

Voice from the vicarage April 15th 2021

Dear All,

Here's some wonderful news. I heard from our Cara that she is to be admitted as a novice in the Community at Tymwar on the Eve of the Feast of the Ascension. For those of you who are fairly recent members of the community, Cara Greenham-Hancock left these shores in October last year to 'test her vocation' to the Religious Life with the Society of the Holy Cross, a Contemplative community for women in Wales. (www.tymawrconvent.org)

In the way the exploration of the religious life goes, a person begins as a 'postulant' and then if it seems right moves on to be 'clothed' in the habit of a novice. Of course it's not just an outfit, but a clothing in the *life* of the community. A person is a novice for several years before taking vows as a professed sister. It's quite a step.



The chapel where Cara will name her commitment...

It's such a lovely thing for us as a parish to have been part of Cara's journey and to continue in daily prayer for her and the Community in our intercessions at our 6 p.m. prayers each night. Of course we won't claim all the credit but there are now what Cara calls a 'gaggle' of postulants to be admitted!



From my point of view I am delighted that the Bishop Visitor to the Community who will admit Cara is a fellow member of my own Community, the Oratory of the Good Shepherd, and that though the convent is now well settled in Wales it began its life in the diocese of Chichester where I ministered for over 20 years....the Church is old and worldwide and yet so beautifully connected!

AND SO IT WAS that last Sunday we prayed as mightily as we could for

Deacon Katie as she leaves us to become assistant curate in the parish of Altona knowing that even as she goes we remain one in the ministry and life of the Church. I have terrible trouble remembering the name 'Altona'...so when people ask me where she's going/gone I look a bit blank...I think it must be a subconscious thing because I haven't yet got used to the thought of her not being here! But I have little doubt that we will see more of her. And what a privilege it is for a parish priest and a parish to share in the crucial, early time of a person's ordained life.

Even now, forty years on, I am so often recalling my experiences as a curate, and quoting my training vicar! He was, to be fair, very quirky and very quotable. The best sort!

For those of you who weren't there on Sunday let me quote Katie who warmed my heart considerably when she said that from Day 1 in Brunswick it was drummed in to her that **the adoration of God** is the most important thing we do; all else flows from it. A quote worth remembering....

In the wider world there has, or course been much in the media about the death of HRH Prince Philip. Though death at the age of 99 cannot be described as a tragedy, there is much sadness. He has been a larger than life figure in Britain, and throughout the Commonwealth. Always there.

It seems to me his life was given to one thing, and that one thing was enough: the Crown and Commonwealth His commitment to young people through his fantastic award scheme and his work with the WWF were exemplary. In a former life I was sometimes called upon to present Duke of Edinburgh awards in Sussex, often to kids for whom it had been a tremendous effort, instilling a real sense of appropriate pride in their achievements. It was good to join others in our Cathedral last night for a beautifully sung Evensong at which the Duke's life was commemorated. I must admit a highlight for me was the singing of **the Anthem**....May 'God save our gracious Queen' and be with her in these days of mourning.

Talking of singing, let me remind you that if you enjoy singing and would like a file of Sunday's music sent to you in advance of the service so you can be better prepared for Sunday worship, then simply email our organist Stephen Baldwin and he'll be glad to oblige. (baldwinse@hotmail.com) Now was it my imagination, or was the singing last Sunday particularly robust? It was good to have Zac Beaumont as our cantor for the first time, and my spies tell me that Albert Young will take on the task this Sunday. Albert was student pastor here in 2019 and lived in the vicarage in those days. And this Sunday you can watch Vy Vu gently push me and the servers around as she is Master of Ceremonies for the first time at 10 am.

Stations of the Resurrection... This service of prayer and readings in which we seek to be with Jesus and the disciples in the days following his resurrection will be on **Sunday @ 5**. The service is in church and will be followed by a glass of wine in the vicarage..

Holy Week seems a bit ago now, but I do want to say that it seems to me God has and is blessing us very much here, and our worship that week was surely a sign of it. Of course we have our strengths and weaknesses and there are challenges, or as I prefer to call them, opportunities ahead. They will undoubtedly stretch our hopes, our energies and I suspect our finances. But, as Easter reminds us, our God has been so generous with us, how else can we respond, but with our own generosity?

And finally, I came across this quotable quote from an Orthodox bishop I got to know, as he was a frequent pilgrim to the Shrine at Walsingham: **'It is not the task of Christianity to provide easy answers to every question, but to make us progressively aware of mystery. God is not so much the object of our knowledge as a cause of our wonder.'**

Hope to see you wondering soon! +Lindsay