

# ParishQuarterly

Our Lady & All Saints Catholic Church, Otley

[www.olasotley.org](http://www.olasotley.org)

CHRISTMAS 2021



## Fr Lawrie's message for Christmas

"Any spare change" was a request often heard on the streets of our major cities, towns and occasionally nearer home in Otley. Usually coming from ground level from someone who had their worldly possessions gathered round them. So what's our response, do we walk past pretending not to hear, do we stop and offer a few bob or at the least go off and return with a sandwich or a cup of coffee, which is not always graciously received?

Perhaps the challenge we face is what do we have to "spare"? Many people are dependant, through no fault of their own, on foodbanks and the like supported and staffed by people who have something to "spare" be it food, time or care.

None of us know the background or circumstances of the individuals asking for our help, be they on our streets or dependant on the generosity of others or the reasons why their life has come to this. The temptation is to judge and not always sympathetically. One of our Advent prayers at Mass asks us to

"judge wisely the things of earth that we might hold firm to the things of heaven".

As we come to the end of the season of Advent and its time of preparing for the One who is to come, can we "spare" more than a thought or a prayer for those less fortunate than ourselves. After all, the God we worship did not "spare" Himself, but changed to be one like us, "that we may have life and have it to the full".

That life is freely given to us all in the Christ child who comes among us this year to bless our families, our Church and Our world. May these Christmas blessings encourage us to change what we have to spare into a blessing for someone else.

**Father Lawrie**



# New birth: new hope

**“And the Word was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us.”**

Every new birth brings change, none more so than the birth of Jesus, who restored our relationship with our Creator. But even the more ordinary births change the world in ways that are beyond our knowledge. Mothers, fathers and siblings are immediately changed, but so too are communities and from there go ripples of change through the whole world. Daniel has brought our family so much joy already and we hope that the ‘word’ that God speaks through Daniel will bring even more joy to his community and the world. We hope for a world where every child is cherished as a unique addition. We hope for a world where every child is recognised as a person with gifts that will be allowed to flourish. We hope for a world where each and every person can tell the story God has written on his or her heart. **Phillipa Knaggs**



**One of our eldest Parishioners sent these words for our very youngest:**

*I hope baby Daniel can look forward to a peaceful world where we can all live happily together.*

*As Christmas is a celebration of the Holy Family and the birth of Jesus, family life should be uppermost in our hearts. Hopefully we can revert to being a bit more kind and loving to each other. As Daniel grows up let's hope he's inspired to offer a helping hand to someone who is lonely, especially at Christmastime. In days gone by, families had very little but they shared what they did have. I think there's a lesson there for us all.*

## Happy 100th Birthday, Norah!

**The whole Parish would wish to join in sending our congratulations and best wishes to **Norah Hollins** on her 100th birthday! When she was reminiscing about her long life in Otley this is what Norah had to say:** “I have lived in Otley most of my life and sadly the main changes I have seen are closures. From the bandstand to the tennis courts, the swimming baths - where we spent most of our leisure time as a family; the police station, the hospital - the people of Otley pulled together to have a new hospital built which was then unused! But the fight of the people have the hospital up and running now. Shops closing, cafés taking their place on every corner. The Mechanics Institute, later named the Civic Centre, was a very busy hub over the years offering a great variety of activities and is now unused. Post offices closing; banks are closing and technology is taking over. Those of us who are used to paying our bills in person are expected to understand the internet!

We had Whitsuntide processions, buses with helpful, much-loved conductors, a busy rail service - all gone now; babies in big Silver Cross prams, now buggies ... we used to have our own named doctor, and we always had visits.

I was a dinner lady for 19 years, first at St Josephs on Crow Lane next to a smelly gasometer then after that closure, to the newly built St Joseph's next to Our Lady and All Saints church which is thriving, as is St Mary's Secondary school.

There have been so many changes in Otley but I would not wish to live anywhere else!”





*It has been said that the only constant in life is Change. And today, more than ever, we are confronted by the need and the desire for change: Climate change, for example....., change after Covid,.... and likely change in the Church after synodality.*

*Closer to hand, what changes have we all experienced in our lifetimes? Cath Smith was born here in Otley in 1932, almost 80 years ago, and looks back on some of the changes she has witnessed.*

"During my lifetime I have seen great changes in Otley and in Society as a whole. Many houses here, including ours, heated water in a kettle on the coal fire. Clothes were boiled in a basin above the fire, hot water being transferred into a tub and a scrubbing board used to complete the wash, Then a mangle with wooden rollers squeezed out excess water! The 1940's saw the arrival of the modern washing machine much to the delight of housewives who could afford one!

Children left school at the age of 14 and usually found work in or near the town where they grew up. A few gained scholarships to a grammar school. The 1944 Education Act meant every child went into secondary education until at least the age of 16. That changed the lives of many children from poorer families who would not have had the opportunity to access higher education.

In 1939 war with Germany was declared. Many men were in the Territorial Army and were among the first to be called up. Others volunteered and others were conscripted. Because of their engineering background some local men worked in an underground factory near the Leeds-Bradford airport where aircraft parts were made but no-one spoke of this work or where it was located!

Science and communications advanced at speed from the early 30's when the wireless set was run on batteries the size of bricks! It was difficult to hear because it crackled until it was given a good thump! Today we have television, computers and smart phones. Shopping is done on-line. Man has been to the Moon! I remember in 1959 we went to Brittany in a Dakota aircraft. It carried twelve passengers and had to refuel in Jersey! Nowadays people fly all over the world at amazing high speed and in comparative comfort.

From the 1950's great changes have taken place in the role of women in Society. Today they hold senior positions in all walks of life. Indeed Pope Francis is intent upon appointing women to high profile positions in the Vatican. In our own Parish it's lovely to see women and girls who are Communion Ministers, Readers and Altar Servers – and they're all wonderful!"

## During my lifetime...

*Fellow-Parishioner Moira Wallace has lived here for nearly 50 years and laments the loss of a number of popular amenities in the town.*

"Since coming to live in Otley in 1972 among the biggest changes I've seen is the takeover of Otley by Leeds City Council, the loss of the outdoor swimming pool, and of the Otley Civic Centre. The Otley Museum was situated in the Centre and many big community events took place there which were well attended. I particularly enjoyed going to plays produced several times a year by local people and also to socials organised there by St Joseph's P.T.A. I understand that the Art Group used to meet there too. Unfortunately, the building was not adequately maintained, never refurbished, and was left to deteriorate for many years by Leeds City Council. Although it would have cost a lot of money to make the improvements that were necessary, I think that it would have been money well spent for the benefit of the local community. Sadly it sometimes feels that Leeds City Council has made many improvements in Leeds but they have attached rather less importance to the community needs of the people of Otley."



### **Eddie Vaughan tells of more personal Change he has encountered:**

"I am a 'cradle catholic' and originally lived in Shipley attending St Walburga's church. I was an altar server as were my two elder brothers. I was "forced" to go to church, and both my parents and school all expected me to serve on the altar which I did until I was about 12 years old when I went to St Bede's grammar school. I kept on attending church however.

When I got married at 21 years of age I continued going to church now with my wife who became a convert herself. But after our first child was born my attendance at church declined and then stopped altogether. It was my own decision. However I returned to the church around 1980, essentially because my conscience told me that I was failing in my duty to God and I also felt I was letting my parents down by not attending. So I began attending church again and went to St Peter & St Pauls at Yeadon. I attended there for about 5 years but in that time I was never approached to join any group in the Parish - Eucharistic Ministry, SVP, or choir - so I decided to attend Our Lady and All Saints, Otley. Here was where I first felt welcomed. Here I felt that I fitted in. And that was very, very important to me then, and still is today, no matter what changes there may be in our liturgy or language."

### ***There are changes afoot in the Church, no doubt, but what about changes in the priesthood.***

#### ***Retired priest Fr Paul writes:***

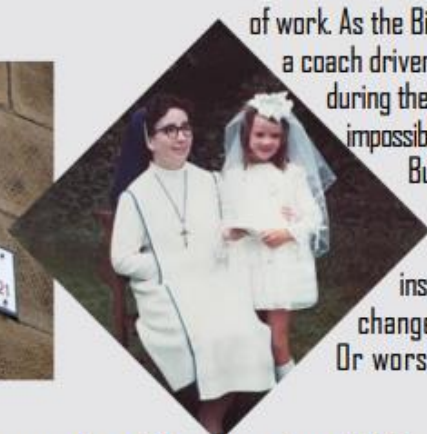
"I was ordained in 1967 by Bishop Wheeler after five years study and formation in the international seminary of St Sulpician in Paris. My fellow students came from many different parts of the world, and it was a great blessing to be in their company and to see the Church from a different perspective. During my time there, the Second Vatican Council began its work. Change of a radical nature would be asked of us all. Our diocese, like many, struggled to make sense of it all. The "People of God", as we were to be called, were confused but most adapted to the "new" Mass.

There were plenty of priests then and with such a "glut" of clergy, Bishop Wheeler appointed me firstly as a temporary curate at the Cathedral, then curate at St Augustine's in Harehills. In those days it was a "factory church" - 7 Masses on Sundays, after three 2-hour long sessions in Confession on Saturday!

While I was serving in Bradford I met an Anglican and a Methodist minister, both serving in deprived areas of the city. The Bishop allowed me to join them in their pastoral initiative called "The Churches' Industrial Mission" involving meeting people in their place

of work. As the Bishop could not fund me, I became a "Worker Priest", a coach driver with Wallace Arnold Tours and I worked for them during the high season for the next ten years. It would be impossible for a priest to undertake such a ministry today.

But it is necessary for the future of the Church, and the proclamation of the Gospel, that we can, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, let ourselves be changed. The temptation is to try to stand still. Or worse .... like Lot's wife, simply "look back"!



### ***Diane Todd shares some fond memories of her church activities as a teenager approaching forty years ago, and recalls wistfully that growing up then seemed somehow simpler!***

"Born into a Catholic family in 1965 I have no recollection of church before Vatican 2 but I do have a very clear recollection of my Grandmother saying the Rosary all the way through Mass - as she would have done throughout her life since she really did not understand the Latin!

We attended Mass every week and Confession once a fortnight. I remember my clothes were dictated by the Church's year: new outfits for Christmas, Easter and Whitsun would be rotated as my Sunday best and relegated to 'playing out clothes' when the next one came around.

I can remember having 'House Masses' which always felt very special because although my parents were extremely 'faithful' we didn't pray regularly together in our Catholic home, (unless you count the sprinkling of Holy water which would occur during severe thunder and lightning storms!).

As a teenager I attended the Junior Legion of Mary every week when as a group of young parishioners we would gather together to say the Rosary and assign work for the following week, often visiting the elderly in the parish or the nursing home run by Little Sisters of the Poor. Church did manage to feel 'cool' when I was in my teens, as we had a 'folk group' in the parish and the hymns we sang seemed modern and lively. I loved going to Mass and would often go before an exam (perhaps some revision would have also helped!). The church always felt like home to me and it always seemed to be open. Church life has changed a lot but part of me looks back wistfully to those less complicated times when living generally seemed so simple. On reflection, I really do feel blessed to have grown up in the Church when I did."

**Fuller versions of all these reflections can be found on the Parish website [www.olasotley.org](http://www.olasotley.org). Log on, sit back, and enjoy reading them while you take your own walk down Memory Lane! Joe McGuinness**



# Our special day

Seventeen of our young Parishioners received their Sacrament of Confirmation on Saturday 27th November. They led the Mass the following Sunday and reminded everyone that receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation is not the end ... but the beginning.



*My Confirmation made me feel even closer to God and more part of the Catholic community.*

**Esther**

*It made me feel happy and nervous but allowed me to feel closer to God and his family.*

**Tallulah**

*My confirmation made me feel special and close to God.*

**Mia**

*During my confirmation, I felt excited to enter fully into the family of God.*

*My confirmation made me feel happy, proud and part of God's family. When Father Lawrie confirmed me, I felt happy and relieved.*

**Lily**

*My confirmation made me feel closer to God in my faith journey.*

**Daniel**

*It was scared before I went up but when I was confirmed I was happy.*

**Abigail**

*I was extremely nervous and my legs were shaking erratically. The most nerve-racking thing was walking up the aisle but when Father Lawrie blessed me, I felt like God was inside me.*

**Joseph**

***Our loving Father in Heaven,** thank you for having created us in love, made us your children through Baptism, bestowed us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit at Confirmation and constantly nourishing us with the Holy Eucharist. Thank you for loving us through all the people in our lives.*

*May we follow their examples by*

*growing our faith in you every day, living our life in love, courage, humility and unity, coming forth, serving our communities and the needy in all the little ways that we can.*

*Mother Mary, gentle Mother of Peace, pray for us.*

*St. Joseph, Loving head of the Holy Family, pray for us.*

*All the saints and angels, pray for us.*

*All the holy souls, pray for us.*

*We make all these prayers through Christ our Lord. **Amen.***

## Our World Matters



Earlier in the school year, each class at St Josephs looked at climate change and considered the questions: What is climate change? How is it impacting our world and what could we do as a school to affect it?

Firstly, with the help of parent volunteers, trees were planted in the school grounds by every class. Carrying spades, tree food and tree saplings the great planting began. It was lovely being outside in the fresh air knowing that our tree planting would benefit the next generation.

At the same time the children participated in an initiative suggested by CAFOD. After watching an assembly entitled 'Eyes of the World' the pupils were encouraged to promote action that would protect our planet. The children were informed about the important meeting of all the world leaders, that would happen in November known as COP26, where decisions would be made to affect climate change. CAFOD asked everyone to play their part. Each class made a display letting the Government know that all our eyes were watching them to ensure that they would make decisions that would help stop the climate crisis.

As a school we realised our impact would be small but if everyone made little changes then the impact could be BIG. So...we can try to: walk to school more, turn off lights when leaving the classroom, use both sides of paper, reduce the amount of food wasted, bring a reusable water bottle to school and use less plastic.



## Reflections on the Christmas story

I am writing this year from a perspective of grief and loss and my first inclination has been to cancel Christmas altogether. It was a bit of a knee jerk reaction which led me to think what it was I would be cancelling and what I would put in its place.

So firstly, what would I cancel? Rampant commercialism and consumerism. But then the inn was full so the hospitality business was doing well, there was a census so the public sector was busy and the shepherds were working as usual. It was business as usual then just as it is today. I have to think in a more positive and spiritual way don't I?

The Church begins its liturgical year with Advent and does not return to Ordinary time until after the Easter season. It is a long journey and it starts now.

I've always thought of Advent as a bit of a mysterious time peopled by such as John the Baptist and with readings from the prophet Isaiah. Its main theme is hope but this hope has to be expectant. There has to be a sense of urgency and longing, of vision and desire. These senses are often dulled by other activities but for us Christians the spiritual has to take precedence. We must 'wait in joyful hope for the coming of our saviour Jesus Christ' as we say after the Lord's Prayer at Mass.

“... the spiritual has to take precedence ”

Then comes the Nativity, a burst of light filled with angelic choirs appearing to humble shepherds. The hope is realised and the child is born and we celebrate with Glorias and Hosannas. For many it ends there and its back to normal. But there is one more chapter in the Christmas story, the Epiphany.

The three men, whether they be kings or wise men, bring three very symbolic gifts, Gold for kingship, Frankincense for divinity and Myrrh for death. The Christmas season is over and we have finished on a downbeat.

We have a break before we enter into another three-part story, Lent, Holy Week and Easter. But that is all for another time in this long journey of faith we begin at Advent.

God bless all of you, may His light shine upon you and bring you peace in your times of darkness.

**Frank Bowe**

*Frank decided to go ahead and write this Reflection after very recently losing his beloved wife Ann. A dedicated Parishioner, Ann was also a great supporter of the ecumenical life of Otley.*



## HELP NEEDED!

Owing to the 'early retirement' of our existing volunteer, we are looking for replacement help to put together the Parish Quarterly.

This is a great opportunity for a young, or not so young, person who likes to unearth interesting stories about life in Otley, in our Parish, and about the local people who have a story to tell.

Full support will be given but you'll soon have lots of discretion to produce the material YOU believe Parishioners want to read. To learn more please email [joemcguinness@btinternet.com](mailto:joemcguinness@btinternet.com)

*Please pray for:*

### Baptisms

Nathaniel Joseph Copsey  
Quinn Thomas O'Donnell  
Ivy Rose McGuire  
Rory Hugh Robertson  
Reggie Thomas Speed  
Nancy Molly Jean Walshaw  
Daniel Gabriel Knaggs  
Olivia Anne Harrison  
Jack Stanley Spencer  
Esme Willow Burton  
Nellie Loretta Venalls Bray  
Enzo Raffy Moscovitch  
Keira Ray Flaherty  
George Robert Nichols  
Theo Alexander Edney

### Weddings

James Davey and Rachel Howle  
Emma Moss and Jack Bolton

### Recently Deceased

Bertie Andrews  
Jeremy Mortimer  
Mary Cooper  
Ann Bowe  
Norah Finlay  
Don Reavey

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
May they rest in peace.  
Amen*



**From Offertory bells to Wedding bells!**  
**Emma Moss and Jack Bolton:**

Emma was formerly an Altar Server in our Parish, initially in Year 5 at St Joseph's School, through to Year 8 at St Mary's, serving under Fr Gilligan and then Fr Tom. The music at Emma and Jack's wedding was provided by HUM Gospel Choir and included the modern-day classic 'Hallelujah' by Leonard Cohen, and Stevie Wonder's 'Signed Sealed Delivered'... quite a change from the more traditional wedding hymns but no less moving and meaningful.

Congratulations also to **Rachel Howle and James Davey** who were married in our church recently. In spite of the fact that it sometimes seems that the world is in turmoil, it does us all good to remember the love that brings two people together to share their lives together, is the same love that is both timeless and endless. Our prayers and our blessings go to both Couples.