When my younger sister, Anne, was about three she was happily playing with her toys one day when she suddenly stopped and sat stock still. She stared into space with a look of deep concentration on her face. And she said aloud ‘Why am I here?’ She stayed still, pondering for a few moments, then the feeling passed and she got on with playing with her toys again. My mother was in the room at the time and she witnessed this moment of . . . what? Awakening? Awareness? Revelation? ‘Why am I here?’ Anne wasn’t asking ‘Why am I here in this room?’ or ‘Why am I here in this house?’ she was asking ‘Why am I here at all?’

I say that with confidence because I remember having a very similar experience myself when I was her age. For me it happened more than once. I used to get a picture in my mind of a night sky full of stars circling round me and I found myself saying over and over again, ‘I am here and I am here and I am here . . .’ It was as though, if I kept saying it, I’d get some understanding of the situation I found myself in. The feeling usually lasted about ten or fifteen seconds and then it would wear off the and I’d continue with whatever I’d been doing. As I got older the feeling disappeared altogether and I just got on with life the same as everybody else.

I assume that nearly everyone must have had a similar experience in their early childhood, even if they no longer remember it. After all, we were borne into this world not knowing anything. Gradually our parents taught us to walk, taught us to speak, taught us to feed ourselves and so on. But at some point the sheer oddness of our situation must have dawned on us. We found ourselves here in the world and we had no idea how it happened. So it would be perfectly natural to ask ourselves the question my sister Anne asked: ‘Why am I here?’

I think that question, and the feeling that goes with it, is what one philosopher has called ‘an intuition of being’. The question is not ‘Why am I alive?’ It’s much more fundamental than that. It’s ‘Why do I exist?’ ‘Why am I here rather than nothing being here?’ It’s not about my life its about my very being. It’s about my existence.

My favourite verse from the psalms is from Psalm 139. It’s this:

For it was you who created my being, knit me together in my mother’s womb.
I thank you for the wonder of my being,
For the wonders of all your creation.
‘The wonder of my being’. How often do we stop to reflect on that? I suspect not very often. We get caught up in our everyday lives. We have responsibilities, we have commitments. It’s easy just to take our existence for granted without ever reflecting on the sheer oddness of it, the sheer wonder of it. That’s what the psalmist is thanking God for: the wonder of his own being, and the wonders of all creation.
Yet the psalmist is not alone in reflecting on the wonder of creation. Scientists spend their lives exploring and studying the material universe. They seek explanations of what things are, how things happen and how they interact. And their discoveries are mind-boggling. Theories like relativity and quantum mechanics are wonders far beyond the understanding of most of us.
But the wonders of creation in the scientific sense are not quite what the psalmist is getting at. The psalmist is not concerned with the way the world is put together or with the wonder of its inner workings. The psalmist is talking about the wonder that the universe is there at all. The wonder of its being. That is what the psalmist is thanking God for because that is what creation means.
Creation is not a one-off event in the dim and distant past. The being of everything depends on God always and at every moment. Think of a singer singing a song. At every moment the song depends on the singer. If the singer stopped singing the song would cease. So a poetic way of describing creation would be to say it is like a song that God is singing, bringing the song into existence and holding the song in existence at every moment.
And there lies the answer to the question my little sister asked herself at the age of three. ‘Why am I here?’

Michael Henesy C.SS.R

Parish News

Project Zimbabwe

Greetings from Zimbabwe! After a delayed start we arrived at Alphonsus House to a great welcome from all the Redemptorists. We had no problem at the airport, though we did find later there was a big space in one case when we opened it. I wonder what happened there?...
Evening recreation included the community and students at Alphonsus House as well as Br Benjamin and a few other priests dropped by to say hello. Joint recreation of students, brothers and priests happens once a week with the students having a soft drink and crisps. Br. David said there are times now
when this does not take place with refreshments because they can’t afford to buy the drinks, as one small bottle of Fanta is over $3.

The next day at 7.30am it was off to Mavambo Trust to greet old friends and the children. Due to the situation here, the school had only been open for three weeks and some children had never been to school before. So Gill and I got stuck in with the classes. On Wednesday the children had their first trip out which was to Mwango Park, which is an animal sanctuary. For the teachers reading this, there was no risk assessment or health and safety policy in place. The trust bus seats 30. There were 48 children, 3 teachers, 3 adult helpers and a photographer. I will leave you to do the sums…. We travelled with Brother Tendai but still had to join the queue for petrol. Yes, queuing for petrol is another story. The coach left around 9am and made one stop on the way to pick up a portion of chicken and chips for everyone. We caught up with the others at the park. The children were amazing. Not only had they not seen wild animals before but many had not even seen pictures of wild animals. Just after 1pm we sat down for lunch (yes the food was cold). A boy near me was still hungry so he had most of mine. Br Tendai asked the children about the food. All of them said they had never had chips and chicken and most of them had never eaten chicken. The children had a wonderful time. We will have lots of pictures to show you when we get back.

The next day was a national holiday, so no school. On Friday Gill and I went to school with suitcases full of clothes, toothbrushes, tooth paste, torches and lots of equipment for the teachers. We also had lots of underwear for the children which we gave to the teachers to give out when they saw the need.

On Saturday we went to see what the prices were in the supermarket. Butter cost $32 (about £27), a kettle cost $79 (about £68). It just goes on and on. Needless to say we left without buying. What chance have people who live in the communities which the Redemptorists serve here in Harare?

Sunday Mass was 2 hours of real reverence, participation, prayer, lots of singing with a full congregation. The children of all ages sat quietly and joined in with the music. The offertory was something to be seen. As they danced, they carried on their heads trays that had bottles of orange, cooking oil, fruit, fabric softener etc., then came the chalice and water and wine.

After Mass one of the altar servers asked if I was the person who had done the Stations of the Cross at 5am in 2015. He was then a little boy who accompanied me each morning and shared my readings in English. Yes, and Fr. Joseph is doing them again …………. Yes, I will be there and I have a very special intention this time.

Thanks to Gill for all she has done. She flies back on 26th February. I am back on 26th March but will have a further article next month.

Please keep up your prayers. The people here are going through a really, really hard time with no end in sight.

Frances
GIFT AID 2019/20
Please collect your gift aid boxed envelope sets for the new tax year. They are now ready for collection in the Hughes Room following all Sunday Masses.

Information on gift aid and relevant forms for any parishioners considering signing up for gift aid will also be available. For more information please come along after Mass.

'B.E. ALIVE'
YOUR MAGAZINE!
If you have an idea for an ongoing item you would like to write please put your idea forward to the team via email to the parish office.

Parish Website—www.bishopeton.org.uk:
- If you are responsible for a parish group let us know when contact details change, when you organise events and take photos of the events (permission must have been given by those in photos).
- Electronic versions of posters can be uploaded to the web-site.
- E-mail in photos of events to: administrator@bishopeton.org.uk or to ourladybs.bishopeton@rcaolp.co.uk
Become a Dementia Friend -
Tuesday 26th March at 7pm

As the population of the country ages, more and more people will be affected by dementia. This may be directly or as a friend, relative or carer. There are many myths surrounding dementia. Many think it’s a normal part of ageing. It isn’t. It can also affect young people.
Our sister parish, St Mary’s, has been working towards becoming a dementia friendly parish, and we would like to follow its example.
Our first step is to provide an information session.
The session will look at how dementia affects someone and what we can do to make a difference. There will be an opportunity to join over 2 million people (including Fr. Tim) and become a dementia friend.
The session is open to all but will be of particular interest to those who are most likely to meet someone with dementia in their parish role. E.g. SVP, Eucharistic Ministers who take communion to the housebound and nursing homes, welcomers and those who staff the monastery reception.

Details of the Session
When and Where?

- Tuesday 26th March at 7pm in the Fisher-More Hall

Tea and Coffee will be served on arrival.
The session is suitable for anyone 14 and over.

For more information on Dementia Friends visit www.dementiafriends.org.uk

Already a Dementia Friend?
Please come along if you feel you want a refresher or feel able to share with the group.
Any Dementia Friend or Dementia Champion who would like to be part of a group guiding the parish towards ‘Dementia Friendly’ status should contact the parish office and leave their contact details.

Following the information session, a meeting will be scheduled for all those who wish to be part of such a group.
The Taggart Family
Sheila was the fifth of six children, born to a family prominent in the Liverpool Catholic community. Her grandfather's brother was master of novices at Bishop Eton and his name, Patrick Taggart, is listed on the wall of the Lady Chapel as one of those buried in the vault under the church. It was because of this, that when the city council decided to name some newly created avenues after local politicians, Independent M.P., Alderman John Taggart chose the road adjacent to Bishop Eton.

Teaching Career
Sheila followed her mother and two older sisters to Notre Dame, Everton Valley. During the second world war she was evacuated with the school to Whitchurch She then trained as a teacher in Southampton and was evacuated to Cheltenham.

St Margaret Mary’s
After qualifying, she returned to Liverpool to her teaching career and was evacuated a third time! She spent most of her teaching life in St. Margaret Mary's Infants’ School, the largest infants’ school in the North West of England, first as an assistant teacher and then as head for some twenty-three years. Most people in that parish aged between twenty-five and sixty-five must have been taught by her.
Irish Night
Friday 15th March

Celebrate the feast of St Patrick early with a Fun Night in the Fisher-More Hall and help us to raise funds for Street Child Africa with Chance for Childhood.

The evening will start at 7.30 with the George Ferguson Irish Dancers who always give a wonderful display and look fantastic in their traditional Irish costumes. The different age ranges do a variety of dances that are very professional.

The dancing will be followed by a short game of Irish Bingo with a prize for the lucky winner. There will be a quiz sheet on every table that can be completed during the evening. It can be completed by individuals or as a team effort.

It will then be time for supper served by Quality Caterers. There will be Irish hot pot or a chicken curry if you prefer that. This will be followed by apple pie and cream. Vegetarians can also be catered for but please request a vegetarian option when ordering your ticket. As there will not be a bar please bring your own drinks.

After supper, some members of the parish folk group will play for us. This is always a very lively enjoyable part of the evening with the opportunity to join in the singing.

The evening will be rounded off with a raffle and the answers to the quiz.
Tickets are £12.50 from Cath on 722 3286 or Jean on 722 9833. Should you have any unwanted gifts that would be suitable raffle prizes please contact us.
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<td>J&amp;P Youth Group</td>
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<td>3 Mar</td>
<td>Coffee Morning/Repository</td>
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<td>RYM</td>
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<td>BELL – Bishop Eton Lending Library</td>
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<td>13 Mar</td>
<td>Wednesday Lunch</td>
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<td>15 Mar</td>
<td>Irish Night – SCA</td>
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In 2018, Ofsted inspectors recognised that “achievement in the Sixth Form has been consistently good for a number of years” and “continues to be good”; students “can select from a broad range of high-quality courses” and that they “gain a great deal from other aspects of their education” including strong advice and guidance such that they are “well supported to make strong and convincing applications”.

Applications for St. Julie’s Catholic Sixth Form are now open, so be sure to visit www.stjulies.org.uk/6f to begin your application today!

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Parish Quiz Night  
Every First Saturday of the month  
at  
8.00PM for 8.30PM start  

£1 per person per quiz —Cash prizes  
Bring your own refreshments  

There is only one happiness in life, to love and to be loved.  

You can have it all, you just can’t have it all at once.  

Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die.  

The grass is always greener on the other side, then jump the fence and see the weeds up close.
Christianity has come a long way from the beginnings of this people whom God himself had contacted, in order to begin the process of forming right praise. The formation of right praise would take a long time: through many Israelite lineages, prophets and kings, wars, pagan deities and practices, the inexorable procession makes it way to Jerusalem. King David is the great anticipator of Jesus. King David consolidated the tribes of Israel and brought the Ark to the city where the first temple would eventually be erected by David’s son Solomon. David dons the Ephod (see 5) the priestly garment of the high priest, and in exuberant joy, dances before the Ark of God as it is carried in what can be seen as a liturgical procession into the city. Though many hundreds of years have to pass before Jesus enters Jerusalem, preparation for his coming has begun.

It began implicitly in Eden, the first temple where God walked and talked with Adam, the first priest, who named the whole of God’s creation. It continued with Noah and the Ark he constructed according to God’s instructions. The ark of Noah could be viewed as a ‘floating temple’ (Bishop Robert Barron); and then the Ark of the Covenant, at the centre of the ‘moveable temple’, instituted by Moses and carried with the tribes throughout their wanderings.

Now, within a generation of King David making Jerusalem the centre of his kingdom and the centre of worship, God was to have a Temple that all could see and visit. The Temple was not a bare place inside; It was decorated with depictions of the cosmos, with animals and plants, with colour, as befits the place where all the tribes of the earth, even the cosmos itself, go up in right praise of God, the creator of everything. ‘The Temple, built on Mount Zion, true pole of the earth’, (Isaiah 2) where The Holy Family, in due course of time, brought the infant Jesus to Jerusalem and the Temple to present him before God. Where Jesus came, aged twelve – we could speculate that this might have been his Bar-mitzvah – spending three days in discussion with the priests and scribes of the temple, and where, in due time, this God, enfleshed in the person of Jesus Christ, would enter in one last liturgical procession into the Holy City.
This Month’s Poem

The Journey
We are on a journey
None of us here would have chosen.
With reservations (no pun intended)
We came to agreements
"To give it a go!"
Even from our first meeting,
We seemed to have rapport.
Friendly, smiling greetings
Warmed the atmosphere,
As complete strangers
Met for the first time.
Who said that 13 was unlucky!
Even the inclement weather
Failed to deplete our numbers!
We have shared times of compassion,
Of understanding and, of course, laughter –
Not to mention tea, coffee, biscuits – ad lib!
We have looked into each other's eyes
And seen the bonds which unite us.
It has been a time of enlightenment,
Made easier to follow
Through the advice and expertise
Of our lovely, sympathetic Team.
We have discovered that we are not alone.
The future is still unknown,
But we tread more confidently
With hope in our hearts
And promises of continued friendships.

Eileen Murray © 19 February 2019
We want your Christmas stamps!

funds go to Redemptorist Mission Action

We have sent cheques for £260 to RMA

Thank you so much.

There is a box in the sacristy waiting for all your used stamps which are collected at regular intervals.

‘PROJECT ZIMBABWE’ SUPPORTED BY THE REPOSITORY

All profits from the Repository go to ‘Project Zimbabwe’. A selection of cards is always available from the Monastery Reception Monday—Saturday 10.00am—6.00pm.

We will also be at the next Parish Coffee Morning—3 March

Please come and browse; every card or gift item makes a difference.
The following children have been baptised at Bishop Eton during the last month.

A big welcome to our parish family:

Liana, baptised on 10 February.

Lily, baptised on 17 February.

Theodore, baptised on 24 February,

Saoirse, also baptised on 24 February.

We extend our condolences to the family and friends of :-

Ciaran Raftery, aged 73 years.

Robert Harrington, aged 76 years.

May they rest in peace.

Wear no false air of solemnity or sorrow. Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes that we enjoyed together. Play, smile and think of me. Let my name be ever the household word that it always was. I am but waiting for you just around the corner. All is well.

Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped away into the next room. I am I, and you are you; whatever we were to each other, that we still are.
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