

Cathedral Deanery Newsletter

Eastertide 2021



Dear brothers and sisters across the Cathedral Deanery,

Like so many things, our plan to have a regular deanery newsletter was swamped last year by the confusion of the Pandemic, but now that there is some sense that we can begin to build a new future together it seemed a good time to resurrect it. I hope that you will find it helpful and interesting – and of course if you have any ideas for things to include, please do contact Becky* (thank you so much, Becky, for editing this) or myself.

A little over a year ago Bishop Richard was speaking at a meeting of the deans from all across the Diocese. At that meeting he gave us an insight into his vision of what the Diocese, and its parishes, might hope to become, and I thought it would be good to share that with you. Here it is, slightly rearranged to make it easier to think about in separate phrases.

*“May our parishes be communities of saints:
where the liturgy is always recognised as an encounter with the wonder of heaven;
where people and clergy, fed by the Word Who is Life,
[bring] that life into every moment of their lives and into every encounter with every other person;
where young people grow in deep love for the Gospel,
for the Sacramental Life of the Church and in prayer –
leading them to spread the Gospel, calling others into relationship with Christ.”*

This is a great vision, even an exciting vision. We all have a part to play in making it happen, with God’s help. You might like to pray about it, think about it, perhaps even talk with some friends about it. Just the first line gives us plenty to think about: are our parishes communities? Am I committed to becoming a saint? (Do you know these words from Léon Bloy: *“The only real sadness, the only real failure, the only great tragedy in life, is not to become a saint.”*) Perhaps the biggest question for each of us is: in what ways am I, consciously or unconsciously, getting in the way of this? Please God, help me to get out of your way!

There is plenty for us to think about, and it will be a great adventure for us all to set out on together.

Best wishes to you all,

Fr Peter Newsam

Dean of the Cathedral Deanery

peter.newsam@abdiocese.org.uk

* You can contact Becky via the Chichester Parish

Office: chichester@abdiocese.org.uk

Cathedral Deanery Parish Websites

Petworth & Midhurst: petworthcatholic.org

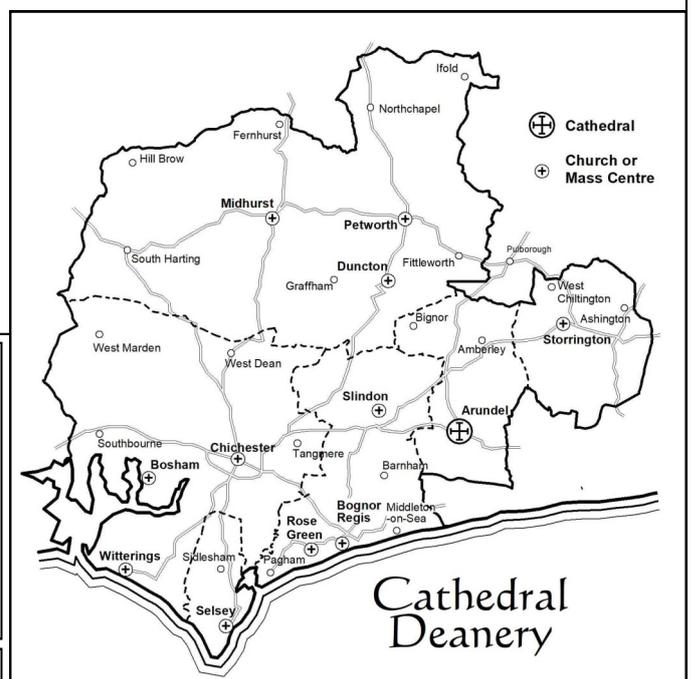
Storrington: ourladyofengland.parishportal.net

Arundel: arundelcathedral.uk

Bognor: bognorcatholicparish.co.uk

Selsey: stwilfridselsey.co.uk

Chichester & Witterings: strichardschichester.co.uk



The Arundel and Brighton Diocesan Trust is a Registered Charity No. 252878

Change on the horizon for the Selsey, Witterings and Chichester parishes

In early June, Bishop Richard will visit our churches in Selsey, the Witterings, Bosham and Chichester, to talk about the future of the Church in that part of the deanery, in particular how its structure will change and adapt for the mission to proclaim Christ to the world around and in accordance with the diocesan Pastoral Plan.

If you wish to revisit the Pastoral Plan, 'The Word who is Life', it can be read at:

abdiocese.org.uk/diocese/pastoral-plan

Bognor Regis and Slindon, *Scripture Saturdays*

As part of our celebration of the *Year of the Word of God*, we began a series of meetings which we called *Scripture Saturdays*. These have been very successful and now continue on a regular basis through the year. Each meeting combines some excellent input from either David Beresford (David and his wife Sarah are Directors of the Catholic Bible School) or Kathleen O'Gorman (Scripture professor at St John's Seminary, Wonersh) with opportunities for reflection, sharing and prayer.



"Scripture Saturdays are a great opportunity to dive deep into scripture, to ask questions and to share our faith with others."

"Such an enjoyable way to explore scripture, no expertise needed!"

... just a couple of comments from participants on previous sessions.

Our next *Scripture Saturday* is 17th April, 11am-1pm and Kathleen will lead us in a reflection on an aspect of The Acts of the Apostles. Coming up on 9th May and 12th June, we'll examine the place of the great exiles to Egypt and Babylon in our journey of faith, and after a break for the summer, on 11th September and 9th October we'll look at the letters of the New Testament.

Everyone is very welcome to join - the link to join the meeting can be found on the Bognor parish website - www.bognorcatholicparish.co.uk – we look forward to seeing you!

Invited: Lent 2021 and beyond



The first season of *Invited* brought people across our Diocese together; exploring God's great love for us and journeying in faith with one another saw many friendships formed. There have been over 10,000 views of the episodes and hundreds of people from across the Diocese joined online discussion groups, either in their parishes or in the huge Zoom meetings run by the Formation Team on Thursday nights. The mission doesn't end there and the Formation Team looks forward to bringing you a monthly reflection and *Season 1: A Deep Dive*, a series of talks, in the Autumn.

There are many ways to be involved in your Church, both locally and across our Diocese, and the Team has produced an [Invited follow-up booklet](#) listing just some of them. They hope that you will be engaged and inspired by the opportunities available, continuing our shared work and mission. Contact details are provided with each entry and you are welcome to get in touch, even if it's just to find out more!

You can download the booklet and find out more about *Invited* at abdiocese.org.uk/invited.

A new passion for prayer



Melissa and Lucy are two young people from the parish of Bognor Regis and Slindon, and are currently part of theAscent process. Here Melissa shares how the Ascent has helped her deepen her prayer life.

When I thought about prayer before I started *theAscent*, I often thought of formula, tradition and rules. I would sit down every night before bed and say thank you, sorry and please (in that order) and hope that someone was listening. Then I would finish with an “Amen” and go to sleep. As much as I find routine helpful sometimes, this way of praying didn’t engage me, help me or even interest me when I followed the same steps every evening.

What I am realising more and more is that for me, prayer is freedom. You can carry it around with you all day and use it when you feel ready or compelled to. It isn’t a place (like the foot of your bed or a church), it isn’t a time (like first thing or before bed). Prayer can be experienced in all its glory wherever and whenever you need it. During my journey with *theAscent*, I have tried many different types of prayer to find the one that suits me best. We are encouraged when on weekend retreats at Worth Abbey to make the most of the grounds for “activation” (a time of reflection and contemplation) and personal prayer, and it turns out that going on walks surrounded by nature is my favourite time and place for prayer. I am able to use my passion for nature and the beauty of the earth to really communicate with God and establish a very real connection with them; God is the creator after all! Prayer doesn’t feel like a routine for me anymore and I don’t feel any guilt or pressure that I’m not praying “correctly”; I feel relaxed, comfortable and at ease.

Another thing that has really influenced my prayer journey is the incredible young people who are also on *theAscent*. My group continue to inspire me every time they share their experiences, and I am so excited to continue my prayer life with fantastic peers and friends growing alongside me. In short, I am immensely grateful for *theAscent*, and to the Cathedral Deanery for the opportunity, as my prayer life has been completely transformed already – and I am only half-way through the process! I feel so proud of how far I’ve come, and I can’t wait to go further with prayer!

Lucy and Melissa have recorded a podcast about their experiences with theASCENT process. You can listen to it on the Bognor parish website: bognorcatholicparish.co.uk/discipleship

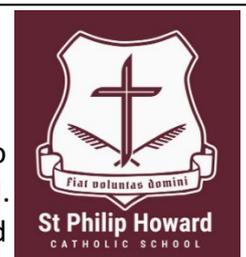
The parishes of the Cathedral Deanery are very grateful to the Arundel and Chichester Catenian Circles for their help with funding our young people on theAscent programme.

Chaplaincy at the St Philip Howard Catholic High School

A reflection, by Chaplaincy Team Member Joe Farrell

Almost two years ago, when the team first started, nobody knew what to expect: two ex-students and a psychology student coming together to enrich the chaplaincy at SPH. We hit the ground running with the Year Seven Days of Reflection: days when we would take students off site, in this case to the Free Church in Yapton, and engage in a multitude of activities focused on their faith and the wider community. The Year Sevens, as newbies, had the same unknowingness and an overshadowed confidence that was yet to come out.

The term seemed to rattle by as we were trying to find our feet and place amongst the team and in the SPH community. For me, there was the highly daunting realisation of how many students there are, and how many you can get to know. As someone who has often been shy and found it hard to talk to people, especially about my own faith, introductions and testimonies were far from my lips. Our next real challenge was another Day of Reflection, this time with Year Eleven, which was done in a conference style, on site. It had a more detailed and exploratory character, allowing the older students to come to terms with the more advanced theology of their Catholic Faith. With testimony ranging from military service in the Mediterranean Refugee Crisis to how science and faith can go hand in hand, the range of content that the



students could pick from was amazing. I led a session based around prayer, with a variety of media that the group could use to aid their own prayer, from Bible Journaling to structured Rosary and Daily Prayer. The session concluded with a time of Adoration in the chapel and proved to be really successful. And just like that, it was the season of Advent, with a number of services and liturgies to prepare for.

By this point the team's strengths and weaknesses were apparent and we were utilizing each other as best we could to cater for the needs of the school. Initiating "small groups" made up of students from all backgrounds within a year group. This, for me, was a perfect way to tackle the confidence issues that I have had, and really get to know a group of students. The groups participate in games, activities and prayer focused on the theme for the week. Since we started we have initiated six small groups, each with different themes and focuses. My Year Eight group, named Journey, is focusing on biblical texts and the layout of the Bible, starting with the creation story in Genesis and making their way through the Old Testament to the time of Christ, understanding how the timeline is set out and how it links so greatly to what Jesus said and did during his life.

It seemed as we entered Lent 2020 and headed toward the Easter season that we had really settled into our work and were laying the foundations for what we all wanted to achieve during our apprenticeship at SPH. Then the world changed as Covid-19 changed everyone's lives, dictated what we were able to do and what we could not and forced all that we had built up to adapt to the "New Normal".

The chaplaincy at SPH became highly virtual: we gave weekly updates, very much like an assembly, on YouTube from home, as well as daily one-minute updates on our Instagram, and we sent out our Prayer Sheets with daily and weekly content to everyone who would make use of it. During the month of May we led the Rosary, for the Virgin Mary. The six months we did have at school showed us the importance of variety, the need for constant content and how just a few minutes a day can be vitally important for the majority of our young people. Until the start of the new calendar year, 2021, I never felt like we had shifted lockdown: the constant state of flux led to so much uncertainty in what we would be able to do when we did finally return to face-to-face chaplaincy. During the lockdowns, we managed to lead two virtual Days of Reflection, with interactive online content as well as virtual talks and activities that we took it in turns to lead. We focused on things that would alleviate the mental stress that students were very likely to be experiencing, from making bird feeders with recycled materials as part of Pope Francis' call to us in *Laudato Si'* to, in contrast, switching off for a time of guided meditational prayer.

As we returned to school, firstly as a small body of key-worker students, later as a complete community, it was apparent that our roles as chaplains had greatly shifted towards the pastoral, from the evangelisation roles we had when we began. All of us picked up students who needed our listening ear, which was highly rewarding. The challenges that many of the young people face are humbling. Over the past year I have faced many personal challenges and the students' examples have shown us how to get on as well as we possibly can. As an ecclesial body we must take so many steps to encourage our young people to voice their opinions, because it is those same young people who will bring the energy and drive to achieve what they set out to do. Many if not all of you reading this will understand that Catholic community feel, that you are part of something great, a family-like gathering for sharing, growing and glorifying the Gospel. That is no doubt what it has been to be an apprentice at SPH over the last few years. I am excited to see where the Lord guides me next on my journey, but our time as a chaplaincy team at SPH is so important, as we imprint our legacy on the students as they grow in their faith.

I could have written so many more things that have happened during these two years, from our learning trips to other chaplaincies across our diocese to leading activities in our sister primary schools, and a great number of charitable events and days to benefit our local communities. Without the amazing students and the ability to work in such a close-knit team none of it would have been possible. I hope that each of the students we have worked with over our time at SPH have experienced something good about their faith, no matter how small.

With every blessing and our prayers

Joe and the Chaplaincy Team, St Philip Howard Catholic High School