

# NEWSLETTER

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Dear Pilgrims,

As I write in early July the last rush of details is being sorted in readiness for the mailing bee organised by John Lamb for Saturday 19th July (more helpers always welcome). Route timings, prayer stops and services are being ably organised by Maurice, Terry, Patrick, Father David and others.

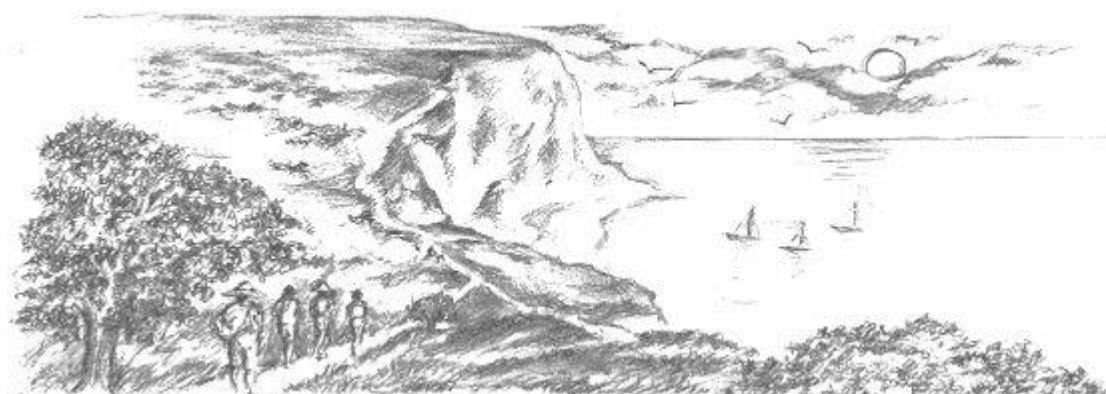
Volunteers have come forward for van driving and cooks helpers. The one role still to be filled is that of Fire & Security Officer. Not a full time role but an important one.

As well as the practical stuff think about the prayer stops. What could you share to inform or encourage the other pilgrims? There will be resource material brought with us to help inspire some preparation.

Now that the pilgrimage is so close I am looking forward to the time out from work and DIY. Just to walk, think, pray and share with you all is a prospect to lift my spirit from the daily routine.

Best wishes to you all,

Bruce



## Coming Events

There might just be time left to book your place on this years Romero Walk. To be held Sat & Sun 26/27 July from St John's Horsham. "Join us in building homes for earthquake survivors in Latin America. 2 day walking (or come on just one) in the High Weald. Sunday Mass in memory of Fr John Medcalf (who died last July). Sleeping bag space and evening meal provided. Send £5 with your name to Romero Walks, St John's, 3 Springfield Road, Horsham RH12 2PJ. Further info tel: 01273 23042, email: [romero.walk@ntlworld.com](mailto:romero.walk@ntlworld.com)."

## News

Many Congratulations to Fr David Russell who celebrated the silver Jubilee of his ordination on Monday 31st March 2003. Friends gathered with him at St John the Baptist Chapel, Brighton, the church in which he was ordained to mark the exact anniversary of his 25 years as a priest.

A late vocation, David studied at the Beda College in Rome before his ordination, 25 years ago, in this. He then served in Farnham, Walton-on-Thames, Eastbourne, Worthing and St Leonard's-on-Sea before taking up his current ministry, travelling around the diocese on supply work, relieving parish clergy, and, of course, Father David has been Chaplain to our walking pilgrimage for several years.

The celebration consisted of Mass with many concelebrants (including Fr Andy Ollard and Deacon John Lamb) followed by refreshments in the parish hall, including of course a cake by Frances Dean



Carol (nee McMahon) & John Pritchard got married at St Joseph's Church Aldershot on Easter Monday 21st April 2003. Many Congratulations to you both! Carol walked the early pilgrimages in 70's & 80's, having been involved with Bill Haynes on youth holidays before that. Carol & John are still in the flat in Aldershot and would love to hear from anyone who was on the earlier pilgrimages who remembers her.

John & Lesley have had a busy time with baptisms, at Easter, being godparents to Sophie Kanssen on 27th April (at The Sacred Heart, Frinton) then having their own son Joseph baptised the week after in Thornton Heath!





**Richard Backedine, Bishop of Chichester (1245-1253)**, who became Saint Richard, was a man of strong character, a scholar, but sensible and practical as well, energetic, kind, modest about his own powers, cheerful and courageous. He loved people and was greatly beloved by them.

When Richard, his brother and sister were still children their parents died, leaving them in the care of guardians who mismanaged the property and squandered the income. Richard left his studies and came home to help restore the family fortunes.

Gradually things got better, the farm was saved and returned to prosperity. His brother recognised that Richard was the more capable of the two, & offered to make over to him the inheritance, but neither this, nor the chance of marrying a rich and charming lady, could keep Richard from his books. Turning his back on the land at last he set off for Oxford to resume his neglected studies.

At that time students enrolled with a Master, who rented his own Hall in Oxford for lectures and let out accommodation. Richard was poor and often cold and hungry. Despite the hardships of life, he said later that never in his life had he been so happy or felt such joy and peace of soul as during those years as a student at Oxford.

He continued his studies at Paris and Bologna. Until his mentor and friend, Edmund of Abingdon became Archbishop of Canterbury, & Richard was made his Chancellor. After Edmund died, Richard determined to become a priest. He studied theology with the Dominicans at Orléans. After two years he was ordained and returned to England as a parish priest in Kent.

In 1244 the Bishop of Chichester died; the canons elected Richard as their bishop. When King Henry III heard of Richard's election he was furious, and refused to give up the property and revenues of the See. Richard travelled to Lyons, where, the next year, with other Bishops, he was consecrated by Pope Innocent IV, who supported his claim. For several years, however, Richard became a wanderer in his own diocese. He was entirely dependent on the charity and hospitality of the people and clergy, who defied the King. At last, in 1247, the King relented and, Richard came to his cathedral at Chichester.

Richard's personal life was very simple, but he considered it his duty to keep the state proper to a bishop, and particularly to offer hospitality to rich and poor. Sometimes he was imposed upon, but the people loved him, not only for his almsgiving, but for his caring, preaching and the sweetness of his character. Richard was an able administrator as well as a holy man, and expected high standards from the clergy, although he defended their rights.

Richard was bishop for only eight years, he died at midnight on 3 April 1253. He was about fifty-six. Richard, the bishop, was canonised in 1262 by Pope Urban IV on 22 January.

The 3rd April began to be celebrated as his feast day in all the Benedictine abbeys in England and today both English Catholics and Anglicans honour him on that day. The body of St. Richard was translated from its original burial place in the nave of Chichester Cathedral to an elaborate shrine on 16 June 1276. His shrine behind the high altar attracted almost as many pilgrims as Saint Thomas' shrine at Canterbury until it was destroyed in 1538 by order of King Henry VIII. The bones of the Saint were probably thrown away and the treasures were confiscated by the Crown. In recent times the site of the Shrine has increasingly been renewed as a centre of devotion.

## **A visit to Africa**

Ursula Stringer

There are holidays and there are life-changing experiences and my three and a half weeks with Fr Joe on his Mission Station in Kenya was one of the latter. It certainly wasn't a holiday but I could highly recommend it to you all. You are all welcome!! Karibu is one of the commonest words. Welcome. I had a vision of Patrick out there giving "the Youth" a temporary new focus, but the Lord works in mysterious ways and maybe He means YOU who are reading this article to take your narrow Britishness to a new world. "The Youth" had a place in each of the 8 churches in the Mission Field and they would sing in natural harmony and dance and play percussive instruments with all the vitality of Heavenly choirs in spite of massively high temperatures. The wise virgins went to Mass with a missal and a face flannel for the constant moppings of sweat from face and neck.

I set myself one or two projects in the Presbytery and the Church. Big things could be done for small amounts of money. For instance I prompted the immediate replacing of the Church roof's guttering, so that very large amounts of water could be stored in the three huge tanks which would provide water for nearly 6 months of the year. That was the easy bit. I did quite a bit of painting in Joe's house and I tell you it was a big relief to move from wall preparation to brush-wielding because it requires far less effort. The place is as hot as hell. It must be a lot hotter than hell at Christmas. And it's that bad when you're painting the kitchen and someone comes in and starts cooking the lunch.

If you've been in any hot country you will be familiar with the house lizards and snakes and crickets and mosquitoes, but in addition we had rats in the bedroom and squillions of ants on the work surfaces in the kitchen and on the dining table. One night a HUGE cockroach ran down the whole length of my leg, incognito, and just sat looking at me from the INSIDE of the mosquito net in the morning. There were big biting ants, which got under the sandal straps, especially if you walked through their highways in the dark. Joe's place has solar powered lighting and a generator powers it when they're feeling festive or frivolous, which is about two evenings a week with visitors and a lot less often otherwise.

Compared to the people around Joe lives like a king but he knows from his childhood exactly what it's like to live in a mud hut. It's like camping with no clean water, no primus, no toilet paper, no shower. I "adopted" two orphan boys aged 18 and 12 who live nearby and for two and a half weeks visited them daily. Their poverty is extreme. Joe takes the younger boy once a month as he goes to say Mass in one of the outstations and picks him up on the way home with a supply of food for a month given to them by a cousin. The 12 year old carries it easily on his head. Also they get a litre of paraffin for their lamp to study in the dark. It's dark for 11 and a half hours every night. They can make a very meagre profit from some of the trees on their land: one provides a berry which is used in the production of nail varnish and it takes the two of them 3 hours to collect 3 Kgs. For this they get 60p. I paid a man 50p for mending the roof for the boys: rain had been cascading into a bedroom for 3 years. They have to borrow so many things from neighbours. There is almost nothing in the house. Small change they might earn usually goes to paying off debts.

Joe had a simply massive photograph album containing all his pictures from the two last visits to UK and our pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2000 all in glorious disarray! To start with I got all the pictures of the Holy Land into one part of the album and had two long sessions with one of the nuns who is absolutely passionate to go there, with no real possibility of it ever happening. On my last night Joe and I even managed to label most of the Holy Land pictures, but what is more relevant to you is the fun I had looking at all my friends in the A&B in amongst the other photos. There was another couple of hundred in a stack on the coffee table as well! Millie, I bet you had no idea you were over there lightening up the dark Continent!

A tale of heat and hardship and penury but I was surrounded by not just the warmth, but the heat of their welcome. They gave me many gifts of fruit and meals and a gorgeous white dress for the Easter vigil, but best of all they gave me the example of their faith and perseverance.