families and our Church. The first step is to recognise them. Then we can embrace the small opportunities we are given to participate in solidarity with our spouses, our children and our parish.

The next time you read the parish newsletter, and ask yourself, "Should I do this?" what will you choose?

"Anything done for another is done for oneself." – Pope John Paul II

Christine Newpower

CATHOLIC TRIVIA!

Spilling Salt: This was held to be unlucky (it was thought that the person had been jugged by the Devil), hence salt was thrown over the left shoulder with the right hand (to put salt on the tail of the Devil). In Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper Judas is shown spilling the salt. Salt was used in Baptism to symbolically cast out evil. It is an emblem of purity, and hence it has been put in coffins to ward off the Devil.

Casino Churches: This may come as a surprise to those of us not living in Las Vegas, but there are more Catholic churches there than casinos. Not surprisingly, some worshippers at Sunday services will give casino chips rather than cash when the basket is passed. Since they get chips from so many different casinos, the churches have devised a method to collect the offerings. The churches send all their collected chips to a nearby Franciscan Monastery for sorting and then the chips are taken to the casinos of origin and cashed in. This is done by a chip monk.

Elvis: Dolores Hart, the niece of Mario Lanza who starred alongside Elvis in *Loving You* and *King Creole* left Hollywood in 1963 to become a Benedictine nun at the Abbey of Regina Laudis, Bethlehem, Connecticut.

There was a (very obscure!) Celtic saint called St Elvis, who was a bishop of the Irish See of Munster.

Some trace of Saint Elvis remains in Wales, as not far from the village named Solva on the south Pembrokeshire coast there is a St Elvis Farm as well as a Neolithic burial chamber that bears the name of 'St Elvis Cromlech'. Also, just twenty miles away to the north are the Preseli Hills.

DAY OF RECOLLECTION

Saturday, 26th April 2008
in the Sacred Heart Hall
10.30 - 16.30

The day is open to everyone in the parish but it is hoped that those involved with Catechesis, Children's Liturgy, Confirmation preparation, Ministry of the Eucharist, Ministry of Reading will make every effort to attend. This day is for YOU to 'recharge your batteries', to give you some 'space' in your busy schedule, to reflect upon your own spiritual growth and to meet some of your fellow parishioners. A list will be put up in the porch after Easter for your names so that we can gauge numbers for catering.

St George's Lunch
Thursday, 17th April
at 12.30 pm in the Sacred Heart Parish Hall

Roast Beef and Yorkshire
Pudding
Vegetables,
Choice of Pudding,
Soft Drink
£3.50

Proceeds to
LIFE Charity

**PARISH OPEN
MEETING**
Sunday 18th May
**at 4 pm in the Sacred Heart
Parish Hall**
ALL WELCOME



Parishioner Jimmy Ryan is taking part in the London marathon on Sunday 13 April

in aid of Children with Leukaemia. Those who would like to sponsor him can do so by going to www.bmycharity.com/jamesryan or speaking to him after Saturday Mass.

To Light a Candle

The practice of lighting a candle as a sign of prayer is of long standing among Catholics, but it may become a mechanical or ill-understood gesture.

The following is a prayer which attempts to restore to it something of its genuine spiritual content.

*Lord,
May this candle be a light
for you to enlighten me
in my difficulties and decisions.
May it be a fire
for you to burn out of me
all pride, selfishness and impurity
May it be a flame
for you to bring warmth to my heart
towards my family, my neighbours and all who
meet me.
Through the prayers of Mary, virgin and mother,
I place in your care those I come
to remember especially
I cannot stay long here with you:
In leaving this candle,
I wish to give you something of myself.
Help me to continue my prayer into everything
I do this day.
Amen.*

There may be some other Catholic practices that you would like explained more fully. Please let me know - or maybe you have a favourite prayer that you would like to share with others.

Please contact Elizabeth Barker, Parish Religious Education Coordinator through the Parish Office. Thank you.



Saint Vincent De Paul Conference



In our parish we have a small conference of seven members who regularly visit the sick, the housebound and those in hospital if we are aware that they wish to be visited.

We do, however, also try to support the work of the De Paul Trust, an important “arm” of the SVP who take care of the young homeless in London and many of our major cities.

Having read this report in a recent edition of the De Paul Trust newsletter “Safe and Sound”, I thought it needed sharing with you.

Elizabeth Barker

My name is Joe

I got kicked out of home by my Dad aged 16. There were too many of us. When you got too big to hit you got kicked out. By the time I was on the street I knew I was a second-class citizen. I knew I didn't deserve any better, that I was stupid, a waste of space. I met a bunch of others like me and got into drugs. I thought there was only one way out of this dead-end life and that was dead.

I got arrested for begging and hitting a police officer and sent to HMP Feltham. After three months I was going to be kicked back onto the streets again. Who knows, I could have ended up on a street near you. I didn't want to go back out there, but what else was there?

I got referred to De Paul Trust's Outside Link Project. I didn't take it all that seriously at first. No-one had ever wanted to help me before but they got me somewhere to live, so that for the first time in my life I suddenly saw the chance of a life.

Outside Link put me in touch with a volunteer mentor called Gill who helped me start straightening out the mess I was in. I had a heroin habit so she got me to go along to a 12-step meeting and pretty soon I was on the programme to help kick it. It's an amazing process, getting clean, a bit like being reborn. Gill gave me support, advice and most importantly a friendly face and someone to talk to.

You can go a long way when someone believes in you. You need that until you start believing in yourself. Getting free of the drugs has changed everything. I don't think of myself as scum now because I'm not - I'm a regular citizen. I'm doing a training course now and I'm hoping to join the army.

A lot of youngsters end up on the street for reasons they can't control. You don't want them there, and they don't want to be there. Someone has to show them how to get back on track. They can't do it on their own but of course it all costs money.

The money you give to De Paul Trust will save lives and give at least some young people a second chance - it will also give you a safer street to walk in.

**If you'd like to help others like Joe, please call 02079391273
or you may like to contribute through the parish SVP.
Please send donations to the Parish Office marked
“SVP Treasurer”.**