

# NEWSLETTER EXTRAORDINARY EDITION VOLUME 1



Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world: indeed it's the only thing that ever does.  
*(Margaret Mead)*



This time of cessation and isolation reveals new ways to be together, fresh ways to pray together, different gestures of care, and innovative forms of compassion.

We are asked to encourage the vulnerable, comfort the impoverished, inspire the anxious and give wisdom to those who govern.

Maybe we can see more clearly the abundance of what is still beautiful and true, and not be captivated by what is lost and absent.

## PAUSE FOR THOUGHT



Please look at our website which we update daily with prayer and reflection throughout Holy Week and into the Easter Season [www.canonesses.co.uk](http://www.canonesses.co.uk)

## COMMUNITY NEWS

In these troubled times we are all wanting to know how are friends and neighbours are faring and how we are adapting to different ways of being Community. We are venturing into the world of Zoom so that we are able to have more face to face communication as well as meetings!

With this in mind we thought we would update you on our news and also share with you some of the reflections and amusing moments that are keeping us relatively on track.



## St AUGUSTINE

"Bad times, hard times - this is what people keep saying. But let us live well and times shall be good. Such as we are, such are the times."

## EAST LONDON



We returned from a Community weekend in Colchester to start an unknown period of social distancing. This means we can only go out for essential shopping and for one period of exercise. We have taken full advantage of the period of exercise living opposite Cundy Park and not far from Docklands.

Earlier the Church had been closed for public worship but we were still able to use it for own prayer but now the Church has to stay locked - a loss for our spiritual life. Fr James our parish priest has installed all the right equipment in the Church so now we are able to take part in a "streamed" Mass from the comfort of our own home.

It has become very quiet here with City Airport being closed and therefore no planes landing and taking off and there is a lot less traffic. Also, there are very few children at St Joachim's School so there is no sound of children's voices at playtime.

This area has been in the news a lot over the last week or so as the Excel Exhibition Centre is being turned into the Nightingale Hospital London (see photo). Fr James has been asked to co-ordinate the Catholic Chaplaincy there and he has gathered a team of priests to help with this essential work. Please pray for Fr James and the other priests as they prepare for the challenges this will bring.

## NEWS FROM COLCHESTER

S. Ann has moved temporarily to Colchester to join the group there while this isolation period lasts. Sometimes it is the slightly eerie silence that is striking - far fewer vehicles on the road and certainly not the constant sound of police and fire engine sirens along St Andrew's Avenue. Going for a walk along the various paths that intersect our area of Greenstead, if you meet folk, (at a distance of course!) conversations strike up easily. A couple with three small children on bicycles sharing how difficult it is to keep them occupied; a young man with a beautiful young Golden Labrador saying how difficult it is for both himself and his dog to be indoors for so much of the day, an elderly man with an old bag of tools saying that it is hard to have no work to do at present. But isn't it marvellous that it takes a crisis like the present to break down the usual English reserve? As another person offered to help an elderly person up a slope: 'it takes horrible things to bring out the best in people', he said.

We have been continually aware of the kindness of people and thoughtfulness for neighbours: a couple from the parish came in the evening before the re-dedication of England to Our Lady and left outside our door a bouquet of camellias and a bottle of champagne, so that we could celebrate. We have been keeping in touch with the elderly and vulnerable by email and phone.

We miss the contact with people in the parish and the weekly gatherings in church but do our best to mark the special days as well as possible, Holy Week without its ceremonies will be something challenging for each of us and the group as a whole.

## IN MELBOURNE

We have plenty to fill the day but are missing the social contact with friends and neighbours. We have made rotas with our friends and volunteers to be in regular phone contact with our Wisdom members, older parishioners and other local vulnerable families. That phone contact is really important and we have the back-up of some splendid youngsters who are willing to give practical help as needed.

We have also been able to work with a small charity to deliver parcels to local families and have some things from them in store for when further need arises.

Apart from that we are trying to keep a routine going and giving far greater attention to the garden and house cleaning than ever before!! We are also taking regular walks and are pleasantly surprised by the level of safe distancing but cheery communication from people we have spoken to before.

We have joined the self-isolation choir which is a great act of solidarity with singers and musicians across the world as well as a fun evening!

Along with thousands of others we are all trying to remember two important gestures of solidarity and hope each week:

Lighting a candle in our front window every Sunday at 7pm.



And clapping outside our houses on a Thursday at 8pm.

## ALEXANDER MCCALL SMITH

The unexpected always happens in the way the unexpected has always occurred: While we are doing something else, While we are thinking of altogether Different things - matters that events then show to be every bit as unimportant as our human concerns so often are;

And then, with the unexpected upon us, we look at one another with a sort of surprise; How could things possibly turn out this way when we are so competent, so pleased with the elaborate systems we've created - networks and satellites, intelligent machines, Pills for every eventuality - except this one?

And so we turn again to face one another and discover those things we had almost forgotten, but that, mercifully, are still there: Love and friendship, not just for those to whom we are closest, but also for those whom we do not know and of whom perhaps we have in the past been frightened;

The words 'brothers and sisters', powerful still, are brought out, dusted down, found to be still capable of expressing what we feel for others, that precise concern;

Joined together in adversity we discover things we had put aside:

Old board games with obscure rules, books we had been meaning to read, letters we had intended to write, things we had thought we might say but for which we never found the time;

And from these discoveries of self, of time, there comes a new realisation that we have been in too much of hurry, that we have misused our fragile world, that we have forgotten the claims of others who have been left behind;

We find that out in our seclusion, in our silence; we commit ourselves afresh, we look for a few bars of song that we used to sing together, a long time ago; we give what we can, we wait, knowing that when this is over a lot of us - not all perhaps - but most, will be slightly different people, and our world, though diminished, will be much bigger, its beauty revealed afresh.

QUARANTINED WITH HUBBIE FOR TWO WEEKS - GERTRUDE IS KNITTING SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR HIM! 🧶



AND FINALLY  
LET'S END WITH  
A SMILE

Working from home  
as a parent...



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