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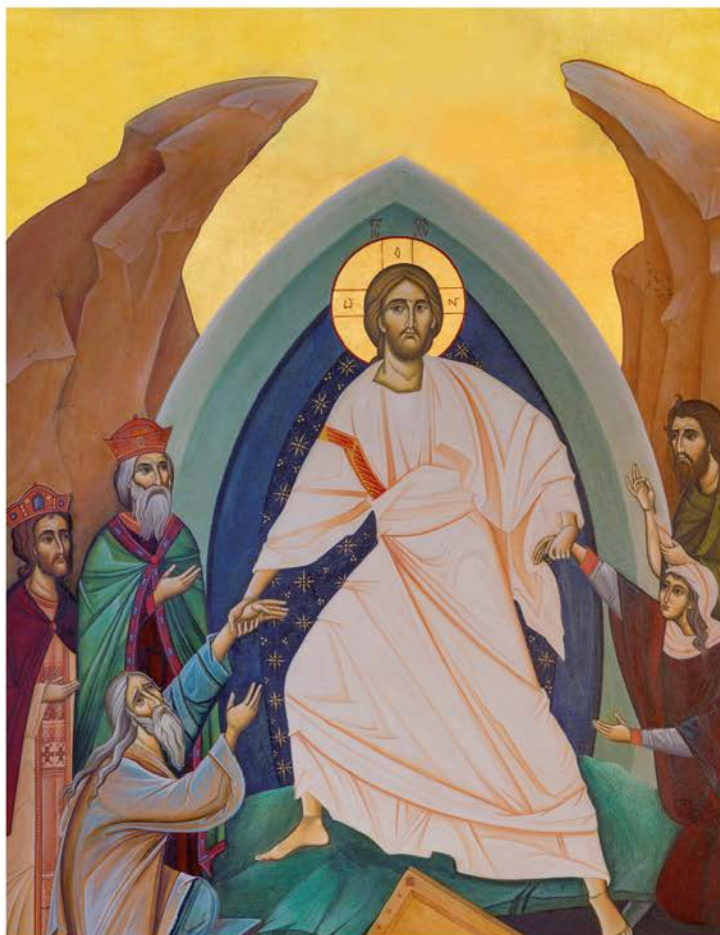
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Pray for The Passage and the homeless people they are helping during the COVID-19 crisis.

Please visit www.passage.org.uk to find out more about how you can help during this challenging period.

Dear Friends of Westminster Cathedral

One of the Cathedral activities that I have missed during my months of illness and convalescence, has been the Friends' outings and I have looked on with a certain amount of envy at some of the very interesting places which you have visited. A sure indication of my slow return to better health is my signing up for some of the expeditions that are planned for the summer months.

I am hoping to join you for the trip to Tonbridge, Tudeley and Penshurst in May and the anniversary event at St Mary Moorfields in July. I remain very grateful to everyone for their thoughts, prayers and kind wishes. Please continue to pray for our Cathedral.



Yours

Canon Christopher Tuckwell

Cathedral Administrator and Chairman of the Friends of Westminster Cathedral

Since the preparation of this newsletter, the COVID-19 coronavirus has had a dramatic impact on all our lives. We set out to offer the Friends an interesting programme of events and talks this spring and summer and everything is now unknown. Pope Francis has offered a special prayer to Our Lady and we reprint it here. He implored her protection as 'Health of the Sick' adding that she kept her faith firm as she stood at the foot of the cross.

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.

At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith.

You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need.

We are certain that you will provide, so that,

as you did at Cana of Galilee,

joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love,

to conform ourselves to the Father's will

and to do what Jesus tells us:

He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.

Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

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If you're a UK taxpayer, you can add an extra 25p to every £1 you give – at no cost to yourself – with Gift Aid.

Friends Gift Aid forms are available from The Friends Office

Telephone: **0207 798 9059** Email: friends@rcdow.org.uk Charity number: 272899

The Council: Canon Christopher Tuckwell, Chairman; Andrew Sanders, Vice-Chairman; Andrew Hollingsworth, Treasurer; Linda McHugh, Chair of the Friends' Anniversary Appeal; assisted by Zoe Goodway; Patrick Gormley; Geraldine Kay; Nicholas Morrell and Euphrasie Mundeke-Kilolo. The Council is aided by Barry Lock, Chairman of the Mosaics Appeal group and Christina White, Director.

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...Looking back

Our autumn season began with a brilliant talk from historian Robert Hutchinson on *Henry VIII: Decline and Fall of a Tyrant*. His narrative began with the death of Thomas Cromwell who has, of late, enjoyed the hagiography of Hilary Mantel and it was refreshing to hear another viewpoint. Cromwell went to the scaffold with the King oblivious to his pleadings for mercy. Robert was accompanied by his lovely wife who enjoyed the talk and meeting the many Friends who stayed on for the book signing.



Our new head sacristan Richard Hawker offered the Friends an exclusive look at the treasures of the Sacristy in September and this was a memorable tour. He set out various vestments, chalices and patens and discussed their significance in the Cathedral. All eyes were drawn to the Tudor pre-Reformation chalice, of especial import given our talk by Robert earlier in the month. Richard has very kindly offered to repeat the tour in the coming autumn – date to be arranged – do not miss this.

His knowledge is unsurpassed and he has worked tirelessly to make sure that these treasures are used in the daily Masses at the cathedral.

The Friends enjoyed another 'curry' quiz in October with our regulars battling it out for prize-winning glory and a bottle of wine. Claudette excelled herself with delicious food. Regrettably our planned spring quiz has been cancelled in light of the present coronavirus outbreak. We hope to repeat the quizzes in the autumn.



Fr Daniel Humphreys, fresh from his triumph as quiz master, joined the Friends for the trip to Aylesford Priory later in October. We were blessed with absolutely beautiful autumn weather – the sun shone all day – and it made the trip extra special. The Priory was founded in 1242 and parts of the Medieval foundation still survive. Many of the Friends had previously attended Aylesford on various pilgrimages but our day alone, bar the odd visitor or dog walker, gave us a



privileged insight into the history and character of the place and we enjoyed an excellent tour after a good lunch. Aylesford has a world-renowned pottery which was founded by David Leach, the son of prize potter Bernard Leach, in 1954. The Friends left spiritually uplifted and laden with pottery and other delights from the shop. Aylesford is relatively close to London so we were able to depart at the later time of 9.30am which was appreciated by all travellers.



Past Events

We felt that this year we should mark the canonisation of St John Henry Newman, England's first saint in more than 50 years. The Friends were privileged some time ago to twice visit the Birmingham Oratory and to say prayers in the private rooms of Cardinal Newman. These rooms are currently under conservation so our celebration took the form of a Halo party at the Hall following Ecumenical Vespers in the Cathedral, and on a later evening a very well-attended talk given by Fr Nigel Woollen on Newman and the Rosary. The Clergy House Library was standing room only at the back as people gathered to hear Fr Nigel speak about Newman's faith and the path to Rome. Our thanks to Lorcan Keller for recommending him as a speaker:



In November we arranged a walking tour with the brilliant Paul Pickering focusing on the Roman Mithras Temple in the City and the art collection of London's Guildhall, which also enabled the group to visit the amphitheatre remains which lie beneath the complex. The Mithraeum is brilliantly executed, with a sound and light show that evokes the mysterious rituals of the cult. The 'religion' was Persian in origin but was taken up by the foot soldiers of the Roman army and spread to Europe as the Legions extended Rome's dominion across

the continent. After a sandwich lunch we headed for the Guildhall where Paul took the group through the various pictures on display. He was so good that we attracted a number of hangers on who were delighted to hear him explain in detail the meaning and significance of the current collection.

Christmas Fair
Sunday 1 December 2019
Doors open at 9.30am
and Fair closes at 2.30pm

In the historic surroundings of
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- Light refreshments • Bric-a-brac
- Christmas plants • Books,
- CDs and DVDs • Handicrafts
- Toys and games • White Elephant stall
- Christmas puddings and gifts
- Religious items and much, much more.

Prize Raffle, Carols & the 'Every Ticket Wins' Bottle Tombola

£1 entry
Children free or charge

the friends
OF WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL
Organised by The Friends of Westminster Cathedral

Christmas Fair

As the year drew to a close, our attention was again focused on the Christmas Fair which this year was held on the earlier date of 1 December. We really struggled with donations in 2019 and our thanks go to the wonderful helpers and volunteers who worked so hard to make the event a success. My thanks in particular to two very loyal friends whose generosity meant that we could offer a cash prize which was a very valuable enticement for selling raffle tickets. Since the Friends took

Betty Retford was one of the lucky winners in our Christmas Fair raffle and she took 'Sebastian' the donkey home in the New Year. She was delighted with her prize and said she would await the reaction of her three-year-old grandson: 'Although I believe Sebastian will have a quieter life if he remains with me for the present time!'

All the Christmas Fair helpers were invited to a 'thank-you' reception in Clergy House on 6 January. Our thanks go to Canon Christopher and the chaplains for allowing us to use the Clergy House Common Room for the party.



charge of the Christmas Fair we have been very pleased to engage the services of the art club at the Westminster Cathedral Choir School. The boys produce a range of pictures and this year's prize-winning poster was really exceptional. We all loved the red fox!





theBigGive.org.uk *helping your donations go further*

In early December a supper was held for major donors to our Big Give Appeal. In total – including those who chose to send cheques directly rather than via the online giving platform – we raised over £40,000. It was heartening to see Canon Christopher back at the helm and the guests applauded his return to good health. Our thanks to the Clergy House cook Ishmaeli for a delicious supper. We have given a cheque for £70,000 to the Tower project with further fundraising to come.

Our events carried over into 2020 and we were privileged to welcome Oxford Professor Diane Purkiss to Clergy House for her talk on politics and religion, with a special focus on the Catholic martyrs of Oxford and a brief mention of the Civil War. It was a very moving and very erudite talk and her

research was impeccable. We approved of her description of the Protestant zealots as the 'Corbynistas of their day'. Diane has written a brilliant book on the Civil War and we sold out of copies as Friends queued to get their books signed. The evening resulted in further discussion on possible future talks so we hope to invite Diane back later in the year. She was an exceptional speaker. A big thank you to the marvellous Waterstone's in Piccadilly who ensured we had books to sell.

Into March, and a loyal group attended the walk through Clerkenwell which included Mass at St Etheldreda's and a welcome lunch at the Bleeding Heart Tavern. It was evident from our visit that we need to set a date for a longer and more comprehensive tour of the Charterhouse and this will be arranged for later in the year. We had hinted at a St Patrick's Day event in 2020 but as the newsletter was being prepared, celebrations were being cancelled across Europe. We hope you enjoyed the autumn programme.

What might have been...

We thought long and hard about deleting this section of the newsletter. Under the constraints of COVID-19, all events are cancelled for the foreseeable future and we live in uncertain times. However, I felt it was important for the Friends to see the full programme that had been planned. If there is sufficient demand, we will re-schedule these events so it would be useful to gauge your interest. The Cathedral needs its Friends and we will come back in strength to support its work, its ministry and its place as the 'sacred heart of London'. Supporting events supports the Cathedral.

Spring events for the Friends will start in late April with a talk on the 22nd by Cambridge Professor John Harvey on 'Rubens in London', based around his wonderful book 'Pax' which was launched in October 2019. I was fortunate to attend the book launch at Emmanuel College, on Hallowe'en no less, and can confirm that Professor Harvey is a brilliant speaker. Peter Paul Rubens was an accomplished painter but also a devout Catholic and diplomat and John has wonderful tales to tell of Rubens' time in London, helping to broker peace. All manner of life, art and fiction are in the book. Please do come to the talk.

There will be a blessing of the donors' plaque in the chapel of St George and the English Martyrs by Canon Christopher on St George's Day, 23 April 2020. All are most welcome to attend. The blessing will take place immediately after the 5.30pm Mass. There will be a small private reception for major donors after the blessing – this will be invitation-only.



We are very pleased to welcome Dr Rory O'Donnell back to lead a very interesting tour for the Friends on May 7, focusing on the Catholic architect John Walters. Our day will start at the seminary in Wonersh where we will also have Mass. The Rector Canon Brian Coyle has generously invited us to join the community for lunch in the refectory. In the afternoon, we will visit the historic church of St Peter and St Paul on the Albury Park estate. We will finish our day at the Benedictine Monastery at Chilworth in the beautiful

Forthcoming Events: *Spring/Summer 2020*

surroundings of the Chiltern hills. The Chilworth community is a closed order - we will therefore be allowed to visit the Abbey chapel and the grounds and we will have tea and will stay for Vespers with the community. Rory led a brilliant tour to Ingatstone last summer with the visit to the Petre Family Chantry a particular highlight. This promises to be a fascinating day out. Fr John Scott will accompany us from the Cathedral.

The talk by Diane Purkiss in February has led to ongoing discussions about what happened at the Reformation to the many much-loved Marian shrines in England. Diane explained how the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham was 'burned as a witch' and the fires in London raged for days as Cromwell's henchmen plundered the churches and chapels of the land, destroying the objects of devotion and relics of English Catholicism. Joanna Bogle will come to the Cathedral on May 11 for her talk on the Marian Shrines of London.



On to the 19 May and another trip out – this time to Tonbridge, Tudeley and Penshurst Place. Canon Christopher will be accompanying the group and will celebrate Mass in Tonbridge. We have lunch arranged in a hostelry in Tudeley before driving to Penshurst. Penshurst Place is one of the most



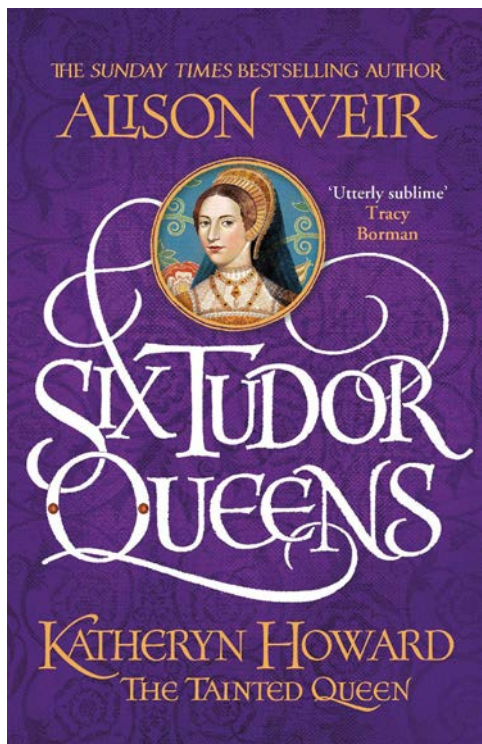
historic houses in England which has made it a sought after location for period drama. You will spot the Hall and the Long Gallery from recent productions. The gardens too are spectacular. Later in the afternoon, weather permitting, we will join Friends in Tonbridge for afternoon tea in their beautiful garden before returning to SW1.

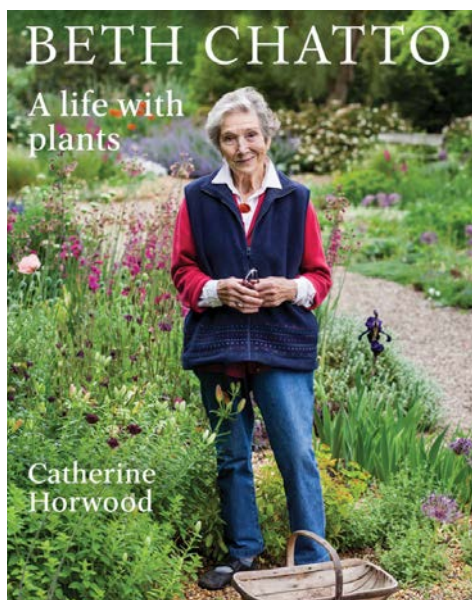


With our focus on Rubens early in the season we have arranged a trip to the Wallace Collection in London with Paul Pickering to see two famous paintings reunited. Rubens' painting 'A View of Het Steen in the Early Morning' is on loan from the National Gallery, and will be on display with the Wallace Collection's own Rubens, 'Rainbow Landscape'. Both paintings were meant to be together – previously hanging in Rubens' own house. Paul's art tour 'Rubens: artist and diplomat' will be followed by tea at the museum.

Alison Weir said last year that she would return and as promised she comes to the Cathedral Hall on 3 June with her talk on the

tragic figure of Katheryn Howard. Alison will be on hand to sign copies of her book which will also be on sale. Alison is a firm favourite with the Friends and we are looking forward to the evening; she always has an interesting slant or tale from her extensive research and we await with anticipation her latest findings on Katheryn, 'The Scandalous Queen'.





We are trying something different this summer with a garden trip to the famous Beth Chatto Gardens near Colchester: Beth died in 2018 but was famous for a stellar record at Chelsea Flower Show and her mantra 'the right plant for the right place'. We have been advised that the journey will be approximately two and half hours so we have factored in a half hour comfort stop en-route so that Friends may get a coffee and stretch their legs. On arrival we have an introductory talk arranged and a quiche and salad lunch pre-booked in the tearooms. The afternoon is then yours at leisure to wander the gardens



purchase plants and talk to the experts. There are five main areas of the garden: all dealing with challenging soils and aspects and showing what becomes possible when you work with nature rather than against it. Please do book early so we can gauge interest. We have tried to keep prices down but our difficulty is the cost of the coach travel. We even looked at possibly going by train by the costs were similarly prohibitive.

Mary Maxwell kindly forwarded details of a very interesting evening at the Old Bailey and thanks to her we have a Friends' private tour arranged for the evening of Wednesday 24 June. The tour will begin at 5pm and we have a prosecco and canapé reception to follow. It is a great privilege to see the Old Bailey and especially the famous Number One court. Names will have to be vetted so we hope to send our list of guests through early for confirmation. Our thanks to Judge Mark Lucraft QC who has arranged our visit. We are limited to 50 guests so please book early.



We have struggled with a summer party over recent years and when Fr Chris Vipers came to see the Friends about the 200th anniversary year celebrations for St Mary Moorfields it seemed an ideal opportunity to both celebrate a summer party and acknowledge the diocese's first pro-Cathedral.

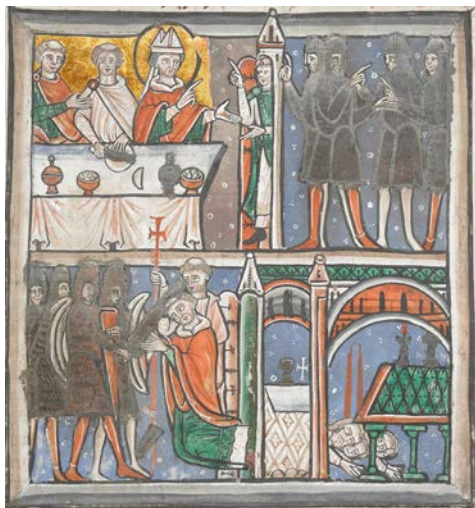


The Friends will celebrate Mass in the church to be followed by a talk from Fr Nicholas Schofield, the Diocesan Archivist, on the history of St Mary Moorfields and the Westminster Diocese. Guests will then enjoy a three-course supper with wine in the parish rooms. We have deliberately

kept the price low at just £35, to make the event as accessible as possible. Numbers are limited to 60 so please book early.

The parish of St Mary Moorfields will be making a return visit to the Cathedral for a private tour on May 13 with Professor Andrew Sanders as guide. If any Friends would like to help serve refreshments, please contact the office. We want to give them a warm welcome.

This year marks another very important anniversary: the 850th year since the martyrdom of St Thomas Becket who has his own side chapel in the Cathedral. I am delighted to tell you that we have Professor Caroline Barron OBE, Professor Emerita in the Department of History at Royal Holloway, University of London, coming to the Cathedral Hall on Wednesday 16 September to talk about the influence that Thomas Becket had in life and death on London. We are in discussion with the British Museum at present to see if a private view of the exhibition might be arranged for the Friends. More details in the autumn newsletter:



St Mary Moorfields – the City

This year marks the bicentenary of the consecration of the first church of St Mary Moorfields, in Finsbury Circus: a momentous occasion in more ways than one. The parish has served City Catholics since the Reformation, and the church is the direct successor of London's clandestine chapels, a living reminder of the beginnings of Catholic Emancipation, after many years of repression and persecution, punctuated with occasional moments of violence, such as the Gordon Riots of 1780.

When, in 1791, chapel-building and the public celebration of Mass were legalised, a church opened in White Street, Moorfields. Four priests served a huge parish, embracing a large area of London in addition to the City, with numerous prisons, hospitals and workhouses – a truly enormous workload. However, it was thought too small, and in too inconvenient a location, to represent Catholicism adequately, and, in 1816, a campaign was launched to replace it with a larger church in Finsbury Circus, better suited to showcasing the Catholic Faith and Liturgy in a suitably imposing manner. The cost of building was raised by public subscription, and work started in 1817.

This first church of St Mary Moorfields, consecrated by the Vicar Apostolic on 20th April 1820, embodied a newfound confidence, as Catholicism emerged from the shadows of the past, to take its rightful place in English life.

The church (with presbytery, burial ground and schools) was designed by John Newman, with an elegant Neoclassical portico, and an apse replicating that of St Sulpice, Paris. The interior, with marble columns and a panorama of the Crucifixion



behind the altar, was extremely dramatic (Pugin likened it to a theatre). Designed 'to confer becoming splendour on the services of our Holy Religion, and to afford sufficient accommodation for the numerous congregation of the district', it certainly impressed contemporary London: the Illustrated London News and various other papers published articles on the building, and the services held therein, catering to a widespread curiosity about Catholic beliefs and practices.

The church also served the spiritual and material needs of the many impoverished

Parish by Elizabeth Manners



Catholics who made up the population of the parish. As well as burial grounds, the parish ran Boys', Girls' and Infant Schools, to educate their children, and in 1860, the parish priest, Monsignor Daniel Gilbert, founded Providence Row, the first non-sectarian Night Shelter in London, which celebrates its 160th anniversary this year.

In the 1850s Cardinal Wiseman chose St Mary Moorfields as his Pro-Cathedral. It was an obvious choice; pending the building of Westminster Cathedral, the City church was the most prominent Catholic church in London. St Mary

Moorfields served as Cardinal Wiseman's Pro-Cathedral for twenty-six years (1843-69). However, in the 19th century the once vast congregation dwindled, houses gave way to offices, and in 1900 the site was sold, in part to raise funds for the building of Westminster Cathedral. However, following a public outcry, some monies were earmarked to build today's church of St Mary Moorfields in Eldon Street. The new church, marked only by a discreet portal embedded in the façade of a mansion block, was completed in 1902, and the first Mass was celebrated in 1903. The architect, George Sherrin, re-used many of the first church's materials and features, from the marble columns and altar to the Stations of the Cross, confessionals, pews, font and candelabra, and the Assumption Window in today's Blessed Sacrament Chapel. The City saints Thomas Becket and Thomas More are also commemorated here.

Despite its location outside the City walls, St Mary Moorfields has long been known as the 'City Parish': surprisingly, in view of all the legislation banning Catholic churches from the City, its claim to this title is (now) genuine: on 1st April 1994, boundary changes brought Eldon Street within the City's boundaries, making it the first Catholic church in the City for 461 years.

Today St Mary Moorfields constitutes two parishes in one. It bears witness to the Catholic faith in a secular City, ministering to office workers and commuters during the week (up to 2000 people regularly attend Mass on Feasts and Holidays of Obligation), but it also has a small Sunday congregation of local



residents. The church's doors are always open, offering a welcome to those in need, or seeking time for quiet reflection, and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. We pray that it may continue to serve the City for many years to come.

The parish celebrations commence on 20 April 2020, when His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols will celebrate Solemn Mass. Details of this, and many other events during the year, are listed at parish.rcdow.org.uk/moorfields. *The Friends of Westminster Cathedral will be celebrating their Summer Party at St Mary Moorfields on Thursday 2 July.*



The Envoy from Madrid: Peter Paul Rubens and Peace

Cambridge author John Harvey on the inspiration behind his new novel 'Pax'



I have always loved pictures, and either drawn them or studied them, and in PAX I felt I had found a great subject for an art-loving novel. PAX follows the visit to London which the great Catholic painter

Peter Paul Rubens made in 1629. Events are seen – in part – through the eyes of a contemporary artist, for whom the fate of Rubens has an intimate value.

Rubens came as envoy of the Court of Spain, with the purpose – his own initiative – of negotiating a Peace between Catholic Spain and Protestant England: this was in the midst of the Thirty Years War, which had devastated Europe since 1618. Rubens knew about war because he grew up in Cologne where the murderously savage 'Cologne War' raged through his childhood. And an artist who loved the human body so warmly would hate the mutilations of war. Rubens hoped his Peace could be 'the connecting knot in the chain of all the confederations of Europe' – words which might please a present-day 'Remainer'.

To me it seemed a remarkable story. What artist now could make peace between nations – or between warring faiths? To do so Rubens must outwit both Cardinal Richelieu in Catholic France, and the Calvinists in England. We see him haggling with a suspicious King Charles I. In London Rubens met high life and low: he left behind

an oil-study of a London prostitute as well as portraits of grandees and of a homely family. But also I imagine him wrestling, in London, with a painful revelation, which parallels the crisis of my contemporary artist. It concerns the past intimacy of his wife Isabella Brant (who died in 1626) with his most brilliant pupil, who lived with them, Anthony Van Dyck: legends later flourished about that romance, and I too have investigated. And in the present time Stephen Bloodsmith is falling for his stunning Afro-British model, Mae, even as a relationship his wife has had appears to be unravelling.

In an extraordinary vehicle Rubens flies one night with his own dark lady to the ends of space and time: he passes Hell and sees Creation, the Heavenly City and Eternity. And an agony of gout in his painting hand reminds him of the pain in the Crucifixions he has painted, and of the forgiveness he needs to make Peace in his own life.



In search of architect Frederick Arthur Walters FSA

Dr Rory O'Donnell, member of the Cathedral Art and Architecture Committee, explains why FA Walters is an architect to be cherished

Walters is best known as the architect of Buckfast Abbey. But he built much in Southwark diocese, notably St Joseph's Seminary Wonerth (1889-1891). Its builder and President (1889-1897) was the future Cardinal Bourne. The chapel added (1896) was the gift of 'Mr Broderick of Brighton,' who was in fact an Irishman from Co Sligo who made his fortune in England but kept his piety and religion. Walters's design is eclectic Franco-Flemish in lovely warm brick and stone dressings. The chapel, lavishly fitted out over the years has surviving side-altars, but the sanctuary is now the scene of a radical but artistically well-handled re-ordering by Corinne Bennett architect c1975.

We will/are hoping to meet the college archivist who may have some of Walters' original drawings.

Popular report suggests the college was a setting for the ITV show 'Foyle's War.'

In the afternoon we see the Pugin decorated Drummond mausoleum arranged (although for non-Catholic use) in chantry-like form at Albury Old Church.

At the Holy Ghost Friary at Chilworth, Walters made a complete friary quadrangle in sylvan setting on top of the North Downs. His distinctive church (1890-2) has the wide aisle-less nave, the narrowed crossing with tower above and a long deep chancel of medieval urban Franciscan friaries such as the Kings Lynn Greyfriars. Once again it was lavishly furnished and miraculously never re-ordered (!), it has side chapels, the Mivart/Wells chantry, a rood arch, a stalled choir and an alabaster high altar and reredos. Ranges on three sides (1890-1915) make a quadrangle of library, refectory etc.

In 2010, the Ramsgate Cassinese Benedictines took up residence and they take enclosure very seriously. We are very grateful that they have agreed to give us access to the church and grounds.

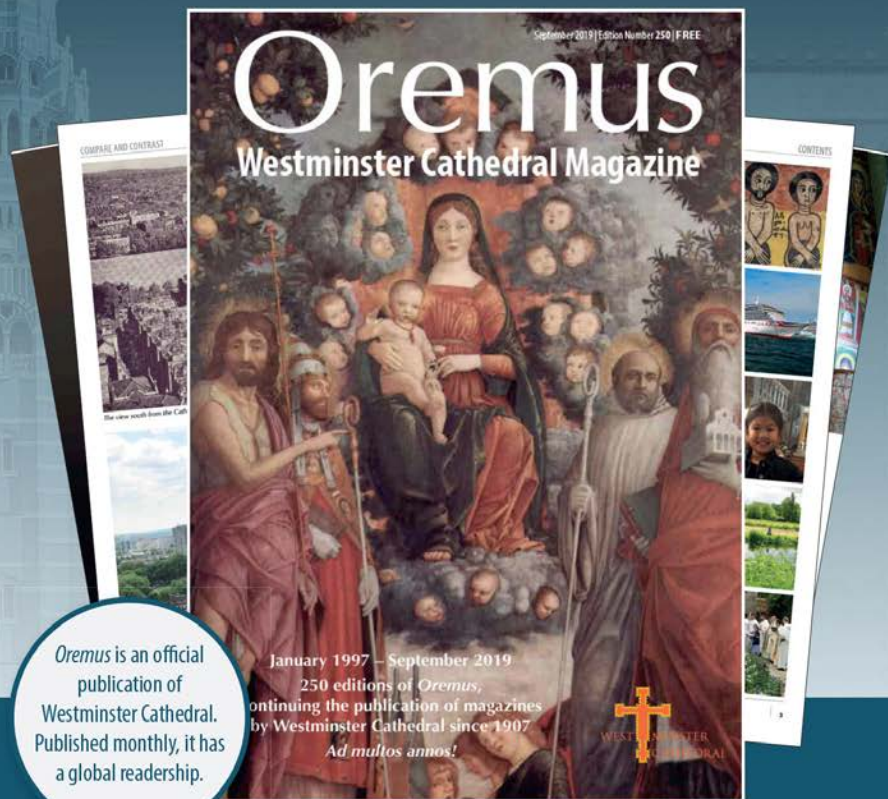
Postscript: The Community at Chilworth is now in isolation – any re-arranged trip would be subject to their willingness to accommodate guests.



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The Magazine of Westminster Cathedral

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Mosaics update

St Patrick's Chapel Mosaics



Unfortunately, there is not too much progress to report with regard to the design for the mosaics in St Patrick's Chapel. Although a design had been approved by the Cathedral Art and Architecture Committee on behalf of the Cathedral, it met with criticism from the Historic Churches Committee. As a result, the design has been referred back to the designer for modification. Without an approved design, the Friends cannot at present launch a formal appeal.

Nevertheless, the seed-corn fund for the St Patrick's Chapel Mosaics Appeal remains open and gathers contributions; it now exceeds £30,000. The American Friends of the Cathedral have just sent one thousand dollars for the St Patrick's mosaics. Please remember that 17 March is St Patrick's Day so please send St Patrick a birthday present by sending the Friends Office a cheque in favour of The Friends and designated for the seed-corn fund, or by putting donations in the St Patrick's Collecting Box just alongside the Chapel.

Thank you for your continued support of Cathedral mosaics which is much appreciated. If anyone wants to discuss a significant donation to the appeal please do not hesitate to contact me via the office. You remain in my prayers.

Barry DS Lock Chairman of the Friends' Mosaic Committee

Support the Westminster Cathedral Tower Appeal

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OF WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL

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COVID-19 – a huge threat to the Cathedral's financial viability

An urgent message from Linda McHugh, Trustee of the Friends and Chair of the Westminster Cathedral Finance Committee

As this edition of *The Friends' Newsletter* was going to press, we heard the sad announcement that there will be no more public Masses in the Cathedral after the evening of 20th March until further notice.

This is a devastating blow for regular worshippers and particularly for the large group of predominantly older people who attend Mass every day and for whom it is an important opportunity for social contact with like-minded individuals. Many of these parishioners live alone and have comparatively few opportunities to interact with other people.

As well as the human impact and the creation of debilitating fear and uncertainty, the Coronavirus pandemic has brought

to the Cathedral a very real threat to its financial viability.

The cost of running the Cathedral is £2.4 million per year or approximately £46,000 per week and it is already experiencing an operational shortfall of £6,000 per week. As an organisation the income of which comes largely from voluntary donations, having to stop Masses is going to have a catastrophic effect on the Cathedral's finances.

The Cathedral's offertory collections total about £12,600 per week including all Sunday and weekday Masses. It also receives just under £5,000 per week from votives. All of the cash offertory and much of the income from votives will disappear when

there are no public Masses. Furthermore, the Cathedral shop will have to close for the safety of its staff with the result that there will be no income from that or from the Tower until the Cathedral reopens

All this is likely to increase our operational deficit to well over £20,000 per week and there is little that the Cathedral can do to stop this happening.

For, although the Cathedral's income will disappear, its costs will very largely remain the same. Staff will still be paid and overheads associated with maintaining Clergy House will continue.

As those who attend Sunday Mass at the Cathedral will know, a few weeks ago, the Cathedral completed a three-week planned giving campaign, the principal objectives of which were to encourage a larger number of parishioners to sign up for Gift Aid and to ask people to change their main method of giving to standing order.

As parishioners were told during the presentation at each Mass from a member of the Finance Committee: "A standing order is ideal for the increasing numbers of us who don't carry cash and it means you can continue supporting the Cathedral when you can't come to Sunday Mass here. It also means that we can – literally – count on your support."

No-one had any idea how prescient those words were or that we would very soon be facing a situation in which none of us could come to Mass.



The Friends have always been generous in their support of the Cathedral and we are asking you all now to consider helping the Cathedral through the dark and challenging weeks ahead by setting up a standing order to make a regular payment and by signing a Gift Aid declaration in favour of the Cathedral if you do not already have one. If you would also like to make a one-off donation, it will be most gratefully received.

To start a standing order, simply complete and return to us the form that has been included with this Newsletter. Alternatively, you can set one up on-line using the following information:

Bank: **HSBC Bank plc**

Account name: **Westminster Cathedral**

Account number: **01309056**

Sort code: **40-05-20**

The reference that you use should be your surname and initials.

Even if you do set up a standing order yourself, please return the form by post to Agnes Dabrowska, Westminster Cathedral Clergy House, 42 Francis Street, London SW1P 1QW. Alternatively, you can e-mail a scanned copy to cathedralfncttee@rcdow.org.uk

Thank you, in advance for your generosity. It will help tide the Cathedral over until we all meet again in happier times.

For the Diary: Calendar April 2020 – S

Wednesday 22 April: Professor John Harvey – Rubens in London. To mark the publication of John's celebrated book *Pax*, a talk on Rubens – Catholic, diplomat and artist – focusing on his time in London. Westminster Cathedral Hall 6.30pm for refreshments. Talk will commence at 7pm. Tickets £10.



Thursday 23 April: Prayers and a reception to mark the formal installation of the donors' plaque in the chapel of St George and the English Martyrs. All are welcome to attend the prayer ceremony and blessing which will take place after the 5.30pm Mass. The donors' reception is private.

Thursday 7 May: In the footsteps of Catholic architect John Walters with Dr Rory O'Donnell. A visit to Womersley seminary where Mass will also be celebrated and where we will have lunch in the Refectory. A visit to Albury Park to see the St Peter and Paul church

with Pugin reredos and then on to the Benedictine Monastery at Chilworth where we will visit the abbey church, join the community for Vespers and have tea before returning to London. Coach departs at 8.30am. Tickets £45.

Monday 11 May: Talk by Joanna Bogle on the Marian Shrines of London (lost and found). Clergy House Library. 6.30pm for a glass of wine and the talk will be at 7pm.

Tuesday 19 May: Our day will start with Mass at Tonbridge celebrated by Canon Christopher and then on to the beautiful chapel of All Saints' Tudeley with its historic Chagall windows. We have a Ploughman's lunch booked at a pub in Tudeley and in the afternoon we visit the historic Penshurst Place. We have, weather permitting, been invited for afternoon tea in the beautiful garden of close Friends of the Cathedral. Coach departs at 8.00am. Tickets £45.

Friday 22 May: A visit to the Wallace Collection – Rubens, artist and diplomat – with Paul Pickering focusing on the return to the Wallace of *A View of Het Steen* in the Early Morning from the National Gallery which reunites two pictures in Rubens' own collection. Afternoon tea included. Meet at the Wallace at 1.45pm for the tour to start at 2pm. Tickets: £25

Wednesday 3 June: Kathryn Howard – Westminster Cathedral Hall. Talk is at 7pm and doors open at 6.30pm. There will be a glass of wine before the talk. Books will be on sale. Tickets £10

Thursday 11 June: The celebrated Beth Chatto Garden. We have an introductory talk on arrival followed by a pre-booked quiche, new potatoes and salad lunch in the tearoom. The afternoon is then free to

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explore the 7.5 acres of garden. There will be a half hour coffee/tea stop en route. Coach departs at 8.10am. Tickets £55.



Wednesday 24 June: Am exclusive private tour of the Old Bailey with Judge Mark Lucraft followed by a prosecco and canapé reception. Meet at the Old Bailey at 4.45pm for the tour to start at 5.00pm. Tickets £50.

Monday 29 June: Friends AGM. Westminster Cathedral Hall 6.30pm. All members of the Friends welcome.

Thursday 2 July: Summer Party at St Mary Moorfields marking the 200th anniversary of the foundation of the diocese's first pro-Cathedral. We will have Mass in the church, a talk on the history of the diocese from the Diocesan Historian Fr Nicholas Schofield and then a three-course supper with wine. Tickets £35.

Wednesday 16 September: Professor Caroline Barron: St Thomas Becket – his influence on London in life and in death. This talk marks the 850th anniversary of the death of Becket. Westminster Cathedral Hall. Doors at 6.30pm and the talk will commence at 7pm. Tickets £10.

COVID-19

Diary List is for 'Information Only'

All Events are currently postponed. At the present time, the Friends may be contacted only on 0207 798 9059 or email: christinawhite@rcdow.org.uk. The office in Clergy House is closed.

Regular updates will be posted on the Cathedral website and the Friends' Facebook page. Please do join this to keep in touch with other Friends



END POINT



In October last year, I was delighted to represent the Friends at a Conference of Cathedral Friends held in Peterborough. Over two days, delegates shared experiences and we talked about the issues common to our organisations: data protection, falling and ageing membership, events and fundraising. No one mentioned the threat of a virus.

Without thinking, I dipped my fingers into the holy water stoup by Cardinal Basil Hume's resting place but the stoups have all been drained. Life in the Cathedral is somewhat changed as we adapt to a new protocol. We had prepared a full schedule of Friends' events for spring and summer but these are now postponed indefinitely. I pray that the advent of warmer weather will herald more than just a lifting of spirits as the world waits for the virus to abate.

I received an interesting email in March informing me that there are moves afoot to restore the ancient shrine of Our Lady of the Oak in Islington; the original shrine is believed to have been close to the west door of St Mary's Anglican church on Upper Street.

I found mention of the shrine in an exhortation from Henry VIII from 1546. The king had prohibited all hunting and hawking of hares, partridges, pheasants, and heron, from 'Westminster to St. Giles-in-the-Fields, and from thence to Islington,

to Our Lady of the Oak, to Highgate, to Hornsey Park, and to Hampstead Heath'. Diane Purkiss mentioned the brutal burning of statues in her brilliant talk for the Friends in February and this led to a wider discussion about Marian devotion in London, pre and post-Reformation. Joanna Bogle was coming to talk about the lost shrines and, at some point in the future, we might consider a walking tour.

Just before 'lockdown', Glynn, the Cathedral shop manager, popped by the office to discuss a project that the Friends are supporting: a new mosaics book with extensive photographs. She observed that our own saint St John Southworth was known for assisting the victims of plague and maybe he would be a good focus for our prayers at this time.

As the newsletter went to press we were still awaiting news of live streaming of Masses from the Cathedral - do follow the updates on the Friends' Facebook page. The Cathedral and the chaplains need both your prayers and financial support. If you can encourage a new friend to join, email us the membership form on P21. You may also use this to renew your membership. And please, remember the Cathedral in your devotions this Easter; St John Southworth and Our Lady of Westminster pray for us.





*St Joseph's Mass in Lourdes during the Westminster
Lourdes Pilgrimage*

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**St Joseph's Pastoral Centre,
St Joseph's Grove,
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