

# IN TOUCH

February 2012

St Edmund's Parish Church  
Downham Market



## St Edmund's Knitting and Crochet Group



There will be an initial meeting on **Tuesday 31 January**, at **7.30pm** in the **Church Hall**.

Bring a current project, or if you are a beginner, bring a ball of wool and a pair of needles (or a crochet hook).

We expect to be a versatile group with several projects on the go at the same time! The group will cater for all levels of ability with instruction on hand.

Future plans will be discussed that evening. But at the moment we anticipate monthly meetings, one in the evening and one in the daytime, on different days.

We hope that there may also be a way of including people who are housebound.

Additionally, we know that there are people in the town who are seeking local knitting groups, so this may be a way for St Edmund's to reach into the community!!

Further details (or if you are interested but can't make the first meeting) from **Sheila W-B**.

*(Oh, it's not only for the girls...!)*

## EDUCATION SUNDAY 4<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2012

### LEARNING AND SERVING

If you are reading this, you are probably one of the 88% of the world's population lucky enough to have attended primary school. Possibly, you have also been to secondary school (60%), and you may even be one of the 27% who have studied beyond secondary school level.

In our culture, access to education is often taken for granted and is increasingly seen as a commodity to be bought and sold for individual gain. This is not the Christian view of education.

As Christians we are called to work for a fairer world – to ensure that everyone has access to education, that our schools include those on the margins of society, and to tackle the root causes of poverty and inequality that lead to millions of people around the world being denied their basic human rights.

Education is not simply about preparing us for the workplace. It is also about the development of the whole person and finding ways to use our newly acquired skills and knowledge in the service of others.

**Our special guest speaker on Education Sunday will be MR. JON FORD, the new Head Teacher of Downham Market High School.**

## FR. DAVID EVANS

We are sad to report that Fr. David died at home on 3 January, having been diagnosed with cancer last October.

Trained at Mirfield, Fr. David was ordained and served in the Southwark diocese before moving to Ely in 1990. Prior to his appointment as Rector of Hilgay with Ten Mile Bank and Southery, he served as Rector of Somersham, Pidley and Old Hurst. More recently, he was also acting priest-in-charge of Wretton with Stoke Ferry and Whittington.

Fr. David was licensed as Rural Dean of the Fincham and Feltwell Deanery in 2009 and as an Honorary Canon of the Ely Cathedral at a service held in December 2011.

Fr. David was a wise pastor and a good friend. He will be greatly missed by his wife Jean and family for whom we pray, by his parishioners, and by all of us who knew him well.

*Fr James Mather*



*At Fr. Alan's ordination, July 2011*

## Bishops challenge supermarkets' anti-faith Easter agenda



Bishops are calling on congregations to buy *The Real Easter Egg* in 2012 after supermarkets failed to order sufficient quantities of the UK's only faith-based Easter egg, despite overwhelming demand from their Christian customers last Easter.

*The Real Easter Egg* is the first and only Fairtrade Easter egg to explain the Easter story on the box and give money to charity. It was launched last year as a mail order gift after the supermarkets initially turned it down. Churches and schools joined a campaign to establish the egg by placing tens of thousands of orders through mail order which were delivered by Traidcraft.

Morrison's, Booths, Co-op and Waitrose later changed their mind and decided to trial *The Real Easter Egg* for Easter 2011. They all sold out within days with people walking past Cadbury's two-for-one offers. Waitrose was inundated with online orders for hundreds of eggs as millions of Christians searched for the only remaining supplies.

With such demand and quick sell outs Manchester based Meaningful Chocolate Company, who manufacture *The Real Easter Egg*, expected a significant increase in the numbers ordered by supermarkets. However, one major retailer has decided to

reduce their order and in many of the UK's biggest towns there will only be a handful of eggs available to buy off the supermarket shelves when they go on sale in February.

A spokesperson, from the Meaningful Chocolate Company, said: "Unlike other faiths, which are catered for by the biggest chains, Christians will struggle to find anything connecting Jesus with the major Festival of Easter on the supermarket shelves. Out of the 80 million Easter eggs on sale this year nearly all will be secular, made from non-Fairtrade choco-late and with no charitable donation."

The Bishop of Oxford, who chairs the Church of England's Board of Education, said; "There seems to be a clear cut agenda to keep credible products, with any connection to Christianity, off the shelves. But it is vitally important that our children are not cheated of the chance to hear the Easter story. Last year churches and schools campaigned with their wallets and ordered tens of thousands online and complained to supermarkets which were not stocking enough. If we have to continue to campaign to establish *The Real Easter Egg* by placing orders online or supporting independent retailers, then so be it."

The Bishop of Middleton, speaking from Manchester, said: "We thought we had proven that people were not afraid to buy an Easter egg which mentions Jesus, gives money to charity and which helps in communicating the true meaning of Easter. It seems incredible that the only Easter egg gift on the market, which caters for the Christian community, is rejected

or marginalised by our biggest retailers."

### How to buy a Real Easter Egg

The recommended retail price is £3.99. *The Real Easter Egg* is made from 125g of high quality Fairtrade chocolate and 15 pence from every sale is donated to Traidcraft Exchange.

There are limited supplies, so early ordering is advised. *The Real Easter Egg* online shop is at: [www.realeasteregg.co.uk](http://www.realeasteregg.co.uk)

To ensure supply, churches are advised to place a bulk order by the end of February. The site has sign-up form, posters and other resources. Online ordering will be open for as long as supplies last or until the middle of March but check the official online shop or Facebook for details.

Traidcraft will also have major stocks available through its online shop and its network of church re-sellers. A number of Independent retailers, including Cathedrals, are expected to stock. *The Real Easter Egg* online shop will include details of all retailers as they start selling.

### Egg with a brighter faith message

*The Real Easter Egg* is breaking new ground this year and has had a make-over with brighter colours. For the first time ever on an Easter Egg there is a Bible quote under the lid and a free copy of the Easter story included inside every box. The Easter story on the outside of the box is a colourful visual and there are three crosses on the front. These new features make the egg even more attractive.

CofE website



## Lent : a Time of Grace, a Time for Healing

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which this year is **22 February**.

### A time of grace

Lent is a graced time of healing and renewal. It originated in the early Church as the final period of preparation for those receiving their Baptism at Easter. But over course of time the Church came to realise that this time would be beneficial for all Christians.

On Ash Wednesday there will be two celebrations of the Eucharist on that day, at 09:30 and 18:00, each with the traditional Blessing and Distribution of Ashes. We receive the ashes (made from last year's palm crosses) as a sign of our sorrow for our sins and of our turning again to the Lord.

So I encourage us all to join in an Ash Wednesday celebration to get our Lent off to a good start. And to make the very most of what is on offer this Lent.

### A time for healing

One of the graced ministries on offer in Lent is the '**Sacrament of Reconciliation**', also known

in the CofE as 'Confession' and the 'Ministry of Absolution'.

I cannot emphasise enough the joy of receiving the Lord's assured forgiveness in this beautiful and rather under-used Sacrament.

It's one of those feelings in life that are impossible to put into words!! (Put yourself in the shoes of the Prodigal Son when he has returned to, and been forgiven by his loving father.)

So I warmly encourage us all – whether we are already a regular penitent, whether we have been in the past but have fallen away, of have never before gone to Confession, to make use of this beautiful gift of grace from the Lord to strengthen their relationship with him.

In Sacramental Confession, the priest has the privilege of being the 'invited eavesdropper', who by the grace of his Holy Orders ministers the Absolution in the name of the Lord.

The priest is there to welcome you home, to pray with you, to be of service in the name of Jesus Christ, who offers all of us forgiveness for our sins and the gift of His mercy and love. The priest does this as one who himself is a sinner who has sought the Lord for the same graceful forgiveness.

As one Bishop put it recently:

"Confession gives us the chance to start over, to hit the 'reset' button of our lives. It shows how forgiving and compassionate our God is and it helps us to grow in concern and love for others. Come to Confession this Lent and receive God's mercy, for peace of mind and to deepen your friendship with Jesus, to receive spiritual

healing and to increase your sense of joy and to experience Christ's saving grace.

"God's love for you is greater than all the sins you've committed or could ever commit. Now is the time to come and have God take away the burdens of guilt that can often weigh us down. If you've been waiting for a sign to return to the Church or to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, this is your chance to re-establish and strengthen a relationship with God that will last forever".

*A priest will always give special help to those making their first Confession, or after a long time.*

## INFORMATION

### SUNDAYS

**9.30am PARISH EUCHARIST**  
(Other Services as announced)

### WEEKDAYS

The Eucharist is celebrated:

Holy Days & Festivals - 9.30am

Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri - 9.30am

Thu – 6pm with Evening Prayer

### CLERGY CONTACTS

**Fr. James Mather ssc** (Rector)

The Rectory, King's Walk,

Downham Market,

Norfolk, PE38 9LF.

☎ (01366) 382187

[james.mather@ely.anglican.org](mailto:james.mather@ely.anglican.org)

**Fr. Alan Davies** (Asst. Priest)

The Lodge, Wallington Hall,

Runton Holme, Nfk, PE33 0EP.

☎ (01553) 810675

[julieandalan@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:julieandalan@hotmail.co.uk)

## **WEBSITE**

[www.saintedmund.org.uk](http://www.saintedmund.org.uk)

# PRAYER CALENDAR

Wed 1 Feb.

The Mothers' Union (MU)

Thu 2 Feb.

The Presentation of the Lord

The Elderly

Fri 3 Feb. - St. Blaise

All with diseases of the throat

Sat 4 Feb.

Those who have no rest

Sun 5 Feb. - 5th in Ord. Time and "Education Sunday"

Our Church and Parish; and all involved in education

Mon 6 Feb. - St. Paul Miki & co

The Church in Japan

Tue 7 Feb. - of requiem

The Departed of the Month, RIP

Wed 8 Feb.- St. Jerome Emiliani

Orphans & Abandoned Children

Thu 9 Feb.

Confrat. of the Bl. Sacrament

Fri 10 Feb. - St. Scholastica

Vocations to the religious life

Sat 11 Feb. - O.L. of Lourdes

World Day of Prayer for the Sick

Sun 12 Feb. – 6th in Ord. Time

Our Church and Parish

Mon 13 Feb.

The Bishop of Richborough

Tue 14 Feb.-Ss.Cyril&Methodius

The peoples of Europe

Wed 15 Feb.

Shrine of O.L. of Walsingham

Thu 16 Feb.

Deanery of Fincham & Feltwell

Fri 17 Feb. - The 7 Founders of the Order of Servites

The poor, homeless & starving

Sat 18 Feb.

The Society of Mary (SOM)

Sun 19 Feb. - 7th in Ord. Time

Our Church and Parish

Mon 20 Feb.

Our Parish Clergy

Tue 21 Feb. - St. Peter Damian

The Church in the Pacific

We 22 Feb. - Ash Wednesday

For the keeping of a good Lent

Thu 23 Feb. – after Ash Wed.

Persistence in prayer

Fri 24 Feb.– after Ash Wed.

Faithfulness in service

Sat 25 Feb.– after Ash Wed.

Generosity in almsgiving

Sun 26 Feb. – 1st Sun. of Lent

Our Church and Parish

Mon 27 Feb.

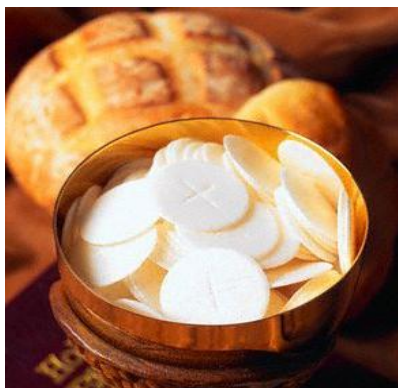
The sick and their carers

Tu 28 Feb.

Society of the Holy Cross (SSC)

Wed 29 Feb.

'Breaking Open the Word'



## EUCHARIST GIVES STRENGTH TO THOSE WHO ARE WEAK AND WEARY, SAYS POPE

The Eucharist sustains those who are tired, worn out or lost in the world and transforms human sin and weakness into new life, Pope Benedict XVI has said.

Speaking at his weekly general audience on 11 January, Pope Benedict focused on Jesus and the Last Supper, where he instituted the Eucharist, *"the sacrament of his body and blood"*.

*"Jesus's gift of himself anticipates his sacrifice on the Cross and his glorious Resurrection,"* the Pope said.

He offers his life before it is taken from him on the Cross and thereby *"transforms his violent death into a free act of giving himself for others. Violence immediately is transformed into an active, free and redemptive sacrifice."*

Pope Benedict continued, saying that at the Last Supper, Jesus prayed for his disciples, especially Peter, warning him, according to the Gospel of Luke, that *"Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat"*. But Jesus prayed that his disciple's faith would not fail and that Peter, who would betray Jesus, would return to strengthen the others' faith.

*"The Eucharist is food for pilgrims"*, he said, *"which becomes [a source of] strength also for those who are tired, worn out and lost."*

Jesus's words at the Last Supper were meant to help Peter, and others who stray, find the strength to be able to follow Christ once again, he said.

Taking part in the Eucharist today is *"indispensable for Christian life"* and is still a source of strength so that *"our life is not lost, despite our weakness and our infidelity, but is transformed"*.

The Pope asked that people join their prayers with the Lord's and offer their lives, and so, *"transform our crosses into free and responsible sacrifice, of love for God and our brothers and sisters."*