



Hope

GOBAITH

St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Colwyn Bay

Happy Easter Pasg Hapus



Vol.8

Easter/Pasg 2026

Happy Easter to you all



“Jesus is risen!”

As we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord, may the light of Christ fill your hearts with hope, peace, and renewed faith. Easter reminds us that even in moments of darkness, new life and grace are always possible through Him.

We are followers of the Risen Jesus, the One who has triumphed over evil. Though His journey was marked by the Cross, His Resurrection brings hope to all who walk in His path.

May the Risen Lord bless you and your families abundantly, strengthen our parish community, and guide us in love, unity, and service.

This year has been especially meaningful for our parish as we celebrated the 125th Jubilee of our church. Established in 1900 through the generosity and faith of devoted parishioners, our church began with around one hundred members attending Mass. Today, we are blessed to have a vibrant and growing community, with over 300 parishioners gathering across our celebrations. This growth reflects not only numerical strength but also the enduring faith and commitment that continue to sustain our parish.

Our parish has become increasingly international and intercultural, which is a beautiful sign of the Church's universality. At the same time, as a community rooted in Welsh soil, we remain mindful of the importance of being connected to the land and culture in which we live.

This year also marks a significant milestone for the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the custodians of St. Joseph's Church. They celebrate the 200th anniversary of the approval of their Rule and Constitutions. Founded by Saint Eugene de Mazenod, the Oblates received official Church approval in 1826, a defining moment that shaped their identity and missionary spirit.

This bicentenary is not merely a remembrance of history, but a call to renew their founding charism. The Rule and Constitutions continue to guide the Oblates in their mission to evangelise the poor and the most abandoned. Rooted in prayer, community life, and missionary zeal, they remain a source of inspiration and unity across the world.

As they celebrate 200 years, the Oblates renew their dedication to Christ and His Church. In today's changing world, their mission remains deeply relevant—proclaiming hope, fostering justice, and walking with people in both their struggles and joys.

As a parish community, let us join the Oblates in giving thanks to God for this remarkable witness of faith and service. May we, too, be inspired to live out the Gospel with renewed commitment.

United in the Risen Lord, I wish you all a joyful and blessed Easter.

Fr. Vimal OMI



Origins of Easter's Moveable Feast

Pope Francis' Laudato Si' letter to the world in 2015 emphasised that the human race is not apart from nature but rather, forms a part of nature. We evolved to walk in the rhythms of nature, and at nature's pace.

Our lives were governed by nature's ebbs and flows; our rising and sleeping, our planting, sowing and harvesting all in response to nature's ways; of the coming and going of light and the falls and rises of the seasons. They still are today, though not to the same degree, as technology distances us from these basic rhythms.

We're used to some things being 'fixed', like birthdays, but as it always is, we find Easter to be a moveable feast.

Easter's date is wholly reliant on the movements and cycles of the moon and sun; the forces of nature and of creation. It falls on the first Sunday after the full (Paschal) Moon following the Spring Equinox and links to the time of the Jewish Passover.

As we'll read in our Holy Week Masses, and in particular in Exodus, our Christian faith and practices derive directly from Judaism. We're rooted in the Jewish Passover that commemorates the liberation of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt over 3,000 years ago.

Jesus, as a devout Jew, celebrated the feast of Passover with his disciples in Jerusalem – his Last Supper, and so the Christian Paschal Mystery – the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ – became intrinsically linked to this Passover festival and to the rhythms of nature, sun, moon and earth.

Easter is a time to pause, think about and renew our experience of the risen Christ

Despite the desperate state of nature and of a world at war, we remember that following Jesus's death on Good Friday, there's always the resurrection of Easter Sunday. And at each Mass, we celebrate the resurrection and renew our faith; an opportunity to be truly reborn again.

Creation, nature and the events of thousands of years ago very much shape our lives and spirituality today.

This is reflected throughout our magazine. We see a Parish spirituality rooted in nature carrying forward the charism of St Eugene in our care for each other, our outreach to the community in Colwyn Bay, and of the world about us.

Sitting in the Presbytery for any length of time one gets to see and have a real sense of the continual busy-ness of a thriving and vibrant parish.

So many things are done, unseen, unbidden and quietly that we'll never know about, and it all adds to the 'hum', rhythm and interconnectivity that is Parish life. So, a sincere thanks to you all for your busy-ness, and for doing St David's 'little things' that make up the spiritual and pastoral life of our the Parish.

Paul Evans
Chairman, Parish Council.

A New Member of our Parish Community

Who is Thulani Kuit Ndlovu?

My name is Thulani Kuit Ndlovu. I was born on the 11th of May 1991 in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. I come from a family of three boys, and I am the first-born.

Growing up, I was an ordinary child, but I had a strong interest in learning about the Catholic Church. After completing school, I worked for about eleven years. During my final year of working, I developed a deep desire to know God more. It was a feeling I could not fully explain, I felt an emptiness within me.

During that time, the emptiness became overwhelming and I eventually shared my experience with my parish priest. He advised me to pray more and seek God's guidance. I followed his advice, and after a few weeks, he said to me, "To be honest with you, Thulani, I was waiting for you to come, and it took you a long time."

Through prayer, discernment, and the guidance of my parish priest, I decided to apply to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. At first, my parents were not in favour of my decision. In our culture, it is rare for the first-born son to choose this way of life. However, with time, they became supportive.

The day I joined, I was the happiest person. The emptiness I once felt was replaced with a deep sense of fulfilment, knowing that I was following what truly speaks to my heart.

The reason why I chose the Oblates is the care and love which they show, especially to the disadvantaged. My story goes like this: during school holidays, I used to visit my grandmother in the countryside, and the place was very far from the main parish – about a three-hour drive from the parish where the Oblates were serving. The Oblate priests used to drive that distance to my grandmother's place, which later became an outstation. At that time, my grandmother was the only baptised Catholic there, and she used to receive the Body of Christ.



That simple act made my decision easier, because I wanted to belong to a Congregation that would go to the least expected places, even where the culture is different from their own. .

The Oblates who came were not from Zimbabwe, but from outside the country. Someone else might have been tempted to relax, but through their dedication my grandmother was able, every Sunday, to attend Mass and receive the Body of Christ.

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My Formation Journey

I belong to the OMISA Province, which includes South Africa and Zimbabwe, with Zimbabwe being a mission of South Africa.

The formation process in the Oblates currently takes a minimum of eleven years:

- One year in Zimbabwe, journeying with the Oblates
- Two years of pre-novitiate
- One year of novitiate in Johannesburg, South Africa. After that a brother takes his first vows
- Three years of Philosophical studies at Cedara in Durban, South Africa
- One year of Regency in St Joseph's
- Four years of Theology

Small Things Matter

Small things matter in life. My religious life has helped me to become more attentive to the small things happening within my inner self. I have come to realize that it is through these small things that God communicates with me. I should not take them for granted but rather respect the voice of God by paying close attention to them.

When I am given small tasks, I must carry them out with great love and dedication. Being faithful in little things allows the glory of God to be revealed through them. This has helped me understand that everything created by God is beautiful and good. God created all things with love; He never created anything worthless

Friends of St Eugene



A Living Expression of the Oblate Spirit

The word Oblate comes from the Latin *oblatus*, meaning “offered” or “given.” At its heart is the idea of offering oneself to God and to others in loving service.

In Colwyn Bay, Friends of St Eugene (FoSE) began around 15 months ago, growing out of the wider call to deepen lay involvement in the Oblate charism and to nurture spaces of reflection, friendship and shared mission. It is one small but meaningful way in which lay people can take part in the spirit of St Eugene within parish life.

Although our gatherings are simple, they express something central to the Oblate way: closeness, compassion and courage. We come together to share food, listen to one another’s stories, reflect on faith and life, and offer one another genuine support. There is no pressure to be perfect or to have all the answers. We come as we are, trusting that God is present in ordinary life and in the friendships we build.

As FoSE continues to grow, we recognise that lay people too are called to share in the spirit of St Eugene, each according to their own vocation and circumstances. In this way, FoSE is part of the wider Oblate family: a local expression of prayer, friendship and service, rooted in charity

Come and Join Us

If you feel drawn to explore this spirit, or simply want a space to reflect and connect, you are warmly invited to join us.

FoSE meets on the second Thursday of each month, from 6.45pm to 9.00pm, and everyone is welcome.

For further information:

Pauline Thomas
p.thomas@oblates.co.uk

A Personal Reflection

What I appreciate most about FoSE is how gently it encourages growth within each of us. Over time, genuine friendship has blossomed as we get to know one another more deeply, learning from each other’s strengths, recognising our weaknesses, and finding ways to support one another for the greater good. In our conversations, we learn to see with the heart, to recognise and share how God’s presence is witnessed in daily life, and to walk alongside one another with compassion.

In many ways, we are living out another of St Eugene’s invitations: “Leave nothing undared for the Kingdom of God.” Sometimes the simplest acts are the most courageous. For us, that daring can be as gentle as showing up, being honest, or offering a listening ear, whether to friends, to strangers, or to anyone who needs it.

We come as we are, trusting that God knows us fully, so there is no need to pretend or perform. In one another we recognise gifts we often overlook, or simply forget, in ourselves, and we gently help each other notice, remember, and grow into what we may not yet see alone.

Together we are truly stronger. As we celebrate this 200-year anniversary of papal recognition, I’m reminded that the Oblate story isn’t just history, it’s a living invitation. The charism calls us to be present, attentive, and courageous in small ways. It encourages us to reach out to those who feel unseen, to build community, and to let charity guide our choices.



Julie Butcher

Mazenod Youth - Faith, Friendship and Belonging

Named after St Eugene de Mazenod, the Mazenod Youth Group exists for many reasons, but perhaps above all because young people need one another, and they need spaces where faith can be lived naturally, joyfully and without embarrassment.

In Colwyn Bay, that matters. For many of our young people, this is their main touchpoint with other Catholics of a similar age, as the nearest secondary schools are not Catholic. Without something intentional, it would be easy for them to feel isolated in their faith. Mazenod Youth offers something different: a sense of community, continuity and belonging.

The group currently includes young people ranging in age from 15 to young adults. Some are only beginning to discover what the wider Oblate spirit might mean in their lives; for others, that recognition may unfold slowly over many years. But that is part of the journey. We want to be together in faith, to grow in confidence, to learn about the lives of St Eugene and Jesus Christ, and to explore how their example can relate to and bring meaning to young lives today.

Each gathering begins with prayer. That matters. It sets the tone and reminds us that this is not just another social group, but a place where prayer, friendship and faith belong together. From there, the evenings are varied: we play games, laugh, listen to music, eat together, talk, and make space for reflection. Sometimes we do something practical, such as sowing wildflower seeds. Sometimes we think about goals and what we want for the year ahead. Sometimes we simply enjoy being together, without phones, without pressure, and without needing to pretend.

Earlier this year, the young people shared some anonymous hopes for the months ahead.

They included: “be open to whatever comes my way,” “enjoy every day,” “live in the now with whatever God puts in my path,” “get good grades in exams,” “read more and make time for activities,” “keep connections with people I met at youth events,” and “come closer to God and understand my religion.”

When asked what support they wanted, the answers were simple and very telling: encouragement, a smile, and a hug.

That honesty says a great deal. Young people do not only need activities. They need warmth, steadiness, prayer, trust, and adults who will simply be there. For the coordinators, that is part of the calling: to show up consistently, with fun and faith in our hearts, and to offer a group the young people can rely on. We are also grateful that Father Vimal, no matter how busy parish life may be, makes time to join us fully and take part in what we do.

Mazenod Youth is also about opening outward. We want our young people not only to grow in their own faith, but to know they are part of a wider Church and a wider Oblate family. We want them to have adventures, to meet like-minded young people, and in time to continue to be of service to the parish.

In all this, something of St Eugene’s spirit is present: gathering people in, building community, sharing faith in a lived way, and trusting that grace works differently in each life. Some may recognise that spirit quickly; for others it may take time. Either way, what matters is that they have a place to begin, to return to, and to belong. Mazenod Youth meets on the third Sunday of each month in the St Joseph’s Centre. New young people are always welcome.

Coordinators: Garth Butcher, Trish Giles and Sarah Braid.



Shared Journey of Hope

At the 2024 Province Assembly, Fr Lorcán O'Reilly OMI launched the Province Review, based on Oblate Mission for Our Time – A Synodal Journey.

He wrote:

“For many years we have acknowledged the challenges we have been living with as a Province and we have now arrived at an existential point for the continuance of our mission on these islands.”

The review recognised the realities of changing demographics, fewer members and changing ministries, while also calling the Province not to lose confidence in the future of the Oblate mission in our own context.

Importantly, the laity were included from the outset as fellow-pilgrims in this process. Through listening and discernment, their voice helped shape the review and its conclusions.

In June 2025, the Province leadership published Directions, Actions, Priorities, with a clear emphasis on collaboration with laity. This reflects the call of the 37th General Chapter (2022), which encouraged the development of an official network of laity sharing in the Oblate charism at local, regional and wider levels.

This is a hopeful vision of mission: Oblates and laity walking forward together.

What does this mean in practice?

The Province's priorities include:

- recognising that collaboration begins first at local level
- supporting formation in servant leadership and the charism
- encouraging wider lay participation and adult faith formation
- strengthening relationships among all who serve the mission
- affirming the place of the Friends of St Eugene
- building on recent lay gatherings and shared formation events
- promoting the celebration of the Feast of St Eugene across the whole community

Charting new pathways for Oblate Laity

Earlier this year, around 30 people gathered at Wistaston Hall in Crewe for a Province-wide reflection on Oblate lay ministry. They came from different parts of the Oblate family – parish communities, the Kairos community, the Lourdes pilgrimage and other settings shaped by the Oblate charism, which continues to offer many people a way of living out their baptismal calling through mission, service and shared faith. Inspired by St Eugene's bold spirit and his call to leave nothing undared for the sake of the Gospel, the conversations explored belonging, leadership, formation and collaboration, and returned again and again to welcome, trust, courage, shared responsibility and hope.

What the Pathways process stirred in me

The Pathways process did something unexpected in me. It did not make me think about managing a decline in numbers, or protecting what we already have, or becoming smaller in our imagination. It made me think about hope. It made me think about St Eugene. And, more than that, it made me ask what might be possible if a parish like ours truly began to live its inclusive mission not only, as it does already, in many good parts, but more consciously as one.

I say that with real affection, because there is already so much here to love. There is generosity in this parish. There is steadiness. There are people who give quietly and faithfully. There are groups, ministries, responsibilities, friendships, acts of service, and a real sense that people care. New people are coming into the area, Mass attendance is growing, and there is life among us. None of that should be overlooked. It matters. It is precious.

But perhaps that is exactly why the Pathways conversations stirred me as they did. Because when something already has life in it, the question is no longer simply how to keep it going. The question becomes: what is it being called to become?

St Eugene was bold. He did not give his life to timidity or small expectations. And I do not believe the Holy Spirit invites us to timidity now. I believe we are still being invited to build, to welcome and to love with conviction.

What touched me most in the Pathways process was the sense that so many people, in different ways, are longing for something deeper than activity alone. Not instead of the good things already happening, but through them and beyond them: a more deeply shared spirit. A stronger sense of belonging. A parish in which people do not only attend, volunteer, help, organise or serve, but know within themselves that they are part of something alive and meaningful.

Perhaps that is what I have been trying to find words for: not concern and worry, but longing. A longing for the goodness already present in our parish to become even more gathered, more visible, more confident and more shared. A longing for new people arriving in the area not simply to find a place to attend, but a place to belong. A longing for the mission of hope to feel not only stated, but lived, in the atmosphere of the parish, in the relationships between us, in the welcome we offer, and in the courage with which we look ahead.

The Pathways process left me with a simple searching thought: with so much goodwill, love and faith already here, should we not dare to reach for the stars? Should we not ask, humbly but boldly, what this parish might yet become if all that goodness were drawn more consciously together?

That, to me, would embrace the true charism of St Eugene. And it would be a beautiful way to live our Easter hope.

Sarah Braid

The Easter Journey - A Pilgrimage of Faith

From Ash Wednesday to Pentecost:

Just as the turning year has its different seasons, so too the Church's liturgical year has its own seasons. Advent prepares us for the Nativity, which is followed by 'The twelve days of Christmas' which culminates in the Feast of the Epiphany. Ash Wednesday begins our Lenten journey which comes to an end when we celebrate The Triduum: Holy Thursday, Good Friday and The Easter Vigil, or Easter Sunday. But this is not of the end of this journey; it is in fact only the beginning. As soon as we experience the joy of the Resurrection, we begin The Easter Season which culminates with the powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This moment is the fullness and fruitfulness of the Resurrection. There are forty days in Lent; there are three days of the Triduum, but there are fifty days of Easter Season. So, Easter is not in fact one day, but fifty.

There is a significant change in tone and colour between the season of Lent and the following season of Easter. The purple and bleakness of Lent are replaced with joy, flowers, light and of course the Gloria and the Alleluia which return to brighten our liturgies. The readings at mass for the whole of the Easter Season tell us about the early church. They describe in detail how the followers of Jesus proclaimed and announced his resurrection with great strength, courage and energy.

Before we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost (May 24), we experience the Ascension of the Lord (May 17). Jesus sends his followers out, not in their name, but his. They are missioned to proclaim the Kingdom of God. Jesus tells them that He will be with them until the end of time; He is leaving them, but isn't leaving them on their own

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, their fear and lack of confidence were replaced with courage, confidence and determination. They went out boldly, fearlessly and proclaimed, 'Jesus is risen'. At that moment, the missionary church was born and burst into life. In a very real, way, those men and women are our ancestors and we are their descendants; today we are called to be the missionary church.



After we recall the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, then we celebrate the feast of the Holy Trinity. (May 31) That dynamic relationship between, God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit; a relationship into which we are each called and invited. On 7 June we are called to celebrate with joy, the Feast of The Body and Blood of Jesus. We remember not only the gift of the Body and Blood of Christ, but also of sharing in the power of the Resurrection through the Holy Spirit the deeper reality that we are called to be The Body of Church in and for the world and our local parish community.

May we celebrate the whole Easter Season and the other powerful liturgical feasts with joy, courage and faith because 'We are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song'.

Br Michael Moore

Parish Council

- **Finance Committee**
 - Collectors
 - Counters
 - Repository Shop volunteers
- **Liturgy Committee**
 - Ministers of Word
 - Organists
 - Eucharistic Ministers
 - Flower Arrangement Team
 - Sacristans
 - Parish Choir
 - Filipino Choir
 - Lectio Divina Group
 - Morning Prayer Group
 - Kerala Mass Group
- **Youth Groups**
 - Mazenod Youth Group
 - Altar Servers
 - Faith in Action
 - Little Lights
- **St. Joseph's School**
 - Christmas Fair volunteers
 - Summer Fair volunteers
- **Community Centre Management**
- **Friends of St. Eugene**
- **Food Hub**
- **St. Joseph's Social Circle**
- **JPIC Group**
- **Welsh Learning Group**
- **Communication Team**
- **Coffee Morning Volunteers**
- **St. Vincent De Paul Group**
- **Knights of St. Columba**

Choosing our Weekend Hymns

A chat with Mary and Jennifer

What do you see as the purpose and function of a choir at Mass?

Most importantly, it's to lead the congregation in sung worship of God whether that's through hymns, the sung parts of the Mass or in just creating the right atmosphere for prayer – St Augustine said “He who sings, prays twice”, so we do our best. We're very conscious not to give a performance when we sing and are always mindful of our role.

While some hymns can be really rousing, often, it's the quiet, understated and slower hymns where we feel that the greatest praise and prayer is present – we find this especially so with the Taizé hymns. With this in mind, it can be a great driver in learning and practicing well beforehand.

I'm guessing choosing a hymn for Sunday isn't as simple as flicking through the hymnal and just stopping on a page. Can you explain the processes involved in choosing hymns?

It's definitely not like sticking a pin in a list of hymns! Firstly, we look to what the Mass is, its setting, the time of year and the Season we're in. We do this by checking the Ordo in the directory, looking at various internet web sites such as the Liturgy Office for England and Wales and occasionally, Universalis, and we also refer to helpful suggestions from St Beuno's. So, there are a number of sources we can check, but it's important to note the three-year cycle of Masses and whether it's Year A, B or C!

So, now you know what the Mass is, what's your next step?

Well, we look at the readings for the day and the theme or message behind them. It may simply be a word or phrase that stands out from the readings, and hymns are chosen to emphasise that. The hymnals have sections in the front that group suggested hymns into the time of year or the solemnity being celebrated that day: Advent, Easter, Corpus Christi, The Month of Mary (in May), St David's Day.

You now have your suggested lists of hymns, how do you then pick the hymns you're going to sing at Mass?

We don't know all the hymns; there are some we know well, some less familiar and others we're not familiar with at all. We see how the hymn sounds, its timing – quick or slow, and whether the congregation might know it; just because we may not have heard some of them before, doesn't mean that our diverse congregation hasn't!

And each part of the Mass has its specific hymns – entrance hymn, offertory hymn, communion hymn and recessional hymn – all calling for appropriate wording but also in how quiet they need to be (communion) or how joyful – Christmas and Eastertime in particular.

The entrance hymn is about 'gathering'; the offertory is about our gifts; communion hymn needs to reflect the solemnity of this period of the Mass, and the recessional hymn is about our dismissal and sending forth, but again, hoping to echo the themes of the readings that day.

You try out new hymns sometimes. What's the process involved?

There are different routes in doing this, and not surprisingly these days, we can always listen to YouTube to check things out.

A few of us, for example, attended a workshop at the Oblate Centre in Crewe in 2024 with Fr Liam Lawton a renowned and world published hymn composer. We were able to select a hymn from what we learned and bring it back to sing during our Season Of Creation month. The Jubilee Hymn in 2025 is another example.

New hymns take time to learn and to rehearse so we're confident in singing them. We have to be realistic in just how much new material we can learn while continuing to serve the congregation with more familiar and traditional hymns.



Choosing our Weekend Hymns



When do you get a chance to practice?

For the Vigil Mass we'll sing the traditional, more well-known hymns. For the Sunday Mass, we practice every Friday evening for about an hour, and we start practicing some hymns up to a couple of months ahead. This allows us to timetable the learning of new hymns, so we don't try to do it all at once.

Some of our hymns can be quite long how do you fit these into the Mass?

Yes, this can sometimes happen and we take our cue from where Fr Vimal is in the church and what part of the Mass we're at; it's not always appropriate to sing all the verses, and at the right time, we give our cue to the congregation by slowing down the last few phrases or words of a hymn.

There are sometimes last-minute changes or special occasions that need to be introduced – how do you cater for these?

Sometimes, we can't always respond quickly with appropriate hymns, but we can always fall back on our more familiar hymns.

Welsh hymns are such an intrinsic part of chapel forms of praise in Wales. How do you set about learning these?

We start weeks in advance to make sure the choir gets the pronunciation of words right before we start on the music element. For example, Calon Lân has three verses, but we take one verse at a time until we're comfortable with it and then move on to the next. So, it takes time to build up our confidence and knowledge of the hymn.

But there are times when you do 'perform', tell us about this.

One of the things we love and look forward to is the joint Christmas Carol concert with the school. Outside the more formal framework of Mass, this gives us a chance to broaden the depth, richness and joy of singing – we can really let rip! It's a great sense of achievement if it all goes well, and performing with the children is a real highlight.

You work hard during the year; it's quite a commitment of time and not just on Mass days – do you have a break at all?

Yes, even though each of us can't always be there each weekend, we're ready for a break by the time summer comes along and we try to take a break during August – it's a chance, too, to be with our families as part of the congregation during Mass.



Treasure Amongst Us

Some of the people who built this parish through years of prayer, service and quiet faithfulness are now less visible in its daily life, yet they remain part of its living heart. Many of them volunteered, prayed, supported the parish and kept it going long before many of us arrived. This reflection is a gentle reminder that caring for our elderly parishioners is not an extra; it is part of who we are. It is also something younger people need to see in us, that those who came before us are honoured, remembered and loved.



As mature parishioners we come together at the Social Circle group weekly. We meet in friendship and as supporters of each other.

Friends from other denominations have been welcomed there in the past. In our mature years we are fortunate to have time to build friendships and to support each other.

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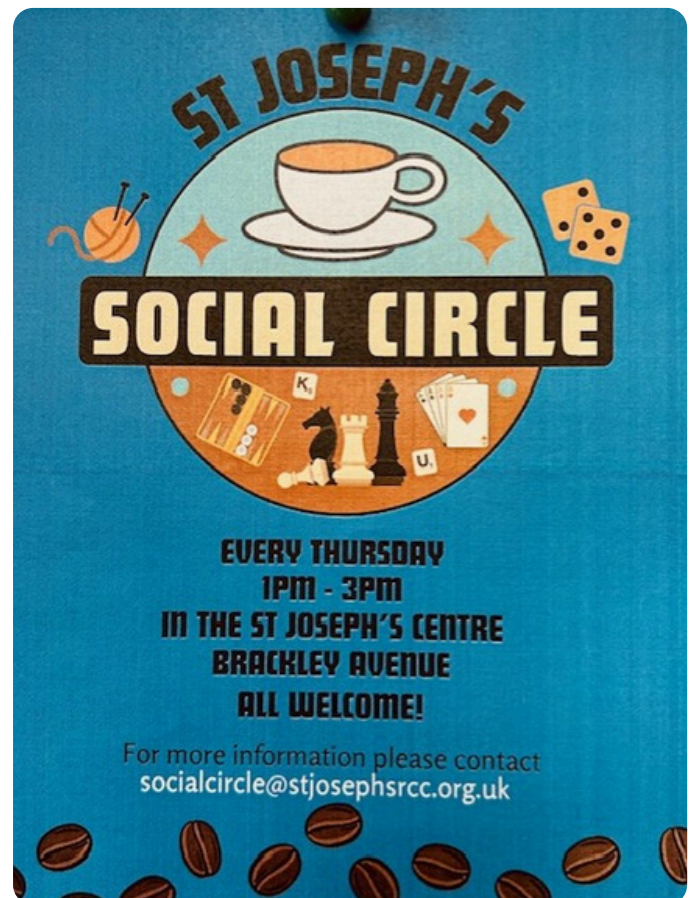
Some of us are privileged to take the Blessed Sacrament to those - even older than ourselves and to remind them that they are 'Not out of sight out of Mind'. These people are truly inspirational to us and a great example of patience and endurance in their various ways.

Their lives now are a parallel with Zechariah and Elizabeth who although old were chosen by God to be the parents of John the Baptist. The same reason why Abraham and Sarah were gifted Isaac in their mature years.

Let us always remember our elderly parishioners and their tireless work, some of them dedicated to supporting this parish before our time, and keep them always in our prayers.

Bridget Jeffrey

If you would enjoy company, conversation, a quiz or simple crafts in a friendly setting, you would be very welcome to come along.



Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

An Introduction to RCIA

The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) is the name given to the process of becoming a Christian or entering full communion with the Catholic Church from another Christian denomination.

The origins of the Rite date back to ancient times. From Apostolic times it has been part of the Church's tradition to baptise adults after some form of instruction was given. Over time, three distinct periods emerged in the time of preparation. These were the catechumenate, Lent and the period of mystagogy. These periods are separated by "Rites" which mark the end of one period and the beginning of the next.

These are:

- ·Period of Inquiry
- ·Rite of Acceptance
- ·Period of Catechumenate
- ·Rite of Election – Generally celebrated at the Cathedral – takes place on first Sunday of Lent
- ·Period of Purification and Enlightenment
- ·Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation – takes place at the Easter Vigil
- ·Period of Mystagogy – a time of deepening of the Christian experience after reception

Marie Breen has been the Lead in bringing forward candidates and in guiding them through the RCIA process.

A Faith Journey – A Personal Reflection

We have the great joy of welcoming six new members to our church this Easter.

At the Easter Vigil Neil Jones, Chris Ashford, Katie O'Reilly, Jordan Woodfield, Sheryl Shea and Nile Tabbener will join us in our faith. We also have Amy Taylor and Richard Shea who are already Catholics but are being confirmed by the bishop in May.

The group have been following the RCIA course (sometimes also known as OCIA), since last June.

During the course candidates have studied parts of the Old Testament and how that fulfils the New Testament. We have explored the sacraments, this being particularly relevant as Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation will be conferred during the Vigil service. Very importantly, we have emphasised prayer and the vital personal relationship with Christ.

Although I started out as the catechist for this programme, I can honestly say that this group have taught me so much about my own faith. Their enthusiasm whilst searching has been touching. Sometimes there have been doubts to discuss but their huge personal commitment to Christ has been inspirational. I have learnt so much from them!

As cradle Catholics I think we can sometimes take certain concepts for granted. The RCIA group have made the decision to attend as adults and have shown great faith in undertaking this step.

This experience has underlined the importance of fellowship and the need for us to engage together on our journey.

Please pray for the group as they are received into the church.

Recently at the cathedral in Wrexham, Neil and Chris attended a Rite of Election service conducted by Bishop Peter.

Neil told me that the Bishop Peter had said that there were the greatest number of RCIA candidates that they had seen in a long time. 'This was so inspiring. I was happy to be there with other people from all over the diocese. You only do this once and it is fantastic to savour every last bit of this journey.'

Chris added, 'This was a reflective experience. It felt like a registration, and it reminded me of Mary and Joseph arriving in Bethlehem for the census before Christ's birth.'

A very warm welcome to all our new members

Marie Breen



Creation, Care and Contemplation

1. Creation : Three Trees for Easter

In every landscape there are small, quiet gestures that, over time, shape the character of a place: a seed planted, a sapling steadied against the wind, a tree that grows slowly yet surely into the life of a community. This Easter, our parish has been the fortunate recipient of such a gesture.

Through the kindness of Paul Richards and the Colwyn Bay Conservation and Environmental Federation, Friends of Eirias Park, three trees have been generously donated to St Joseph's. Though modest in number, they carry a significance that reaches far beyond their roots.

One of these is a graceful cherry tree, an Amanogawa, now planted in the church garden near the Conway Road bus stop. In time its branches will rise skyward and, each spring, break into blossom. One is reminded of the well-loved lines by A. E. Housman:

“Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough...
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.”

There is something deeply fitting in a cherry tree finding its place here at Easter, when blossom returns and the season itself speaks of renewal.

A second cherry tree has found its home in the school grounds, where generations of pupils will see the rhythm of the seasons written across its branches: bud, blossom, leaf and fall – nature's quiet lesson unfolding year after year.

The third tree, a rescued specimen of uncertain variety, has been planted in the grounds of the St Joseph Centre. Though its exact species remains a mystery, its story feels fitting: a tree given a second chance to grow, to root itself, and to become part of the living landscape of the parish

Together, these plantings reflect a wider vision to see trees marking the number 12 bus route from Rhyl to Llandudno, standing beside bus stops along the way like green landmarks. Each one is a sign that care for creation can be expressed not only in words, but in living things.

These three trees beautifully reflect the ecological hopes of our parish and school community. They remind us that stewardship of the earth begins locally, often with something as simple – and as hopeful – as placing a young tree into the soil.

For this thoughtful gift, we offer our sincere thanks to Paul Richards and Friends of Eirias Park. Long after the moment of planting is forgotten, these trees will remain quiet witnesses to generosity, patience and the enduring life of creation.

Tom MacLean



2. Caring for Creation: reflections from the Eco Church seminar

In a recent newsletter, a seminar on Eco Church was advertised. It seemed to fit well with the JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation) aims of this parish. Jane Mallett had also spoken about Eco Church at the seminar held in the parish centre last year, so I went to St Asaph Cathedral on 19 February to find out more.

The event, organised by the Church in Wales, was about celebration, praise, thanks and encouragement. Eco Church is linked to A Rocha UK, a Christian charity committed to protecting and restoring the natural world and helping churches care for the environment in practical and spiritual ways. Through a survey and self-assessment process, churches can work towards Bronze, Silver and Gold awards, not only in environmental stewardship, but also in worship, teaching and raising awareness.

The day included prayer, presentations and discussion. One of the strongest themes was that care for creation is part of our Christian calling. Sr Gemma Simmonds gave a theological reflection on the earth as gift rather than commodity, and on the responsibility we have to honour creation by living simply. She spoke of Ash Wednesday and, in a memorable way, reflected on the fact that most life on earth is carbon-based – the same material as the stars – and that Jesus, in taking flesh, also took on the material of this earth.

There was also a clear emphasis on action. Churches were encouraged to begin with simple things, to recognise what they may already be doing, and to build from there. Eco Church should not be left to the minister alone, but brought into parish structures, discussion and planning.

Creation, Care and Contemplation contd..

Several speakers stressed that small steps matter, and that involving children, local groups and the wider public can help build both confidence and commitment.

There was also some challenge in the day. Much was said about climate change, biodiversity loss and the pressures created by modern patterns of consumption. The question was raised whether we are responding to genuine need, or too often creating and satisfying wants beyond need. For Christians, this is not only an environmental matter, but a moral and spiritual one.

For St Joseph's, Eco Church offers a useful framework for thinking about how we care for creation together. In a place as beautiful as North Wales, this may mean practical local steps – supporting litter-picking, encouraging simple family actions, and recognising that treading more lightly on the earth is one way of living our faith with greater care and responsibility.

Paul Evans

3. Contemplation - Be Still and Know that I am God

Alongside the practical call of Eco Church, our parish has also been exploring quieter paths of reflection, stillness and contemplation. Through an eight-week Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy course, facilitated by Stephen Noone and Liz Lord, Dominique Gray-Williams and Pat Geary reflect on their experience.

Dominique Gray-Williams:

The recent Mindfulness for Life course has helped me to discover how mindfulness practices can enrich spiritual life and deepen relationship with God. The course emphasized the biblical principle of stillness, echoing Psalm 46:10:

“Be still, and know that I am God.”

Through guided exercises, I learned to pause, quiet my mind, and focus on God's presence in everyday life. Another key theme was living in the present, inspired by Jesus' words in Matthew 6:34:

“Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.”

I explored how mindfulness can reduce anxiety by fostering trust in God's provision for today. The program also encouraged intentional thought management, aligning with 2 Corinthians 10:5:

“Take every thought captive to obey Christ.”

Mindfulness techniques helped me notice thoughts without judgment and redirect them toward Christ-centered living

Beyond theory, the course offered practical tools, such as meditation and gratitude exercises, to cultivate awareness and appreciation. Gratitude, in particular, reminded participants that every blessing is a gift from God, fostering humility and deepening dependence on Him.

Mindfulness gave me an opportunity to intentionally notice God's presence in all aspects of life. Practicing gratitude drew me closer to Him in reverence and trust.

The experience not only strengthened personal faith but also built community among those who shared the same spiritual values. The course was more than a wellness practice, it was a transformative journey toward spiritual growth.

Pat Geary:

I had experienced mindfulness in the past while working with people struggling to live with chronic pain, so the concept was not unknown to me.

Yet, as a participant, it felt different. The mindfulness I had experienced before was devoid of a spiritual element. Mindfulness and spiritual wellness are deeply connected.

God has promised to lead and guide us; God's ways are best for us. Being open to God's direction involves prayer, reflection and recognising his presence in daily life. Mindfulness creates space for quiet reflection, for deeper meaning, and for quiet listening to hear his voice.

Within the eight weeks, bonds and a sense of community developed within the group. There were shared experiences, fostering empathy and trust with mutual support. From this grew understanding and compassion for oneself and others, normalising struggles, the realisation that others face similar difficulties, and a reduction in shame, stigma and isolation. Members came to realise that they are not alone.

“Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10) calls us to cease striving and to find peace amidst chaos. It is an invitation to pause, trust and rest in God's power



Serving with Dignity: St Joseph's Parish Food Bank

Established in 2020, St Joseph's Parish Food Bank was created in response to growing need within the local community for accessible, compassionate food support. Since then, it has continued to develop and strengthen its service, adapting to changing circumstances while keeping dignity, respect and choice at the centre of everything it does.

The food bank opens three days a week, from Wednesday to Friday, 10.30am to 12.30pm. These regular hours provide consistency and reassurance for clients, many of whom are facing ongoing financial pressures rather than a short-term crisis.

One of the distinctive features of St Joseph's Food Bank is that it operates on an open-access basis. Clients do not need a referral, and many do not have a case worker. This removes barriers to support and allows individuals and families to seek help at the point they need it. Clients are encouraged to attend once a week for as long as the service is needed, to take what they need, and to speak with volunteers about the food they will actually use. Fresh fruit and vegetables are also available. Offering choice wherever possible is an important part of preserving dignity and reducing waste.

The service is run by a dedicated team of 14 volunteers who welcome clients, prepare food parcels, manage stock, coordinate donations and respond flexibly to changing demand. Their work is practical, reliable and deeply valued, but much of it is unseen. Collecting surplus food can be an after-hours task – for example, late evening collections from Marks, followed by loading, unloading, sorting, freezing what can be frozen, and storing what must be kept fresh. Lidl surplus can arrive at different times of day, and fruit and vegetables often need careful checking, with spoiled leaves removed or damaged items separated so that the rest can still be used. It is labour-intensive work, but the volunteers are fully committed.

Demand has increased significantly. Across 2025–26, the food bank recorded 1,425 separate visits and provided food for 2,598 people. The figures show a clear rise over the year: from 76 people supported in April to 300 in December, rising further to 326 in January. These numbers speak not only of need, but also of the scale and steadiness of the response.



This work is made possible through strong local partnerships. Lidl, Co-op, Morrisons and St Giles (Y Pantry) have all played an important part in helping surplus food reach those who need it most. Y Pantry, in particular, has been a valuable source of shared surplus as well as practical advice and support in caring well for vulnerable people. A new collaboration with Godwin Sourdough Bakers in Mochdre has also brought the welcome gift of fresh, healthy bread for clients.

Support from Conwy Council has been especially important. Grant funding has helped extend the food bank and ensure it has the space and equipment needed, including extra shelving, fridges, freezers, tables and chairs. This practical support has made a real difference. Harvest Festival donations from local schools and the Girl Guides' Reverse Advent initiative have also brought encouragement and help, especially during the autumn and Christmas period.

Names and addresses are not recorded, protecting privacy while still allowing the food bank to monitor demand and plan responsibly. Volunteers also signpost clients to other local sources of support where appropriate. More recently, Community Voluntary Support Conwy has delivered Group A safeguarding training to the team, helping ensure that volunteers feel informed and confident in their work.

As demand continues to grow, so too does the importance of ongoing support. Every donation, every partnership and every hour of voluntary effort helps ensure that no one leaves without help. In this steady, practical and compassionate work, St Joseph's Parish Food Bank remains a real sign of hope in the local community.



Parish Vision Statement:

“Our Spiritual Home: A Community of Faith in Action”

Parish Mission Statement:

“As a vibrant community, guided by the Holy Spirit, we seek to bring the liturgy to life, nurture creation, and share the diverse gifts and talents entrusted to us in the service of God.”



Get involved with Gobaith:

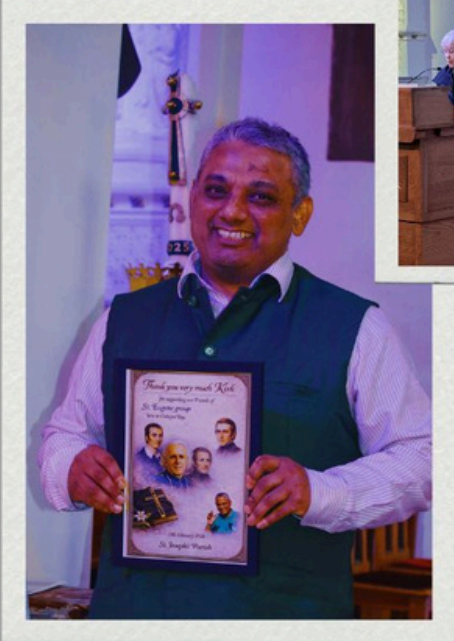
Gobaith is published twice a year, at Easter and Christmas, and we always welcome feedback, ideas and contributions from parishioners.

If you have a story, article, photograph or suggestion for the Christmas edition, please do get in touch. If you have the skills and the desire to help with the magazine, we would also be delighted to hear from you. Please contact us via the Parish Office.



Gobaith Team: Sarah Braid, Paul Evans and Fr. Vimal OMI

Happy Easter



Pasg Hapus