

ParishQuarterly

Our Lady & All Saints Catholic Church, Otley

www.olasotley.org

CHRISTMAS 2020



Fr Lawrie's message for Christmas

When I wrote about “waiting” in the Easter edition of this publication little did I think we would still be “waiting”. Advent is all about waiting and indeed many of the scriptures are waiting for the coming of God in glory and among us. Rather than my words, below is a reminder of Pope Francis and his words of wisdom from much the same time. They are as fresh today as they were then. I wish you and yours a very holy and happy Christ Mass and keep you continually in my prayers.

Father Lawrie

One of the most poignant images of the Covid-19 pandemic this past year was surely Pope Francis walking slowly across an empty St Peter's Square in Rome to deliver what would normally be his **Urbi et Orbi** message in front of hundreds of thousands of people. He painted a sad solitary figure before delivering an Extraordinary Moment of Prayer. He spoke of the “darkness that has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void...we find ourselves lost and afraid” with “each of us in need of comforting the other.” And he went on to suggest that “our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people...who, though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives...ordinary people, often forgotten people, doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women and so very many others, uncovering once more that common belonging of which we cannot be deprived, our belonging as sisters and brothers.”



New Challenges

I remember watching the news from Italy showing the harrowing scenes as this virus with a strange name hit their nation. Even at that point, it seemed unreal, and I suppose I, like a lot of people still didn't think it would affect us here in the UK. Then suddenly over a period of a few days, all the schools were sent home and I was sent home from work. Everything stopped. We were queuing at the supermarkets, terrified of coming into close contact with anyone – life seemed to have changed completely and I really couldn't get my head around it. It all seemed unreal and as if it was happening to some one else. This new way of life which had been imposed on us so suddenly brought many challenges; home schooling, setting up a home office in a bedroom and not being able to do pretty much anything, it was stressful to say the least.

The hardest part though was taking my mum's shopping week after week and sitting with her in her garden, at times freezing cold, and trying to keep her spirits up.

But we got through it. Slowly things improved and little triumphs were had, who knew that a trip to the garden centre could be such a momentous occasion? The post lockdown haircut – now that was special! I, like many people have learned a lot this year, patience, an appreciation of the simple things in life and that nothing should be taken for granted. This year seems to have flown by and I am sure that next year will be a better one. I hope that this experience has changed me, for the better. At the start of the pandemic someone said to me that this had to happen because "we were going too fast" and I think they were probably right.

Denise Emmett

Learning under lockdown



Life for our local school children was so different. Here's what Leona and Eva had to say; At first, when Lockdown was announced, I thought it was good because it would be like a holiday, but I was wrong. We got a lot more homework, much more than what we did in class. While the first week might have been fun, lockdown soon got really boring.

I missed spending time with my friends. Talking with them through video calls was not the same as talking with them face to face. On the bright side, I spent more time with my family, and we did lots of things together like playing board games, charades and baking. Lockdown also gave me time to work on my hobbies like playing the piano, singing and painting.



- The lockdown was long and not fun. I was really sad that I couldn't meet my best friend in person, but I had zoom calls with her once in a while. My family were all at home, and everyone seemed busy on their laptops and tablets all day! In lockdown, studies were very different as I was home schooled. I missed my teachers.

I spent a lot of time with my sister. We made lots of cakes and came up with some dance routines. I also wrote a song for the NHS workers during lockdown and I was very proud of it.

Singing under Lockdown



I had marked a special event in my diary for Saturday 21 March 2020. We (Leeds Festival Chorus) were looking forward to performing Mendelssohn's wonderful oratorio "Elijah" with international soloists and the Royal Northern Sinfonia conducted by Simon Wright at Leeds Town Hall that evening. We were most disappointed to learn on 17 March that Leeds City Council had cancelled all concerts because of the Pandemic.

The show must go on! Modern technology came to the rescue. We continued our regular Wednesday evening rehearsals (via Zoom) and even managed some recordings including Rachmaninov's Bogoroditzye Dyevo – the Ave Maria/Hail Mary in Russian. We could see and hear conductor Simon (in North Yorkshire) but he couldn't hear us and we couldn't hear each other! So 82 of us (out of 130) sang 'solo' and recorded the piece in our own homes (with belated apologies to neighbours!). We then sent our individual video-recordings to Rebecca (our brilliant accompanist and technologist in London) who 'tweaked and stitched them together' into one video collage. This is now on YouTube for those who would like to see and hear it: [youtube.com/watch?v=26ZtQ4LALZw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26ZtQ4LALZw) LFC is still doing Zoom rehearsals on Wednesdays and has also produced a 2021 Calendar (with original artwork and photos by members). Proceeds are going to St Gemma's Hospice.

Tony Hartigan

Open not closed

The Archbishop of Canterbury **Justin Welby** recently pointed out *“There were many headlines during the periods of lockdown that said that the churches were closed. The buildings may have been, and the sacramental life of the church was disrupted, but the Church itself was open. Christians of all denominations were seeking out and helping their neighbours and people in need.”*

Home learning in India

Over the years many of our Parishioners have supported Sylvia Wright and her work with very poor communities in Southern India. As well as the School for over 200 hearing impaired children, and the School of Nursing with over 100 students, Sylvia also established and runs a school for severely disabled children, some of whom have physical disabilities and others severe learning disabilities. The Lockdown in India meant a complete and immediate closure of the Schools, with anxious parents relying on the school staff making regular contact via visits and mobile phones to support parents through this difficult time. A lot of parents have written to Sylvia expressing their appreciation and we include here one such letter received from the mother of a little girl who has Cerebral Palsy; *“My daughter likes to be at school and found it difficult to be at home each day. The teacher has helped me so much with her regular call and visits. The teacher taught me how to help her dress and fasten the button on her dress. I helped my child to color pictures as taught in the school. Now she does the activities on her own. She has learnt to interact with others at the school and now she interacts with her brother showing affection.”*



“I missed going to my regular Mass, seeing so many familiar faces and Danny playing the organ: I streamed Mass from other parishes but nowhere is the same as your own with folk you know, your own bench, and that cosy feeling of belonging!”

Senior Citizen Parishioner

Please pray for:

Baptisms

Eliza Ivy Gilboy

Orla Maeve Davison

Hughie Ray Davison

William Charles Monkman

Frederick Otto Monkman

Roly George Monkman

Charlotte Karen Price

Olivia Sarah Timiney

Lucas Grayson Ulsh

Deceased

Daniel Wilkinson

Marcella Dickason

Bernadette Kerry

Anne Walsh

Fr Michael Sullivan

Sheila Foster

Gerald Francis

Jane Howes

Joan Sharp

Sarah Cullen

Patricia Rochford

Betty Selina

Kath Turner

Stan McMurray

Marie Burns

Philip Pearson

Terry Regan

Thomas Mannington

Michael Wain

John Cush

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light
shine upon them.*

May they rest in peace. Amen