

## Diocesan News.....

## ARUNDEL &amp; BRIGHTON

**March Meeting**

The A&B had their March meeting at St Gabriel's Parish, Billingham. Mass for the feast of St David was celebrated by Fr Paul McMahon, O.Praem and followed the nomination of our new President, Mrs Marilyn Simmonds. Mrs Mary Horgan agreed to continue as secretary and Mrs Hazel Seymour will remain as treasurer.

Our speaker was Mrs Joanna Bogle who talked about Feasts and Festivals in the Church. We were amused by her gentle and accurate description of Confirmation candidates she had met before driving to Billingham. She asked for our prayers for those young people willing to stand up for their faith in an increasingly secular world, especially the ones our teenagers inhabit.

Mrs Bogle showed us, with the analogy of the hot cross bun to illustrate the Church's year, the circle containing the four seasons which are steeped in our Catholic tradition and

for many of us, mothers and grandmothers, the way we planned our household tasks. The meals we cooked, the cleaning and repairing traditions; all allowed us to appreciate God's ordering of our year from eating hot cross buns on Good Friday to the celebrations in some European countries of Midsummer's Day, the Church's feast of St John the Baptist. It is God's Order that we need to preserve where the seasons and the traditions of the past are losing their meaning.

We closed our meeting with a reminder that our AGM would be at Arundel Cathedral on 19 April 2008 and our National President, Mrs Maureen McVann, would be our guest of honour. Bishop Keiran will say Mass and we hope all our Foundations will be able to turn out in force. We also agreed to write to our MP's and the Prime Minister about the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill.

Anne Hart,  
Diocesan Media Officer

## BIRMINGHAM

**Diocesan AGM**

Our Diocesan AGM was held on 3 April at St Anne's Centre, Digbeth, Birmingham with 96 members and guests.

An interesting and informative meeting, covering many topics, encouraging fellow members and parishioners to take an interest in current affairs such as the Human Embryology and Fertilisation Bill and urging all present to complete the 'Passion for Life' cards and send to Local MP's/Cabinet Ministers. Many members within our Diocese have written to their MPs and voiced their opinions on this issue.

Activities included, a study day on the subject of the 'Vulnerable Child and Adult and more recently a National Study Day on the emotive subject of 'TRAFFICKING'. As a result of this, a study day is being held in the Grimshaw Room at St Chad's Birmingham, on Saturday 14 June 10.00am – 1.00pm.

The National Pilgrimage to Walsingham was a wonderful, spiritually uplifting waterlogged day! The Archbishop's Garden Party, where members ran a stall. National Council, annual Mass for UCM and joint annual Mass for UCM and CWL which were both followed by a shared table and Women's World Day of Prayer.

Fundraising has been carried out for Charities such as Zoë's Place, Life, Let the Children Live, Eye Camps appeal, to name but a few.

A beautiful Mass was cele-

brated by His Grace Archbishop Vincent Nichols, followed by a three-course meal where outgoing officers, Elsie Walker (Treasurer), Maureen Smith (Secretary) and Pat Bates (Media) were thanked for their years of hard work and dedication and new officers elected and welcomed.

Finally and most importantly, our Spiritual Director, Fr Timothy Burke is celebrating his Diamond Jubilee on 11th July this year.

Fr. Burke has been Spiritual Director for UCM members in Birmingham Archdiocese for nearly 40 years.

Apparently he undertook the role, expecting it to last just a few years or as he was informed by the Bishop "it could last for life". Well, it looks as though Fr Burke is in for the long haul!

In celebration of 60 years of service to the Priesthood, a cheque was presented to Fr Burke together with all members, expressing much appreciation for his hard work and spiritual guidance.

**Bev O' Sullivan**

A member of St Francis Xavier, Oldbury foundation, Bev O'Sullivan, was asked to nominate a charity to receive a donation of Easter Eggs from staff at Npower, where she is an employee.

Approximately 70 Easter eggs were delivered to Brushstrokes, a community partnership based at St Philip's Catholic Church in Smethwick, which 'offers friendship, hospi-

tal and support to the most hidden individuals and families in their neighbourhood'.

Staff later managed to track down the anonymous person whom they knew to have a connection with the Union of Catholic Mothers at Oldbury. A letter had been sent to the Convent attached to our Parish thanking her for the wonderful donation that had enabled staff at Brushstrokes to provide so many families with a gift that symbolised new beginnings and celebrated the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Well done Bev!

**St Peter's Leamington Spa**

On Sunday 20 April 2008 the nine O'clock Mass at St Peter's Leamington Spa was said for all the members of The Union of Catholic Mothers. During the Mass our foundation's new banner was blessed and two new members were enrolled.

The banner was made by Maureen Abbott one of our members. Fr John Cross, our parish priest, celebrated the Mass at which he spoke of the UCM and wrote in the newsletter of how appreciative he was of the work the members did in the parish.

He is very supportive of the UCM in Leamington and the members are grateful for that support.

Sarah Lockett,  
Diocesan Media Officer

## EAST ANGLIA

**St James Foundation Ipswich**

Father Gates joined 13 ladies on second February for Christmas Lunch at the Holiday Inn. We were given a private room so UCM business, if any, was done. Every year (instead of sending Christmas Cards) we collect for Burgess House, which is a respite home used by the son of one of the ladies. This year we collected fifty-five pounds.

The speaker for our March meeting was Sister Marian Davey who is 'Chaplain' to the Haven Ports for the Apostleship of the Sea. She visits all the ports in East Anglia and is dedicated to the welfare of the seamen of whom 99 per cent are foreign. There are very few UK seafarers.

She was Hospital Chaplain for 14 years and then moved to Aberdeen and the Oil Rigs. The seafarers life is one of sacrifice, conditions are awful, working hours are long and the pay is low. Not all ships treat their men badly but it seems many do. She and her co-workers do wonderful work. A friendly face in port is always read to listen over a cup of coffee and to take them to Mass if there is time. She collects all manner of things for them from trendy clothes to toiletries and sweets. We had a wonderful evening of laughter and sadness and on our part a willingness to help.

**Our Lady and St Walstan Costessey.**

After seven years as chairperson and numerous years on the committee of the Womens World Day

of Prayer, Joyce Potter retired at the end of this year's service, which was held in our parish church.

She was presented with a bouquet and M&S vouchers.

The Lenten talk this year was given by Father John Shannon (our parish priest) on monks. He started by introducing us to the monks of Calvey Island, then with the life and history of being a monk, with snippets of rules by St Benedict. He finished with this saying 'A monk is like a lighthouse - sending out a beam of light of prayer'.

**Diocesan Quiet Day Retreat**

Once again we thank Bishop Michael for letting us use the facilities at his residence in Poringland. Twenty-four ladies from all foundations attended on 5 April. Our speaker was Clare Richards and the theme was 'A Bible Study – Walking with Jesus accompanied by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John'.

Mark's Gospel was written c.65AD and his theme is the 'Mystery of Christ'. He wrote of the passion and death first – there is no mention of Mary – it is the shortest Gospel. It is a Gospel for those who suffer.

Matthew's Gospel is from c.75AD. He relied on Mark's Gospel and repeated 606 out of 661 verses. The Gospel is addressed to Palestinian Jews who had become Christians.

Luke's Gospel is c.85AD and is based on Mark

**St Gerard Majella**

The first weekend in April saw six members of St Gerard Majella Union of Catholic Mothers set off in two cars and lovely sunshine for our annual retreat with the Marist Sisters at their Convent at Nympsfield in the Cotswolds. This has been a fixture enjoyed by varying numbers of us attending over the past twenty years. We received the usual warm welcome from Sister Maria and tea and cakes.

Over the next couple of days we enjoyed spiritual talks by Sister Maria and friendly exchanges among ourselves. The two ablest of our party enjoyed a brisk walk to the Peak while the rest of us had a drive through the lovely countryside and took in the magnificent views of the Peak.

On Saturday evening we attended Mass at St Joseph's Church, Nympsfield, celebrated by Father Vincent Curtis from Dursley, and on Sunday morning were greeted with a cup of tea in bed, courtesy of Margaret, with the news there had been snow overnight. After a leisurely breakfast we had our final meeting with Sister and Holy Hour in the Chapel. The sun came out and we had a safe journey home. I think it is only when we are back in our home surroundings that we realise what a lovely peaceful spiritual weekend we have experienced, and thank God for it.

Pat O'Brien,  
Member of St Gerard Majella Foundation



Giving a family bread – Bethlehem means 'House of Bread'

**House of Bread.**

IN A previous issue of *The Catholic Mother* I mentioned that one of Clifton Cathedral's members, Bernadette Grzybowska, with her baker husband sold bread after Mass every Sunday to raise money for worthy causes.

When Bernadette read about a bakery run by Salesians in Bethlehem, which provides bread for the poor and needy for the equivalent of about £1 per month, she wanted to help in some way.

As a gesture of solidarity with the beleaguered people of Jesus' birthplace, just before Christmas, she sent the bakery £300 profit from the sale of husband Andrew's bread, how touchingly appropriate that Bethlehem, "Beit Laham" means "House of Bread".

Rita Daws,  
Media Officer,  
Diocese of Clifton

## CLIFTON



The cloister in front of St Catherine's church next to the caves where Jesus was born

**Musical Achievement for UCM Member**

Fr Kevin Mortimer, Parish Priest of Sacred Heart Church, was pleased to announce in the Easter bulletin the news that Jane Dyer, organist at the 9.30am Mass, has successfully gained a Diploma of the Royal School of Church Music in Sacred Music Studies. The course taken by Jane was of a four years duration and during this time she submitted work from eleven modules to her tutors for marking and assessment, email for written work and tape for musical work.

The University of Wales, Bangor School of Music offers a flexible distance learning Certificate in Sacred Music Studies and is supported by the Royal School of Church Music. It is intended primarily for those who lead music in their church, whilst the programme aims to develop knowledge and understanding of music in worship with music in their church, using understanding of the Christian season rites and liturgies, to support the appropriate use of music in worship. We join with F Kevin in congratulating Jane for her achievements and commitment to this intensive course.

Patricia Tester,  
Sacred Heart, Westbury-on-Trym



Jane Dyer, Sacred Heart Foundation

**Happy Birthday**

Congratulations to Bridget Newport, 98, of the former St Joseph's Foundation Fishponds, Bristol



Hilary Bushell and Veronica Bell

and has represented our foundation at other levels of UCM. Veronica is a true friend to all who meet her and she gives of herself with friendliness and cheerfulness. We wish her well in her retirement and look forward to sharing lots more fun with her as a friend and fellow member of the UCM.

**Happy Birthday**

Liz O'Connor, a member of St James Foundation, Ipswich had her 80th Birthday on 15 February. The celebrations continued on the 16 with a lunch party. Liz did not want gifts but asked for donations for The White Fathers project in Africa, which raised over £500. (See Page 4 for photo)

plus other material. He saw the message of Jesus not as a call to martyrdom (Mark), or a fulfilment of Jewish hopes (Matthew) but as a proclamation of consoling news for ALL people. It is a Gospel of Joy and Forgiveness.

John's Gospel is c.100AD. Tradition says this and the 3 epistles of John were written on the Island of Patmos. For John, Jesus is the WORD OF GOD. He is clear from ch.1 that He is the Messiah, Son of God, Shepherd, Bread of Life, Gateway, Vine etc. Note especially the GLORY OF GOD. John invites his readers not to learn about Jesus but to live his life.

Clare was a wonderful speaker and all agreed we would like her back for more. The day ended with Benediction.

**Sacred Heart & St Margaret Mary Foundation Dereham**

At the AGM of our Foundation held on 19 February our Secretary Veronica Bell retired. Vice President Hilary Bushell presented her with a statue of the Holy Family and a pendant of Our Lady of Walsingham. Our Foundation has been very fortunate to have had such a loyal and long serving secretary as Veronica. Over the past six years she has been remarkable in her role and kept us well-informed ensuring all was recorded as required. She has also assisted our President and Treasurer