MEETING POPE FRANCIS
Westminster Cathedral Choir in Rome

A TALE OF TWO CITIES
An eye-witness account of the Consistory & Cardinal Nichols’ return to the Cathedral.

PLUS: Special features, news, photos, events, regular columns and more INSIDE!
Oremus
Cathedral Choir House
40 Great Pulteney Street
London SW1P 1QH
T: 020 7798 9055
F: 020 7798 9090
E: oremus42@gmail.com
W: www.westminstercathedral.org.uk
Office opening: Mon-Weds 9.00am-5.00pm

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Pope Francis meets members of Westminster Cathedral Choir soon after the Papal Mass, at which Cardinal Nichols and the other new Cardinals had concelebrated.

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Oremus April 2014

April 2014 Oremus
The Cathedral Choir: Witnessing History

Much of the material in this month’s Oremus will, very properly, cover the Consistory, the Papal Mass with the new Cardinals and the subsequent Masses of Welcome and Thanksgiving here in Westminster Cathedral. It was a great privilege to be in St Peter’s for the Consistory and the Papal Mass, where I found myself sitting, on both occasions, with three other Westminster priests, Canon Pat Brown and Frs Gerard King and Dennis Iousw. Father Alexander and I had travelled to Rome with Martin Baker and the Choir and it was very moving to hear them sing at both events, and especially when the Head Chorister sang the responsorial psalm at the Papal Mass. I was also very glad to be able to concelebrate with Cardinal Cormac and a good number of Westminster priests at a Mass in his titular church on the night before the Consistory.

In the last two editions, I have mentioned the suffering of those who have been affected by the recent flooding. Now that the rain seems to have stopped, let us continue to remember them as they set about drying out their homes and getting rid of the dirt and the smell.

I am writing this in mid-March and it is currently forecast to be warmer and drier, and this will be the case during the next few days as I look forward to going with the Head Chorister to visit my immediate predecessor, Mgr Mark Langham, who will be leading us on a day in Cambridge, his new home, and the next day travelling to Cardiff to visit another former Administrator, Archbishop George Stack.

As we are now well into our Lenten journey, with its sacrifices and extra devotions, may I wish you all a blessed and holy Lent.

The Choir has visited Rome regularly over the years: an occasion choir – it will, very naturally easy and hugely enjoyable. Perhaps the greatest adjustment needed was to adapt to the Sistine choir’s emphasis on word stresses, which is rather more marked than is normal in this country. A single phrase could vary in dynamic between pianissimo and fortissimo several times with great suddenness, making the sustaining of clear pitch a particular challenge. Rehearsing in the empty St Peter’s on Friday we were surprised at how clear the sound was without any amplification, with a linear sound decay quite unlike the confusing bouncing echoes one hears at St Paul’s Cathedral, for example. The eventual amplification, although perhaps not absolutely necessary, was tastefully done with recently improved equipment.

In addition to the joint items of Palestrina and Palombella we were able to sing several motets alone: Stanford’s Beati quorum via, Eliget abecedes esse by Philips (sung at the Canonization of Westminster Cathedral in 1910) and some Guerrero and Bruckner. Peter Stevens played majestic movements by Videro after each service and head chorister Corrin Stewart delivered a stunning solo from the Ambo in the responsorial psalm, seemingly unaffected by the pressure of singing alone directly under the gaze of the Pope (see page 9). Just before the start of the Consistory applause started on the far side of the basilica, heralding a surprise public appearance from Pope Benedict, who had met personally with the choir both in London in 2010 and in Rome in 2012. It was wonderful to be witnessing history: the first time a Pope has watched his successor create cardinals.

Despite the differences, singing together was both naturally easy and hugely enjoyable. Perhaps the greatest adjustment needed was to adapt to the Sistine choir’s emphasis on word stresses, which is rather more marked than is normal in this country. A single phrase could vary in dynamic between pianissimo and fortissimo several times with great suddenness, making the sustaining of clear pitch a particular challenge. Rehearsing in the empty St Peter’s on Friday we were surprised at how clear the sound was without any amplification, with a linear sound decay quite unlike the confusing bouncing echoes one hears at St Paul’s Cathedral, for example. The eventual amplification, although perhaps not absolutely necessary, was tastefully done with recently improved equipment.

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The panting heart of Rome (& London)
A Tale of Two Cities and a Cardinal

When my mobile phone vibrated once during Sunday’s Solemn Mass on 12 January I knew already what the message said without even reading it. A friend had been keeping a careful eye on the Holy Father’s Angelus for me to see if, as expected, there would be an announcement of the names of some new cardinals and, if so, whether the Archbishop of Westminster was among them.

I had planned for some months to be in Rome that weekend with a small group of Cathedral servers as 22 February, the Feast of the Chair of St Peter, fell on a Saturday this year. By that date there would also be a significant number of vacancies in the College of Cardinals, making it an obvious choice for a consistorius to create new ones.

The small party of Paul Tobin, Jessica De Souza and myself, plus David Knight, a Westminster seminarian, flew out on Thursday, 20 February, escaping the dampness of a London morning for the warm Roman afternoon sunshine. We were to stay in the guest house run by the Suore di San Giuseppe dell’Apparizione, just off the Via Aurelia, on the west side of the Vatican walls. (I recommend it! See www.monasterystays.com for details.)

Having met up with another server, Rebecca Keane, we had a good meal (and the world’s best carbonara) at the Hotel Carbonara in the Campo de’ Fiori and then met up with Colín Mawby, former Cathedral Master of Music, and his son, Clement. After a good night’s sleep we began our weekend celebration in union with the See of Peter, by visiting Peter himself. In recent years it has become possible for small groups to visit the Scavi, the excavations directly under St Peter’s Basilica. Led by an English speaking Swiss archaeologist (who is married to one of the Swiss Guards), we spent nearly two hours exploring this most holy of places, which brought us directly to Peter’s grave and to what are believed to be his bones. Tu es Petrus! Here was Peter and on this rock was the Church – literally and theologically!

That evening, a large crowd of bishops, priests and laity, from home and Rome, gathered in that most beautiful of Roman Churches, Santa Maria sopra Minerva. In this, his own titular, Cardinal Cormac celebrated a Solemn Votive Mass of St Peter for the intention of our Cardinal-Designate. By kind invitation, the Cathedral group served the Mass and, I am pleased to report, with great distinction – holding up abroad the reputation for which they are known at home. Gammarelli, the Papal tailors over the road, was open late. So a visit to their shop window was a must, to see what any well-dressed Cardinal would be wearing this season…!

Saturday morning meant an early start and the first of many queues. We had tickets, though these alone would not guarantee entry. But we made it, to secure seats on left side of the nave, with a good view of the Papal altar. Cardinals then arrived by the dozen. The Chair of St Peter at the rear was illuminated with hundreds of candles, while the ancient statue of the apostle was adorned with the most beautiful red and gold cope and papal tiara. Shortly before 11.00am, a buzz, a sudden flurry of activity … and the surprise appearance of Pope Emeritus Benedict in the Basilica, adding more drama to this historic day. Then the Holy Father, Pope Francis, entered in procession through a sea of raised arms clutching camera phones, while our Cathedral Choir and the Sistine Chapel Choir sang. After a prayer, Gospel reading and homily, the 18 new Cardinals collectively made a profession of faith before, one by one, going to kneel before the Pope to receive their zucchetto, a ring, and the assignment of their Roman titular or diaconal church.

After the four Roman curial prelates, the fifth named, and the first residential archbishop, to be created a cardinal by Pope Francis, was the Archbishop of Westminster. There was much pride and joy around us at this moment. Once the new cardinals were greeted and welcomed by their brothers in the Sacred College, it was over, and the Holy Father left with the new cardinals to the accompaniment of the unmistakable skill of Peter Stevens, our Assistant Master of Music, playing the organ.

After a celebratory, but brief, lunch we headed over to the Via Mentana, to get our first opportunity to look at the titular church given to Cardinal Nichols – the Holy Redeemer and St Alphonsus (see article on page 8). And what a gem it is – with the fourteenth century icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and a Sunday afternoon Mass in English – it is a real place of prayer rather than tourism.

Then it was back to the Vatican, as the cardinals had each been given a spot where they could greet anyone who chose to visit them. Cardinal Vincent had been allocated part of the spacious foyer of the Paul VI Audience Hall. By the time we arrived, there was a steady stream of people meeting him and offering him congratulations on his calling to this new service to Holy Mother Church and to Peter’s successor. Having left Cardinal Nichols we went over to the Apostolic Palace on the other side of St Peter’s Square, and, after more queuing and security checks, it was through the Bronze Door and up the Scala Regia to visit the new curial cardinals who were doing the same over there – but really it was to have a chance to see parts of the Palace not normally open to the public! Our route out of the Palace took us past the office door of Mgr Guido Marini, the Papal Master of Ceremonies, who, we are told, has one of the best views in all of Rome. (Honestly, I am not jealous! But I do wonder if there are any vacancies…) A very English morning

Sunday was an even earlier start! More queues and more crowds, but thanks to Rebecca and David, we had even better seats than the previous day, on the right hand side of the nave. Mgr Guido Marini arrived soon after to gently rehearse the students of the Venerable English College (including some Westminster seminarians) who were serving the Mass. What with the Cathedral Choir on duty again and one of our choristers singing the responsorial psalm, it felt like a very English morning and it was a very proud moment for those of us who were privileged to be there. Mass was over and we emerged from the Basilica into a packed St Peter’s Square to listen to the Holy Father’s address and pray the Angelus with him.

In the evening, it was the turn of the Venerable English College to offer hospitality (something the English have been doing on this very spot for over 650 years) and host a reception for our new Cardinal and his guests. There was fine food, drink and conversation – as well as the most stunning of cakes, iced with the Cardinal’s coat of arms.

All too soon it was Monday and time for some final ‘retail therapy’ – books, cuff-links, cottoas, shoes and a scarlet zucchetto were all on various people’s shopping lists – before we headed south of the city to the Basilica of St Paul’s Outside the Walls and the grave of the Apostle of the Gentiles. It was here that Cardinal Nichols presided at his first Mass in his new role, with music and servers provided by the students of the Beda College just over the road. ‘Go in peace.’ And so we did – with haste, to the airport and home. To rest? No. To savour and rejoice in the memory of our time in the Eternal City, of our visits to the tombs of the two great apostles, our union with the See of Peter, of the universality of the Roman Church.
Church and of the honour bestowed on another Archbishop of Westminster. And, of course, to get ready for the great events of the following weekend:

The Cardinal’s Homecoming

Since the time of Cardinal Bourne the return of a new Cardinal from Rome has always been solemnly marked in Westminster Cathedral and this occasion would be no exception. The challenge would be to accommodate all who wished to attend. Due to meetings and other commitments in Rome, the new Cardinal did not return until Thursday 27 February. He already had a longstanding commitment to ordain 9 Jesuits as deacons on Saturday 1 March so the ceremony of formal welcome had to be on Friday 28 February. A further Mass of Thanksgiving was planned for Sunday 2 March, at which there would be invited guests and Papal Knights in procession. Apart from some reserved seats, neither celebration was to be a ticket-only occasion.

The Mass of Thanksgiving was to be within the context of the normal Sunday Mass so no major planning for that was required. However, for the Mass of Welcome there were numerous conversations with Fr Alexander Master about how many priests had replied to their invitations and where we could seat them all. Even with additional seating the sanctuary’s maximum capacity is about 130 clergy, so a decision was made on Thursday that we would use the apse as an overflow and place the seminarians in the nave. It was the right decision, as some 160 priests turned up! A number of bishops had indicated they would like to attend. So we chose to seat them all on the opposite side of the sanctuary to the throne, each in a named seat, while recognising the importance of our two Auxiliary Bishops, two former Auxiliaries (Bishop Hopes and Archbishop Stacki), the Papal Nuncio and Cardinal Murphy-O’Connor.

The liturgy was carefully planned to reflect the importance of the occasion, but at the same time provide a noble simplicity. The welcome at the door was traditional, with a prayer led by the senior auxiliary bishop, the kissing of a crucifix offered by the Provost, and the sprinkling with holy water offered by the Cathedral Administrator. But then came an unique moment, rich in history and symbolism. It was the idea of Fr Peter Harris that three ‘Pontifical’ relics of Reformation Cardinals be carried in the entrance procession – the crozier of Cardinal Allen, the pectoral cross of Cardinal Pole and the ring of St John Fisher. The original intention was that these items should reach the sanctuary and be returned immediately to the sacristy. But late on Friday afternoon came word that the Cardinal would like these items placed on the altar and brought to him, one by one, as he referred to them in his homily. And so plans made and rehearsed late on Wednesday night were quickly adjusted in accordance with the Cardinal’s wishes.

The Mass text chosen was that provided in the Roman Missal ‘for the Local Church’, while some of the music was the same as that used for the installation of the Archbishop in May 2009. One thing we had not planned for, but got all the same, was rain. And so a solemn procession from Archbishop’s House down Arundelston Avenue became more of a dash under umbrellas, accompanied by film crews and photographers!

The Cardinal had requested that the Te Deum should be sung as at his installation, allowing him the opportunity to process around the Cathedral – to be seen by as many people as possible. As on that day, too, towards the end of this great hymn of thanks he paused on his route and knelt for a moment at the grave of Cardinal Hume. And after the final blessing and dismissal, a great, long, seemingly never-ending procession to Widor’s March Pontificale through a Cathedral full of cheering people to warm applause in the sacristy and the fervent singing of Ad Multos Annos. And that is what we truly wish Cardinal Nichols. May there be many, many years before such events happen again in this Cathedral!

Paul Moynihan is the Cardinal Archbishop’s Master of Ceremonies. More photos on the Cathedral Facebook page and pages 18 & 19.
**Santissimo Redentore e Sant’Alfonso**

Cardinal Nichols’ Titular Church

**Fr Nicholas Schofield** is the Archivist for the Diocese of Westminster and parish priest of Our Lady of Lourdes and St Michael’s Church, Uxbridge.

The church of Sant’Alfonso all’Esquilino, as it is often called, was actually built by one of the first Oxford converts and houses a famous image of Our Lady.

The celebrated image is, of course, that of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour (or Perpetual Help), reproduced widely and the focus in many places of a popular Novena. Our Lady, meanwhile, looks down at him with an expression of deep compassion and love. This beautiful icon was first venerated in Crete, where it probably originated, but in the 1490s was obtained by an Italian merchant who transported it to Rome.

On 27 March 1499, the icon was taken in procession to the church of San Matteo on the Via Merulana. During the procession, a paralytic was cured. This brought the image much fame and over the centuries numerous favours were attributed to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Among the illustrious devotees who prayed before the image was James III, the Stuart claimant to the British throne, who lived for many years in Rome.

The church of San Matteo, which for a time was cared for by the Irish Augustinians, was destroyed during the French occupation of Rome. Fortunately the wonderworking image was saved and hung in several churches. However, it was largely forgotten until the Redemptorists moved to a property near the original site of San Matteo in 1853. The Fathers heard about Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and, when the icon was discovered in obscurity, permission was granted to bring it to their new church of Sant’Alfonso in 1866. As in 1499, miracles were reported as the image was brought to the church, including a young girl who regained the use of a paralysed leg. Soon afterwards the image was solemnly crowned by the Vatican Chapter and the devotion was rekindled and spread across the world by the Redemptorists. It is interesting that she has been named Patroness of Haiti, whose bishop was raised to the sacred purple at the same consistory as Cardinal Nichols.

Sant’Alfonso claims to be the last church to have been built in the Eternal City before the fall of the Papal States. Like Cardinal Cormac’s titular, it is in the gothic style and was actually designed by an Englishman, George Wigney, who was also one of the pioneering members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul and helped bring it to Great Britain.

As mentioned before, Sant’Alfonso was built at the expense of one of the early Oxford converts, the Redemptorist Fr Edward Douglas (1819-98). Though little known today, he is a most intriguing figure. Descended from the Earls of Douglas and Mar and related to the Marquess of Queensberry, he was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. At university he was influenced by Newman’s sermons and numbered among his friends Charles Scott Murray and William Lockhart, who would both convert to Rome and play an influential role in the Church. Douglas himself led the way, being received into the Church during a visit to Rome in 1842.

Here is a rather charming – though almost certainly apocryphal – story. He had gone to Rome with Scott-Murray and queued up to witness the papal ceremonies for the Chair of St Peter (the feast, incidentally, on which Cardinal Nichols received his ‘red hat’). Being British, Scott-Murray had brought his umbrella but was not allowed to bring it into the ticketed area – and so he deposited it in the nearest confessionals, opposite the tomb of Pope Benedict XIV. He was later unable to retrieve it and sent Douglas to pursue the matter. The conversations that he had with the Carmelite friar in whose confessionals the umbrella had been found were crucial in his path to conversion.

Thanks to his inheritance of a large sum of money, Douglas was able to travel extensively and three years after his conversion made a memorable trip to the Holy Land, which formed the basis of a book published later in life. His initial desire was to become a Franciscan and it was with them that he was ordained in 1848. However, poor health required him to look elsewhere and so, we read, ‘he found a second St Francis in St Alphonsus de Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorists.’

Working for a while in Ireland and London (where he partly paid for the erection of St Mary’s, Clapham), he was called to Rome in 1853. Here, once again using his family fortune, he purchased the Villa Caserta on the Via Merulana, to serve as the General House, and built Sant’Alfonso. It reminds us that the returns of the nineteenth century brought not only spiritual but sizeable financial benefits, without which the ‘Second Spring’ would have been impossible.

Fr Douglas remained at Sant’Alfonso as Rector for forty years. When Papal Rome fell and the Italian government began confiscating ecclesiastical property, he declared that the Villa Caserta was his own personal property and exempt from the legislation. He even boldly hoisted the Union Jack and sent his documents to the British Ambassador for his assistance, although when the matter was referred to London orders were given that the flag must be taken down.

Fr Douglas also held important posts within the Redemptorist Order – including (on three occasions) Roman Provincial. He made many converts, including David Hunter-Blair (the writer and Abbot of Fort Augustus), and after his death there was even talk of a cause for his beatification. Indeed, when the Pope heard of his demise, he exclaimed: L’un altro santo nel cielo! Another saint in Heaven!

Cardinal Nichols’ titular church may not at present be very well known but, with its British origins and its world-famous Marian shrine, it is sure to become a much loved destination for our pilgrims – a little piece of Westminster in Rome.
Leeds Cathedral, under the patronage of St Anne, opened in 1904, or rather, the second Cathedral opened in that year. The original St Anne’s Parish Church, built in the nineteenth century gothic revival style, opened a matter of 50 yards away in 1838. When the Diocese of Beverley was divided in 1878, it became the first Cathedral of the new Diocese of Leeds. In 1899, the city fathers wanted to widen the street on which it stood, so compulsorily purchased the building, offering the diocese the site on which the Cathedral now stands.

Being built on a sloping and not very large site brings its challenges, but Eastwood and Greenslade, the architects of the new St Anne’s, created an unique building in the Arts & Crafts style, leading the late and distinguished Professor Patrick Nuttgens to describe Leeds Cathedral as ‘one of the best of all the Catholic Cathedrals in the country, and probably the most outstanding after Westminster’. Happily, Eastwood incorporated the high altar (with its Pugin reredos) from the old Cathedral into the new building; it now forms the Lady Chapel, where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. The Cathedral possessed a single bell until 1980, when the ring of eight bells was transferred from the redundant Church of St Francis in Holbeck.

The Cathedral stands in the heart of the civic, business and entertainment quarter of the city, easily accessible by public transport with on-street parking and multi-storey car parks close by. As with many British towns and cities, the mid-twentieth century saw the demolition of nearby streets and their replacement by more modern housing and high-rise blocks. The latter part of the century and the start of this gave rise to the development of water-front and city centre living in Leeds. Our parish has, therefore, changed significantly down the years, and the make-up of the Cathedral congregation with it.

In 2010, the parish merged with that of the Holy Rosary, Chapeltown, to form the new parish of Mother of Unfailing Help, the principal patron of the Diocese.

Cathedral congregations have often been drawn from a wider area than the geographical parish, and Leeds is no exception. Many people come to one of the Sunday or daily Masses, Vespers or devotions, pop in to say a prayer or light a candle.

One of the main features of life in our Cathedral is the substantial music provision, forming part of the diocesan music programme. The Diocese has the largest church choir school and a semi-professional adult choir. There are two main elements to the system: auditioned choirs for boys and girls and the diocesan schools’ singing programme, where choral directors lead the development and training of choirs in regional clusters of primary and secondary schools. The Cathedral maintains five choirs: an adult choir, boys’, girls’, junior boys’ and junior girls’ choirs. During term time, they sing at two Masses on Sunday, four weekday Masses, and Vespers twice weekly. In addition, our parish primary school has been designated as the Cathedral Choir School, where, in addition to a choir, all children are taught singing from an early age by a professional vocal trainer. The school was very proud that its choir was one of two school choirs chosen to sing for Pope Benedict at St Mary’s College, Twickenham during the Papal visit of 2010.

On 16 May 2010, the new Cathedral organ was dedicated. The original organ was built for the Cathedral in 1904 by Norman and Beard. Following a period of silence of around 30 years, Johannes Klais Orgelbau was chosen to reconstruct and enlarge the instrument to serve the requirements of the restored Cathedral and the new position of the choir at the east end.

In 2003, work was completed on the new Cathedral Hall, attached to the south-east corner of the Cathedral. Named after Bishop Wheeler (former Bishop of Leeds and Administrator of Westminster Cathedral), it forms the final element in an important island site in the centre of the city that is now in diocesan ownership and serves as a useful pastoral and social space for the Cathedral and Diocese.

The visual impact of the Cathedral (Grade II* listed) within the city centre has been enhanced by the cleaning of the external stonework in 1987 and the re-slating of the roof in 1991, together with the installation of flood lighting. The Cathedral is indeed an outstanding feature of Leeds’ heritage.

Mgr Philip Moger is the Dean of St Anne’s Cathedral. We hope to continue this series on our sister cathedrals – which we’re glad to reintroduce – for another few months.
The Road to Calvary
The Path Less Taken

At a revival meeting in Campolo’s West Philadelphia church, which has a mainly African-American congregation, Campolo and the lead pastor were having a friendly ‘preach-off’ competition. Campolo really gave it his all. He was sure his effort would rival anyone’s preaching. But then the older man rose, patted him on the shoulder, and then quietly stepped up to the pulpit and began. His words slowly but surely painted a dark and dreary picture of the increasingly tragic events of Jesus’ passion on Good Friday. He ended his description of a coming. The tension mounted in the congregation each time the words were repeated until the sermon’s climax, when the entire congregation leapt to their feet to a choral burst of joyous ‘Amen!’ That sermon is now legendary, as the number of YouTube versions and views can confirm.

This year the Fifth Week of Lent, Holy Week, the Sacred Triduum, and the Easter Octave dominate the month of April. The final days of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem for what we know will be the end of his earthly public ministry, culminating in his arrest and death at the hands of the authorities. His ‘hour’ has come; and back from the road ahead. St John’s Gospel reaches its climax with the final word of Jesus on the cross. In the original Greek, that word is tetelestai, which in Latin is translated as Consumatum est, and in English is usually translated as ‘It is finished.’ In that one word, we have a summary of all of John’s Gospel and the whole of Scripture. Jesus, the eternal Word of the Father, became flesh by the work of the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary to suffer and die for our sins. That is the central event of human history; everything else in the history of our salvation depends on it. Once the work of our redemption is accomplished, the present from death to life prefigured in the liberation of Israel from Egypt, is complete. In those events, we have a pledge of our own promise of eternal life, if we too embrace the cross prepared for us.

Contemplating these ‘mysteries’ or events in the life of Our Lord during these solemn days can provide an opportunity for us to examine our lives and ask whether indeed we are doing our bit to ‘make up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ,’ as St Paul admonishes us to do. The small sacrifices and penances we undertake during Lent are simply reminders that we have a higher destiny and ultimately there is a greater joy than our lives here and now can give us. The long experience of the Christian community has shown the three traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are valuable beyond measure in re-directing our awareness of who we are and what we are about.

Suffering is never popular. In a culture that prizes instant gratification and ever more acquisition, even the idea of deferring pleasure is considered absurd. Laws are being enacted today that offer death as the preferred choice over discomfort or deprivation even more inconvenience. But the Scriptures, the liturgy, and the teaching of the Church continually remind us of the ineffable power of suffering embraced in love. Consider St Venantius Fortunatus’s magnificent hymn (the original Pange Lingua) that we sing during Holy Week: Sing my tongue, the Saviour’s glory; tell His triumph far and wide; tell aloud the famous story of His body crucified; how upon the cross a victim, vanquishing in death, He died.

The understanding of the cross here reflects a deep appreciation that Christians have, from the earliest years of the Church, of the cross as a symbol of triumph and joy. Crosses were made from precious metals, and frequently adorned with priceless jewels. Many were so stunning that a custom of covering these beautiful crosses during the more somber days of celebrating the Lord’s passion developed, a practice later extended to all crucifixes and other sacred images. Over the centuries, particularly since the late middle ages, the emphasis has shifted in various times and places to a view of the cross as representative primarily of the human suffering of Jesus. Instead of jewels and precious metals, more ‘realistic’ crucifixes of wood bearing images of the crucified body of Jesus became the norm.

The liturgy places before us both of these complementary views of the import of the cross. The climax of the year is surely the burst of Easter Sunday joy, a joy so great we spend 50 days of Eastertide savouring it. We meditate then on the triumphant cross, the source of our salvation and a pledge of future joy for those who embrace it. To prepare for that, during the final days of Lent and in the Sacred Triduum, the liturgy asks us to contemplate the dark moments of the Passion. On Palm Sunday we hear the solemn proclamation of the passion from one of the synoptic gospels, this year from St Matthew. These accounts give many details about the difficult and painful moments of human suffering that Jesus endured. On Good Friday, after a stark and dramatic prostration in silence, we hear the passion account of St John, which offers a more triumphant view of these events, the tetelestai described above. And then, even this most somber of liturgies shifts. The cross is uncovered and held high in triumphant procession. As we venerate it, we sing the Reproaches and St Venantius’s great Pange Lingua is sung in full. The import of the Paschal Mystery is clear: our salvation is accomplished. It’s Friday, but Sunday’s a comin’!
Catholic Poets: Alexander Pope

Alexander Pope was born in London in 1688 to Catholic parents, and as such was banned from attending University, so he was taught to read by his aunt. This was a time of strong anti-Catholic sentiment, the Glorious Revolution having recently institutionalised the Protestant ascendancy. Catholics were not allowed to live within ten miles of London, so the young Alexander and his family moved to Berkshire, where he educated himself by reading the classical authors, and became proficient in French, Italian, Latin and Greek. However, his health was poor, and a form of tuberculosis gave him respiratory problems and stunted his growth. Nevertheless, in 1709, his Pastoral was published to considerable acclaim, and brought him the friendship of established writers like John Gay and Jonathan Swift. His second volume of poetry, Windsor Forest, was published in 1713 and further cemented his reputation. He began a painstaking translation of the Iliad, and began writing for the Guardian (not that Guardian) and the Spectator. Nevertheless, as a Catholic, Pope could never enter the highest circles of society, and with the Jacobite rebellion of 1715 retreated to Twickenham, where in 1719 he created his now famous Grotto and Gardens attached to his home. Alexander Pope was faithful, and was visited by a priest on his deathbed.

Pope's most famous work is the Rape of the Lock, a mock-epic satirising the world of manners of eighteenth century London. However, a further attempt at satire, the Dunciad, brought him the implacable hostility of those it lampooned, and Pope (now christened the 'wasp of Twickenham') lost many friends thereafter. Pope's style was too decadent for nineteenth century tastes, and it was only more recently that he began seriously to be appreciated once more. His lyrical poetry, his translations of Horner, and his editions of Shakespeare, are now seen to be - if not works of genius - examples of the finest of eighteenth century poetry.

Questioned on his religious views, Pope wrote The Universal Prayer (it is disputed whether this is an early or a late work). While not his finest work, it suprises many who would not attribute to him such deeply held sentiments:

If I am right, thy grace impart
Still in the right to stay;
If I am wrong, oh, teach my heart
To find that better way.

Save me alike from foolish pride,
Or impious discontent,
At aught thy wisdom has denied,
Or aught thy goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

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Michael Langan, Proprietor, Leisure Time Travel

Behold the Bridegroom
Come and meet him!

In this icon we are faced with Christ as he was presented to the people of Jerusalem outside the praetorium on the evening of Holy Thursday. He has been questioned at length by Pontius Pilate about the nature of his kingship, and the Roman governor - left in an unsettled state of 'wondering' - has handed him over to his soldiers. As related by all the gospels in varying degrees of detail, they mocked him about his claims, plaiting a crown of thorns for his head, laying over his shoulders a purple robe, and giving him a reed for a sceptre. Then they scourged him, striking him with their hands and with the reed. Pilate took him outside and with the now famous cry: ecce homo; behold, the man, showed him to the chief priests and people gathered there. As we see in the icon, Jesus' hands are tied and his demeanour is one of utter powerlessness. His face reflects almost more sorrow than is bearable to gaze at.

With Pilate, believing in his innocence and fearing his strange authority, our initial response is perhaps one of anger at the crown who allows themselves to be manipulated into calling out 'Crucify him!' But on a deeper level, the look on his face reminds us of the words of the Reproaches from the Book of Micah which we hear during the Good Friday liturgy: 'My people, what have I done to you? How have I offended you? And we are aware that it is through our own weakness and sin that he has been brought to the state prophesied by Isaiah: '...despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.'

Yet the title of this icon is not 'Man of Sorrows'. It is Ho Nymphios - Christ the Bridegroom. And we realise that, with our very human responses, we are missing the deeper truth that is being shown to us.

In the Orthodox tradition, this icon carried to the front of the church during the first service of Palm Sunday evening, and it remains there until Holy Thursday, the image of Christ the Bridegroom focusing the prayers and liturgy of the first days of Holy Week.

The name refers, of course, to the parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25), in which five maidens waiting for the coming of the bridegroom were foolish enough to neglect oil for their lamps, and live were wise enough to have their lamps ready. When the cry goes up: 'Behold, the Bridegroom! Come and meet him!' the foolish virgins were obliged to rush out and buy oil, returning too late to be admitted to the marriage feast. This is a parable of the Kingdom, traditionally interpreted as referring to the Church as the bride of Christ. With this in mind, we see that the man we are beholding, rather than reproaching us, is offering love and salvation. The symbol of his authority is a reed. His crown is one of suffering, Royal purple has become the red of martyrdom. His hands are bound not in imprisonment, but in allegiance.

Yet how unlike a bridegroom he appears! As Isaiah says: 'He had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.' We are obliged to look with different eyes and understand with a different wisdom.

'What is truth?' asked Pontius Pilate during his conversation with Jesus, possibly suspecting that it was standing in front of him: the true power of love so great that it gives us itself. Although their intention was to mock, the soldiers presented the people – and us – with an accurate image of our King.

I see thy bridal chamber adored, O my Saviour, but have no wedding garment that I may enter. O giver of light, enlighten the vesture of my soul, and save me!

(From the Byzantine Liturgy for Holy Week)

Sharon Jennings

Westminster Cathedral – Social Media

Westminster Cathedral is now on the social media sites Facebook and Twitter. To keep up to date with all the most recent news, photos, events and timetable changes, please follow us on Twitter (@westminstercath) or like our page on Facebook (www.facebook.com/westminstercath).

Oremus April 2014

April 2014 Oremus
Downside Abbey Mass

The Rt Revd Dom Aiden Bellenger, Abbot of Downside Abbey, celebrated a Mass at Westminster Cathedral on Thursday 27 February to inaugurate the 200th Anniversary Year of the arrival of the Downside monastic community at Stratton-on-the-Fosse. A large number of staff and pupils from Downside School were present at the Mass and the congregation included many members of the Society of St Gregory (Old Gregorians). Many other events are planned throughout the coming year to celebrate this 200th Anniversary. See www.downside.co.uk for more information. More photos on the Cathedral’s Facebook page.

Jesuit Ordinations

On Saturday 1 March, Cardinal Nichols ordained nine members of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) to the diaconate during a Mass at Westminster Cathedral. The new deacons come from four continents and eight different Jesuit provinces, including Sri Lanka, Brazil, the Eastern African Jesuit Province, Germany, and the four Indian Jesuit provinces of Andhra, Karnataka, Kerala and Madurai. Please pray for them. More images on the Cathedral’s Facebook page: www.facebook.com/westminster.ath

The Cardinal’s Homecoming

On Friday 28 February, Cardinal Vincent celebrated Mass at Westminster Cathedral – his first public act after returning to London following his elevation to the College of Cardinals on Saturday 22 February.

The Mass began with a Solemn Rite of Welcome, during which the Cardinal was formally greeted by Bishop John Arnold. He was then presented with a crucifix to venerate by the Provost of the Cathedral Chapter, Canon Michael Brockie, and holy water by which to bless himself and the congregation included many members of the Society of St Gregory (Old Gregorians). Many other events are planned throughout the coming year to celebrate this 200th Anniversary. See www.downside.co.uk for more information. More photos on the Cathedral’s Facebook page.

consistory. After referring to the call of service to the Holy See and the universal Church that comes with belonging to the Cardinalate, the Cardinal spoke of the example of Christ the Good Shepherd: ‘We are surrounded by the example of so many outstanding shepherds, including Pope Francis, who stands as first among all earthly shepherds. He certainly inspires me, with his inner peace, with his directness of speech, with his eloquent actions and ability to touch our hearts. But there are many shepherds present here this evening, also to be inspired. Parents, be inspired to be good shepherds of your families. Teachers, be good shepherds of your pupils. Employers, look after your workforce. Priests, be true shepherds of your parishes; and may this Cardinal be always true to his new-found role.’

The Cardinal’s homily may be found on the Diocesan website: www.rcdow.org.uk – More images on Facebook.

Mass of Thanksgiving

On Sunday 2 March, Cardinal Nichols celebrated the 10.30am Mass at Westminster Cathedral, offering it in thanksgiving for the events surrounding the Consistory at which he and 18 other men were elevated to the College of Cardinals. He was joined by the Apostolic Nuncio, HE Archbishop Mennini, and other members of the episcopacy in England and Wales. The congregation included many dignitaries and representatives from Catholic organisations and the state. Music included Dvorak’s Mass in D and Vaughan Williams’ Te Deum in G. More images on the Cathedral’s Facebook page. See also pages 6-9.

Rite of Election

Over 700 catechumens and candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church attended a special ceremony at Westminster Cathedral over the weekend of 8/9 March (First Sunday of Lent).

They had travelled from all over the Diocese of Westminster to take part in the Rite of Election, at which they were formally ‘elected’ by the Cardinal Archbishop to receive the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and first Communion) at Easter. Most of those who came to have their names inscribed in the Book of the Elect were accompanied to the ceremony by their parish priests, sponsors, families and friends.

Due to the large number of candidates and catechumens in the Diocese of Westminster, the Rite of Election takes place over two days, with half the deaneries represented on the Saturday and the other half represented on the Sunday. They were welcomed on both occasions by the Cardinal, the auxiliary bishops of Westminster, and other members of the Diocesan Curia. More images on the Cathedral’s Facebook page.

Ash Wednesday

This photo was taken during the 5.30pm Solemn Mass at Westminster Cathedral on Ash Wednesday (5 March), which was celebrated by Bishop John Arnold, an Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster. During the imposition of ashes and the offertory, the Choir sang Allegri’s Te Deum in G – an annual tradition. In his homily, Bishop Arnold reflected on the awesome responsibility and privilege of being ‘ambassadors for Christ’. He asked all present to allow themselves to be challenged by this ambassadorial commission and to become better representatives of Christ to all whom they meet. More images on the Cathedral’s Facebook page.

The Guild of St Stephen Gold Medal

On Saturday 8 March, William McGovern received the Gold Medal from the Guild of St Stephen for 50 years’ service. William came to Westminster Cathedral in 1974 and is currently MC at the 12.00pm Sunday Mass. Fr Keith Stoukes, who was joined by Canon Tuckwell and Mgr Vincent Brady, Private Secretary to the Apostolic Nuncio, presented William with his medal. Michael Chute attended on behalf of the Guild of St Stephen. William’s children Niamh (19) and Darragh (15) also serve at the 12.00pm Mass with their father. (Text: Niamh McGovern)
Cathedral Marbles: Exploring the Quarries

Patrick Rogers

The study and identification of the Westminster Cathedral marbles, which took place between 1995 and 2008 and was described in the February 2014 edition of Oremus, included field trips to some thirty of the most ancient and interesting quarries from which they came.

The first such trip was in 1997 to a tiny medieval quarry on the island of Iona in the Hebrides. The journey lasted well over twelve hours – by train to Glasgow and then to Oban, by ferry to the Island of Mull and then across it by bus, by ferry again to Iona and finally by foot across the island to a cleft in the rock east of St Columba’s Bay. So there was a real sense of achievement in finally standing in the Iona Green marble quarry last used in 1914, when the twelve quarrymen abandoned their tools and machinery (much of which still lies rusting there) and went off to the War. Iona Green marble, inlaid with marine creatures, can be seen in the Cathedral on the floor of St Andrew’s Chapel.

The next expedition was to the area of Greece known as the Mani – the remote and mountainous central spur of the Greek mainland which reaches out southward into the Mediterranean Sea. There are several quarries of Rosso Antico there – the dark red marble which forms the sanctuary screen in the Cathedral and can also be seen on the walls and floors of several chapels. Carved blocks of the marble decorated the Treasury of Atreus in thirteenth century BC Mycenae, and it was used under the Roman Emperor Hadrian in the second century AD. The main quarry is at Profitis Ilias, a protected site, but outcrops can be found in several other areas of the Mani and the Cathedral marble came from several quarries.

The first field trip there was in the year 2000, but two more followed, in 2005 and then again in 2008 accompanied by Professor Peter Warren, a Greek-speaking archaeologist, who located several new sites connected with the marble.

Another of the main marbles used in the Cathedral, Verde Antico, was also widely used in Byzantine churches (some now mosques) such as Santa Sophia, St Sergius and Bacchus and St John of Studios in Istanbul (Constantinople). Columns and slabs of the same variegated green breccia marble can be found throughout the Cathedral – notably in the nave where the main columns are of this marble. The ancient Greek quarries which were the source were located in 1866 by a marble merchant, William Brindley, and were reopened in 1896 to supply the Cathedral. They lie on the side of Mount Ossa, seven miles north-east of Larissa in Thessaly. Two field trips to them were made, in 2003 and 2004, and numerous photographs and samples were taken. I was accompanied throughout the second trip by a friendly and helpful little dog who seemed to be in charge of the quarries and associated church, and barked to point out anything interesting.

The grinning dog!

A rather less welcoming dog was encountered on the island of Iona in 2002, the only access being by a small side road on which the family dog, perhaps annoyed at being ignored, bit returning. After exploring the quarry and talking with a delightful old lady with a face as lined as a walnut, who lived nearby and remembered the marble leaving in 1956 (on its way to the Cathedral), the dog had been chained up, but I looked back and it was gazing after me and grinning.

In many Mediterranean countries, carrying enough water to avoid dehydration can be a real problem, for public transport is usually sparse in the countryside and a lengthy, two-way walk to ancient quarries normally necessary. But in Connemara in Ireland it was just too much, rather than too little, water. Connemara Green marble was produced at three quarries at Streamstown, Barnaroyan and Lissouther, all near Clifden, capital of Connemara. Two visits were made to the quarries, in 2002 and 2007, and it rained, not heavily but persistently all day. The advantage of rain, however, is that it brings out all the colours and patterning of the marble, and the wet quarry faces and marble blocks looked spectacular. Another spectacular but wet place was Monte Altissimo in Tuscany, where Michelangelo obtained much of the marble for his sculptures, and which I visited in 2004. The mist was eddying and swirling all around me, frustrating any attempt to relate the map to a landmark. It was only when it finally cleared that I knew where I was.

Other hazards include flooded quarries, unstable mounds of marble rubble, lengths of discarded steel wire used to cut the marble (and trip the unwary), and fatigue leading to loss of concentration. After travelling twelve miles by bus from Athens in 2003, I reached Mount Pentelikon, source of the white Pentelic marble used by Pericles to build the Parthenon in fifth century BC Athens. The aim was to find the ancient workings. However, after several exhausting and frustrating hours on the mountain, the mound of marble rubble I was negotiating (one of many resulting from illegal quarrying over the last century which now conceal the ancient site) gave way under me. Coming to alter the fall I found I couldn’t breathe and believed I had broken my ribs. Only slowly did my breath come back and I realized I had landed first on my staff, then on my leg (which took three months to recover) and only finally on my chest. Back in England the next day, my doctor pointed out that I was both very foolhardy and very fortunate, and should be in a Greek hospital.

My most memorable experience in exploring ancient quarries must have been at Gebel Dokhan, Mons Porphyrites, the Mountain of Smoke, in the Egyptian Eastern Desert – where the Roman Emperors obtained their purple Imperial Porphyry. In the Cathedral it can be seen on the wall of St Patrick’s Chapel and on the floor of St Paul’s Chapel. Accessible until the 1990s, the Islamic terrorist threat has now virtually closed the Eastern Desert to Westerners. After several unsuccessful attempts I finally got there in 2006 with a group of academics who were studying desert rock art. After exploring another Roman quarry, Mons Claudianus that day, the sun was low in the sky as we drove our two-wheel-drive vehicles past an ancient Roman settlement and up the ravine towards Gebel Dokhan between towering purple mountains. By the time we got there it was late afternoon and after a brief exploration of the Roman quarries, fort and shrines we had to leave – only to get jammed in the rocks. I was fervently hoping that we would have to spend the night there and I could explore the site properly, but the Bedouin drivers jacked us out and then drove at breakneck speed down the wadis and ravines and across the desert under the stars. Several times during that surreal, night-time desert journey of several hours I said to myself, ‘You must always remember this’.

Approaching Mons Porphyrites, the Mountain of Smoke, and the Roman Imperial Porphyry quarries at Gebel Dokhan, Egyptian Eastern Desert.

A white statuary marble quarry in the mist. Monte Altissimo, Tuscany, Italy.
Supporting those with Autism

How the Cathedral tries to help

Jane Asher

I first became involved with autism when I went to a children’s tea party in 1985. Children representing various charities were invited, and I remember the room being full of the noise and excited laughter that one would expect. What was different, though, was the intensity of the room: at first I couldn’t quite think why it stood out from the other three – the children had no obvious disability and looked quite ‘normal’ – but after a few seconds of watching I could clearly see that not only were the children unusually quiet, but that there was no interaction between them: no shouting or joking – no squabbling or arguing. They didn’t even look at each other – indeed they seemed completely unaware of each other’s presence. The difference from the behaviour of the other children was so marked that I asked one of their helpers where they were from. They were, of course, autistic, and that was when my association – and, in some ways, fascination – with autism began.

Autism strikes those affected in three vital areas: social communication, social interaction and imagination. On first hearing this one might well assume that the effects were fairly minor – perhaps involving a child having problems with a speech impediment, being stubborn and less creative or inventive than his peers. But it means far more than this: difficulties in these three areas hit at the very heart of the way we function in the world around us – a child with autism, if given no help, may never be able to speak and can be effectively shut in a sad, terrifying and lonely world where everywhere outside is mysterious and incomprehensible. The only social signals that we take for granted are meaningless and confusing: why do people smile when they greet each other? What do they mean when they say ‘hello’? The nuances, exaggerations and pretences of conversation can be taken literally – why do people say it’s raining cats and dogs when it patently isn’t? No simple assumptions can be made: going for a walk may be terrifying – so the government isn’t valid and you fall through it? The noise of the person breathing next to you may be unbearable: a hissing, sawing gas path that threatens unmentionable horror.

O’Leary asked what the Archbishop should wear: it hadn’t struck me that there would be a choice. When I told him I was planning gold sequins he started talking about purple cloaks…

We had a wonderful programme: for the second time ECA music, the well-known city-based choir conducted by Wimbledon-based lawyer Tim Crosely, sang for us and we were sold out on the evening. I persuaded two good friends, Richard Stilge and Martin Jarvis, to read for us and the evening concluded with a blessing from the Archbishop. The atmosphere in St Clement Danes was extraordinary during some of the beautiful, uplifting songs – if ever I was to be converted out of my atheism it would be at moments like that: churches and holy music combined are powerful emotional tools.

Thank you, Cardinal Nichols

We raised £11,000, which is a great achievement in these very difficult economic times, and the money raised will go the NAS Employee Mentoring Scheme. I’m so grateful to all those who helped us make the evening such a success, and particularly to Cardinal Vincent Nichols. The week after our concert I was lucky enough to be asked to read at a service in Westminster Cathedral, and I feel very privileged to have ‘performed’ twice alongside such a gentle, charming and clearly good man: I’m delighted he’s been chosen to be a Cardinal and send him all my congratulations and good wishes for the future.

Jane Asher is President of the National Autistic Society. She is also an acclaimed actress, author and entrepreneur.

John XXIII's Decalogue

Dylan Parry

Just for Today… John XXIII’s Decalogue

T hose familiar with 12-Step programmes of recovery may have come across a helpful little card called ‘Just for Today’. It is a masterful piece of spiritual wisdom, all the more so for its simplicity and humanity. In it, ten easy points are presented, each stating a different card which, when followed, promises abandonment to God’s will and individual human progress.

This simple set of rules helped me a great deal when I was in my late 20s. At the time I believed they’d been written by an American psychologist. So, imagine my delight when I recently discovered that the real author behind them was the soon-to-be Saint John XXIII – ‘Good Pope John!’

Originally called The Daily Decalogue of Pope John XIII, this little ‘rule’ was slightly adapted by Al-Anon (a group for relatives and friends of alcoholics) into what is now called the ‘Just for Today’ card. Here is Pope John’s original decalogue for daily living, which begins with the words ‘Only for today…’:

1) Only for today, I will seek to live the lifelong day positively without wishing to solve the problems of my life all at once.
2) Only for today, I will take the greatest care in my appearance: I will dress modestly; I will not raise my voice; I will be courteous in my behaviour; I will not criticise anyone; I will not turn to improve or to discipline anyone except myself.
3) Only for today, I will be happy in the certainty that I was created to be happy, not only in the other world but also in this one.
4) Only for today, I will adapt to circumstances, without requiring all circumstances to be adapted to my own wishes.
5) Only for today, I will devote 10 minutes of my time to some good reading, remembering that just as food is necessary to the life of the body, so good reading is necessary to the life of the soul.
6) Only for today, I will do one good deed and not tell anyone about it.
7) Only for today, I will do at least one thing I do not like doing; and if my feelings are hurt, I will make sure that no one notices.
8) Only for today, I will make a plan for myself: I may not follow it to the letter, but I will make it.
9) Only for today, I will be on guard against two evils: hastiness and indecision.
10) Only for today, I will firmly believe, despite appearances, that the good Providence of God cares for me as no one else who exists in this world.

1) On only for today, I will take the greatest care of my physical health.
2) On only for today, I will adapt to circumstances.
3) On only for today, I will do at least one thing I do not like doing; and if my feelings are hurt, I will make sure that no one notices.
4) On only for today, I will make a plan for myself: I may not follow it to the letter, but I will make it.
5) On only for today, I will be on guard against two evils: hastiness and indecision.
6) On only for today, I will firmly believe, despite appearances, that the good Providence of God cares for me as no one else who exists in this world.

8) On only for today, I will do at least one thing I do not like doing; and if my feelings are hurt, I will make sure that no one notices.
9) On only for today, I will make a plan for myself: I may not follow it to the letter, but I will make it.
10) On only for today, I will do at least one thing I do not like doing; and if my feelings are hurt, I will make sure that no one notices.
11) On only for today, I will make a plan for myself: I may not follow it to the letter, but I will make it.
12) On only for today, I will do at least one thing I do not like doing; and if my feelings are hurt, I will make sure that no one notices.

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Jane Asher is President of the National Autistic Society. She is also an acclaimed actress, author and entrepreneur.
We Kiss the Holy Cross

Every month in the St Vincent de Paul School we have a prayer focus reflection. In April, our prayer focus theme is the Holy Cross.

April’s Prayer

Behold the wood of the cross

on which hung the Saviour of the world.

Come let us worship.

We adore you O Christ and we praise you because your holy cross you have saved the world.

Amen

Dylan Pugh, aged 11

In our school, during the month of April each year, we think about the Holy Cross. This is because we are in the season of Lent. During Lent we reflect on the Stations of the Cross, which represent what happened on Jesus’ journey to Calvary. Holy Week is the culmination of our Lenten reflection on the Holy Cross when Jesus was arrested, put on trial and crucified. On the road to Calvary, Jesus was helped by Simon of Cyrene to carry his cross. Every year the children in year 5 from our school enact a Passion Play in the Cathedral dramatizing the Stations of the Cross. I was given the honour of playing Simon of Cyrene last year and helping to hold the cross – I was so nervous and could only just hold the cross, but it did feel amazing that I was able to portray one of the most well-known participants from the Stations of the Cross. I would like to invite you all to come to our Passion Play this year on Thursday 10 April at 2.00pm in the Cathedral.

What does the Holy Cross mean for us? The Holy Cross is a symbol of hope, because Jesus died for our sins. For Christians, the cross is always around us – when we bless ourselves with Holy Water we use the sign of the cross, touching our forehead to remember God the Father, our chest to remember Jesus His son and each shoulder for the Holy Spirit. When we enter a church, one of the first things we see is a crucifix that reminds us that Jesus died for us – but the empty cross, the Holy Cross, reminds us that Jesus rose from the dead after his crucifixion.

During Holy Week one of the most well-known chants is used – ‘Behold the wood of the cross on which hung the Saviour of the World. Come let us worship’. Then we remember how much we love Jesus and are grateful to him, we kiss the Holy Cross. I now hope that the next time you enter the church you remember the sacrifice that Jesus made for us and kneel down before the cross to say a prayer of thanks.
Solvitur ambulando

My interest lay also because of a pending trip to Stratfield Saye in 2015, not 2014 as reported in last month’s Oremus. The Friends will be visiting Wellington’s house next year to mark the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. In 1817, a grateful nation gave the Duke of Wellington Stratfield Saye in recognition of his mighty victory over Old Boney. In 1828, the parish of Silchester was added to his lands and so it was that in the 1860s when the Revd James Joyce found some splendid mosaics under the turf they were deemed fit for removal and placed in the entrance hall at Stratfield.

It seemed too good an opportunity to miss and so our visit to Stratfield will include Silchester. 14 May 2015 holds out the prospect of a fine day (May is a ‘merrie month’) so it will be fitting to tread where gladiators trod before heading over to Wellington’s country pile. Reading the chapter lifted me out of the fog. Not quite ‘solvitur ambulando’ but almost.

A reminder that next month on 14 May that date again the Friends will be hosting a ‘Red Hat’ party for our new Cardinal. Tickets are just £10 available from the Friends’ Office and from reception in Clergy House.

The Friends page for April should have been my account of our trip to Cambridge for a long-awaited catch-up with Mgr Mark Langham and a mooch around St John’s College. Alas, I spent the day paracetamol, a temperature and a blinding headache and was forced to stay home.

It was odd to pass the hours in the footsteps of the Friends, in abstience. I found myself thinking, about now they ‘will now be celebrating Mass’; and ‘now they will be on the tour – strolling along the ‘backs’ and ‘now they will be enjoying a cream tea’ (not in truth something I missed, feeling dreadful). There was the awful possibility that ‘now’ they might have been stuck on the motorway but I hoped not.

Late in the afternoon I rallied and, bored, dug out something to read. I wasn’t up to a novel and complex characterisations, so settled on Charlotte Higgins’s book about Roman Britain Linder Another Sky. Higgins, helpfully, has dissected her book into chapters that cover various locations: Kent and Essex, Norfolk, London et al. A chapter was ‘just enough’: read, make more tea, refill hot water bottle.

Silchester got a chapter all to itself – a Roman site buried, as she writes, ‘for the most part beneath soil and an ocean of tall grass through which the wind sings’. I loved it – maybe it was early on in the trek around Roman Britain and her enthusiasm was undiminished. (Her journey along the Antonine Wall seemed positively reckless at times.) But at Silchester, Hampshire’s Pompeii, Higgins revelled in the secrets of Calleva Atrebatum – once one of the most important towns in Roman Britain. ‘To be here in Midsummer is to witness the actual triumph of nature over street and stone,’ she writes.
Approaching God through Music  
A Pathway to Salvation  

Colin Mawby, KSG

One of the extraordinary aspects of Bach’s music is its massive architecture. It reflects in human terms the structure of creation. Pope Benedict, during his homily in 2010 at the Consecration of La Sagrada Familia said: ‘Gaudi, by opening his spirit to God, was capable of creating ... a space of beauty, faith and hope which leads man to an encounter with Him who is truth and beauty itself’. Pope John Paul in his letter to artists written in 1999 stated: ‘The church needs musicians. How many sacred works have been composed through the ages by people deeply imbued with the sense of mystery! The faith of countless believers has been nourished by melodies flowing from the hearts of other believers, either introduced into the liturgy or used as an aid to dignified worship. In song, faith is experienced as vibrant joy, love and confident expectation of the saving intervention of God.’

These two statements aptly describe the theology of sacred music. Who can hear the Sanctus of Bach’s B minor Mass without being overwhelmed by its glorious majesty and magnificent structure? Music can transcend human limitations and command us to stand in awe of that which is beyond understanding. It is a pathway to God and salvation.

I never cease to be amazed at the economy of Creation. A small acom becomes a huge oak, a cell divides and results in a Beethoven or an Einstein. This also applies to music whose tonality nearly always grows from seven white notes and five black, twelve semitones in all. This apparently limited template has given human kind sounds that express the very essence of its emotional and intellectual being. Again, a box with four strings or a tube with a few valves can produce music of ineffable beauty. This brings us face to face with the magnificence and creative power of Almighty God. How can we thank Him for giving us such an overpowering and wonderful gift? Victor Hugo wrote: ‘Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to remain silent’. This is undoubtedly the core of music: it transcends speech and guides us into the realms of the inexpressible. It leads us into a world far removed from our normal everyday experience and causes us to contemplate the sublime mystery of Divine love.

The sensuality and divinity of music

I have no doubt that music can lead us to God but a distinction needs to be drawn between its sensuality and divinity. The sensuality is usually most enjoyable; the best pop music is an obvious example. It appeals to our baser instincts through rhythm, simple repetitive phrases and lyrics that connect with its fans. It speaks and gives pleasure to many millions. The huge numbers that attend pop festivals are incredible evidence of its universal attraction. How extraordinary it is that a mere twelve semitones can lead to L2 and also Beethoven’s Missa Solemnis: Martin Luther wrote that, ‘Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world’. In this context, music undoubtedly enables us to approach God and glimpse, however well hidden, the wonders and joys of heaven.

Is it possible to pray through music? Ruth Burrows OCD in her visionary book Essence of Prayer (Burns & Oates, 2006) writes: ‘Almost always when we talk about prayer, we are thinking of something that we do... Our Christian knowledge assures us that prayer is essentially what God does, how God addresses us, looks at us. It is not primarily something we are doing to God but what God is doing for us. And what God is doing for us is giving us the Divine Self in love’. There are many similarities between this view on prayer and enjoying music. In prayer we aim to immerse ourselves in Divine love, when hearing music we can be overcome by its emotional power and intellectual rigour. In both cases it is God giving and revealing Himself. This convinces me that praying through music is an essential part of most people’s spiritual development. However, it throws into sharp relief the manner in which we pray in prayer and liturgical worship.

A deeper ‘active participation’

After the liturgical reforms that followed Vatican II, participation tended to be seen in terms of vocal response, declaiming acclamations and singing hymns and psalms; but surely it is much more than this! Internal participation is of far greater importance and this has been largely ignored. It is humanity contemplating and listening to God, hearing and acting on what He says. Listening is often thought of as something passive but this is a very one-sided view. It is difficult, needs an open mind stripped of selfishness but full of understanding tempered with acute sensitivity – listening has to be worked at. How many of us can claim to be good listeners? Internal participation is much more demanding than its opposite. Listening and absorbing music is a superb example. Our minds are concentrated and do not tolerate distraction. This is the ideal mental state for prayer but with music it is much easier to achieve!

I now write subjectively as a composer and musician. God has given us extraordinary gifts: we are flare paths that lead to Him and it involves great responsibility. Christ’s teaching that it is ‘easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven’ must apply not only to those of material wealth but also to those who have been given great gifts or even genius. With regular and systematic practice it is fairly easy to perform at some level and to play with soul or feeling is much more difficult. Without emotional and profound spiritual depth (not necessarily Christian) it is very difficult to sustain interest in the arts and particularly the musical. I love light music and surely the joy to be found in the best reflects that to be found in heaven. I relish the remark of the Swiss theologian Karl Barth: ‘It may be that when the angels go about their task of praising God they only play Bach. I am sure, however, that when they are together in onam le they play Mozart’. These two sentences encapsulate the huge and amazing variety of expression to be found in music.

Music: an aid to prayer

Prayer is an essential aid to belief and church musicians inspire people to pray. When I hear plainchant I know that I am in the presence of a mystery that speaks from beyond this world. In Ruth Burrows’ words: ‘God is giving us the Divine Self in love’. Canon Ronald Pilling, for many years a Cathedral chaplain, used to describe the chant as a ‘Sacrament’. If I omitted any during Mass he would come into my office at its conclusion and insist (very gently) that I sang him the missing chant. It is now obvious to me that he perceived chant as prayer and if it wasn’t sung he felt it a denigration of one of God’s greatest gifts. He was totally right and his views have shaped my attitude towards music and prayer. Musicians must have the greatest respect for music. It is an essential part of liturgical worship and should reach the highest artistic and inspirational levels: their achievement is the vocation of the musician. Unfortunately much contemporary liturgical music is very poor; tedious dissonances against simple rhythmic textures rather than raise their minds to God: it is man-centred rather than God-centred. Consider the immense Creation, the unlimited love that God has for man, the extraordinary astronomical discoveries, how can we repay these things? We should approach the Almighty on our knees; the ‘happy clappy’ has little to do with genuine worship. The church musician must always be aware of the spirituality of music and the manner in which it inspires people to approach God. It transcends the limitations of speech and leads us to the foothills of heaven.

There is a wonderful prayer written by the theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar: ‘What you are is God’s gift to you, what you become is your gift to God’. May I paraphrase this for liturgical musicians: ‘The inspiration of music is God’s gift to you, what you make of it is your gift to God’. As musicians we must always be conscious of the place of music in the salvation of souls.

Colin Mawby is a former Master of Music at Westminster Cathedral and an acclaimed organist, conductor and composer.

Throughout the Year

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<tr>
<th>Days</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>6.00pm: Scripture Discussion Group in Clergy House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>6.30pm: Guild of the Blessed Sacrament in the Cathedral Hall</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>7.30pm: The Catholic Evidence Guild in Clergy House</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>12.00pm: First Wednesday Quiet Days on the first Wednesday of every month in the Hinsley Room</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>6.30pm: The Legion of Mary in Clergy House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>7.00pm: Charismatic Prayer Group in the Cathedral Hall</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
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**GRAND ORGAN FESTIVAL 2014**

Recitals take place on Wednesdays at 7.30pm. Admission free, donations welcome.

**30 April:** Philippe Lefebvre (Notre-Dame de Paris)

The Rosary is prayed each weekday in the Lady Chapel after the 5.30pm Mass. The Chaplet of Divine Mercy is said in the St Patrick’s Chapel every Sunday at 1.00pm. Other groups that regularly include the SVP, the Interfaith Group, the Nigerian Catholic Association, Oblates of the Cathedral, the Filipino Centre, CRAC and the Variety. Times and dates are prone to change – please check the newsletter for details or contact Clergy House Reception.
The Ampullae that contain the Holy Oils

The images show the ampullae, which contain the sacred oils consecrated by the Cardinal Archbishop during the Chrism Mass. Once filled, the ampullae, which from their hallmarks can be dated to 1930, are kept in a special aumbrey, behind a copper door with a central panel of repousse brass, in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. The vessels are marked with letters corresponding to the oil contained inside: ‘I’ for the Oil of the Sick (Infirmorum), ‘C’ for the Oil of Chrism and ‘B’ for the Oil of Baptism – also known as the Oil of Catechumens. During the annual consecration of the Holy Oils, the Cardinal breathes on the Oil of Chrism to invoke the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

Cathedral History
The First Pulpit – June 1903

The photograph is of the first pulpit which was installed in the Cathedral in June 1903. It was ordered from Rome by Cardinal Herbert Vaughan, founder of the Cathedral, designed by Cavaliere Aristide Leonori, an artist employed by the Vatican, and made by the firm of Ditta Paolo Medici & Figlio. It is in the Byzantine style, copied by the Cosmati craftsmen of Rome in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and consists of white Carrara marble inlaid with panels of purple and green porphyry and glass mosaic tesserae. The pulpit was paid for by Ernest Kennedy, an important benefactor of the Cathedral.

Although appropriate in style for the Cathedral, the pulpit faced growing criticism because of its position, inconvenient steps and small size. Two replacements were designed but rejected and in 1914 a wooden pulpit was built alongside. This was used until 1934 when Cardinal Francis Bourne had the original pulpit completely reconstructed to increase its size and height, by adding eight new colonettes to bear the weight of the structure, while retaining the original porphyry and mosaic decoration. PR

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The Month of April

**The Opening of New Life**

The name of this month is thought to derive from the Latin apertura – to open: and certainly not only in relation to the natural world but also the spiritual one. The uncertainty and timidity with which we perceive signs of spring in the earth are perhaps also mirrored as we perceive signs of spring in the soul. This wonderful fourteenth century saint has much to teach our busy, short-sighted society. You are rewarded, she says in her Dialogue 162, ‘not according to your work or your time but according to the measure of your love.’

**Sunday 13 April (Easter octave)**

**St Vincent Ferrer** or **Lent Feria**

**Cathedral Facilities Manager**

**Joanna Oliver-Sharratt**

**Richard Webster**

**Chapel of Ease**

**Michael St Aubyn**

**Timothy Ayles** and **Philippa Neal**

**From the Registers**

**Music Department**

**Antonia Brizard** or **Master of Music**

**Peter Stevens,** **Avant Master of Music**

**Edward Summington,** **Organ Scholar**

**Cathedral Commercial Manager**

**Johnty Daly**

**Cathedral Facilities Manager**

**Chapel Organist**

**Estate Manager**

**Neil Farbham**

**Chapel of Ease**

**Sacred Heart Church, Monastery Road SW11 2EF**

**Hospital Services**

The Cathedral opensshortly before the first Mass of the day; doors close at 7.00pm, Monday to Saturday, with occasional exceptions. On Sunday evenings, the Cathedral closes after the 5.00pm service. On Public and Bank holidays the Cathedral closes at 1.00pm in the afternoon.

**Monday to Friday**

Masses: 7.00am; 10.30am (said in Latin); 12.30pm; and 6.00pm.

Morning Prayer Lady Chapel: 7.45am.

Evening Prayer (Latin Vesper) sung by the Lay Clerks in Lady Chapel: 5.30pm. ‘Except Tuesday when it is sung in English: Solemn Mass sung by the Bishop; 5.30pm. Rosary will be prayed after the 5.30pm Mass.

**Saturday**

Masses: 8.00am; 9.00am; 10.30am; and 12.30pm.

Morning Prayer Lady Chapel: 10.00am. Solemn Mass sung by the Choir: 10.30am. Evening Prayer of Sunday Lady Chapel: 5.30pm. First Mass of Sunday: 6.00pm.

**Sunday**

Masses: 8.00am; 9.00am; 10.30am; 12.00 noon; 5.30pm; and 7.00pm. Morning Prayer (Lady Chapel): 10.00am. Solemn Mass sung by the Choir: 10.30am. Solemn Vespers and Benediction 3.30pm. Organ Recital when scheduled.

**Holidays of Obligation**

As Monday-Friday, Vespers Mass (in the previous day) at 3.50pm.

**Public Holidays**

Masses: 10.30am, 12.30pm, and 5.00pm.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

This takes place in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel every Monday to Friday following the 1.30pm Mass until 4.45pm.

**Sacraments**

Confessions are heard at the following times: Saturday: 10.30am-6.30pm; Sunday: 11.00am-6.00pm.

**Public Holidays**

Masses: 10.30am, 12.30pm, and 5.00pm.

**Enquiries about arranging a funeral**

Contact the Administrator, or the Chapels Organist.

**Register of Nurses and Care Assistants needed for small private nursing home in Pimlico**

Please call 0207 821 9001 to arrange an interview. Please ask for Caroline or Yvonne.

**A.U.S.S.I.**

(Alumnamin U.S.A. Society Sanctoralis Internationale International Association of Ursuline Past Pupils)

A.U.S.S.I. meets in the UK four times a year at Westminster Cathedral with lunchtime Masses in January, June, November, followed by an optional Lunch. An Annual General Meeting also takes place in October in the Hinde Room. All past pupils of Ursuline schools in Europe are members and are most welcome to attend – there are no subscriptions. A.U.S.S.I. is governed by the General Assembly of the Ursuline Order under the Mother General in Rome. For more information, please contact the President-secretary Mrs Theresia Haverly – tel: 020 8213 1367 or visit: http://www.aussi.org/

If you would like to contact fellow past Ursuline pupils in a social way, this could be for you!
The Stabat Mater is a mournful poem reflecting upon the sorrows of Mary as her Son hung on the Cross, which has been prayed since mediæval times. It has also been set to music by a wide range of composers going back to the 1400s. The opening verse, which sets the tone, begins: ‘Stabat mater dolorosa’, ‘the sorrowful mother stood’. Translated into English it begins: ‘At the Cross her station keeping/ Stood the mournful mother weeping/ Close to Jesus to the last’.

The three-line structure of each verse and the metre closely resembles the funereal Dies Irae. The Stabat Mater has one extra stanza. The whole of the text graphically describes the mother of Christ at the foot of the Cross, a favourite theme of mediæval piety. It was probably written by a Franciscan monk, Jacopone da Todi (1228-1306).

Though this devotional poem has only been used as a sequence in Catholic liturgy, set to plainchant melody since 1727, composers had been setting the Blessed Virgin’s sorrow at the foot of the Cross to music much earlier, most notably Palestrina, the sixteenth century master of polyphony. A chorister himself in the major choirs of Rome, including the Pope’s own choir, the Capella Giulia, he wrote much sacred music, as did his Flemish contemporary Josquin des Prez, writing in the fifteenth century, an acknowledged master of polyphony before its development by the likes of Palestrina.

Moving into the Baroque musical period, several settings of the Stabat Mater were made by the prolific opera composer Alessandro Scarlatti who died in 1725, and one by his son Domenico, specifically for ten voices. Around this time another Italian, Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, who died tragically young at 26, composed perhaps one of the most stunning settings of the work. In 1735, a year before his tragic death, he moved to the Franciscan monastery at Pozzuoli, where he wrote his powerful interpretation of the poem. In 1767, the great Haydn composed his famous and lengthy work he himself wrote, ‘I set to music with all my power the setting, though only for a small orchestra and choir. Of the three-linestructure of each verse and the metre closely resembles the funereal Dies Irae, dedicated to the memory of the victimsof Auschwitz. Another Pole, less avant-garde than Penderecki, Szymaowski, made a setting of the Stabat Mater sung in his native tongue, first performed in Warsaw in 1929. Seventeen years later the English composer Lennox Berkeley won much acclaim for his setting of the religious work. In France, a composer who made his name in the 1920s in association with ‘Les Six’, Poulenc, set the work to music in 1950, following the death of a close friend. And as recently as 2008, Karl Jenkins premièred his Stabat Mater, a composition about grief, in Liverpool.

For over seven hundred years, in a variety of tongues and settings the Stabat Mater reminds us through Mary of the grief of mothers everywhere, whose only death strikes a beloved son or daughter. Particularly one who is an innocent victim. As the opening of the seventh verse, one of the most moving passages, asks: ‘Quando corpus morietur’ says, ‘when my body perishes, grant my soul the glory of Heaven’.

Another nineteenth century composer whose reputation increased from his setting of the poem (1877) was Dvořák, the first Bohemian composer to achieve world-wide recognition. Around this time another central European, the Hungarian, Liszt, who took minor orders, set the Stabat Mater to music, as did a later Hungarian, Kodály. Towards the end of the century, and towards the end of his life, the great opera composer Verdi wrote Four Sacred Pieces, the final being the Stabat Mater, in 1896-7. Elsewhere in Europe, the Irish composer Charles Stanford (1852-1924) included the Stabat Mater among his numerous choral settings. The coming of the twentieth century did not diminish the appeal of the Virgin’s sorrows to the composer. Arvo Part (born 1935) put Estonia on the musical map, and his religious compositions, notably his Stabat Mater, were critiques of the atheist yoke his country was under for so long. His Polish contemporary, Penderecki, made a setting of the work and of the Dies Irae, dedicated to the memory of the victims of Auschwitz. Another Pole, less avant-garde than Penderecki, Szymaowski, made a setting of the Stabat Mater sung in his native tongue, first performed in Warsaw in 1929. Seventeen years later the English composer Lennox Berkeley won much acclaim for his setting of the religious work. In France, a composer who made his name in the 1920s in association with ‘Les Six’, Poulenc, set the work to music in 1950, following the death of a close friend. And as recently as 2008, Karl Jenkins premièred his Stabat Mater, a composition about grief, in Liverpool.

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