

St Margaret of Antioch, Leigh

Serving West Leigh Since 1919



Trinity 9

(20th Week in Ordinary Time)

Sunday 17th August 2025

This Church is open before Masses on Sundays and other days before advertised services and Thursdays 14:00-16:00 (in term time).

Whilst pandemic restrictions have long ended, you will be aware of the many serious infections and strains on our health and health service at this time, please take sensible precautions and common sense.

- A. **Facemasks** – These are discretionary though pointless in airy and open places.
- 1. **Sanitisation** – please make use of the stations at the entrance and exit to the church
- 2. **Personal health** – if you are aware you have any serious contagions, please let us know and avoid unnecessary contacts.
- 3. **Communion** – during live streaming, for safeguarding and privacy, this is received in the usual place but out of camera sight. Please read the notice on availability of the chalice and proceed down the central aisle and return to your seat via the appropriate side aisle.

Protocols for use of Church:

- 1. **Numbers and space.** Whilst not limited please use the space the church provides and respect others space.
- 2. **Key holders** to the church or hall are asked to let Fr. David of intention to use our buildings outside published and regular event times for awareness, courtesy and ensure deconfliction of use except of course where urgent.
- 3. The Sunday 10:00 Mass and key Feasts are broadcast.

Pastoral Notes for general parish life

Mutual support according to need and out of ability marked the early church and underpins our pastoral, practical and financial support. Biblical stewardship of time talents and money is not just for self-accounting before God but for sake of the whole Church. Bless you as you continue to show your love of God and Neighbour as self. *Fr. David.*

- 1. Especially during bad weather or personal challenges please don't be too proud to ask for help we will do our best to respond. If unwell, please don't come to church but do let us know.
- 2. The church's daily cycle of prayer and worship is advertised.

Mission and Ministry to the wider Parish

3. Home communion, home visits and Residential homes are undertaken compliant with protocols and best practice, please keep in touch and offer your prayers and support.
4. **Hospital visits: The Southend Hospital Chaplaincy may be contacted directly on 0300 443 6379 or via switchboard 01702 435555 x 6453.**
5. **Pastoral care**. Continuing to care for each other by phone, email and appropriate visits and rebuilding our social life is a key task.

Stewardship of time and money

6. Please use the stewardship booklet and help us address our financial needs so that our church and parish become more sustainable.

Time

7. Please offer time **especially to point 6 above**. There are always opportunities to undertake self-help maintenance projects and also projects and work that can be done at home – please ask.

Money Notice 2024 year end update and thank you.

The Full accounts for 2024 were presented at the APCM . Whilst showing static Church giving, this is better than the 10% drop we faced earlier in the year - thank you. However the accounts show bills are considerably higher and that we are paying 60% of our parish share, so we still have a way to go to stabilise our financial viability. Please read the booklet on stewardship.

8. The church giving guideline is 5% of net income after essential housing and living but “No more than you can afford no less than you ought” is a good motto. ☺
9. **There is a card machine at the west door and also a “Sum-Up” card reader based at the south door.**
10. **Key point.** If you normally give cash and have a bank account, please set up a standing order or transfer by phone or internet.
11. **Church bank account:**
Account name: **The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Margaret, Leigh on Sea**
Bank: **NatWest Bank plc**
Sort code: **52-10-30**
Account number: **13657062**
Please note: If you currently pay your stewardship to the church by standing order, we would encourage you to transfer your giving to pay via the Parish Giving Scheme referred to below.
12. **Hall Bank Account – income relating to hall activities should be paid into our new hall account – Bank, account name and sort code are as above**
Account number: **13726056**
13. **Parish giving scheme** – is explained in the stewardship booklet. Money is collected on behalf of the parish and gift aid claimed where appropriate. The funds are forwarded direct to the church bank account. If you would like to know more, please speak to Peter Maddox. If you need a standing order form and/or wish to gift aid speak to Peter - stewardship@saintmargaretsleigh.org or 01702 478413.

The Angelus (Please stand if able)

The angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary
And she conceived by the Holy Spirit

Hail, Mary, full of grace
The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

**Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Pray for us sinners, now,
And at the hour of our death.**

Behold the handmaid of the Lord
Be it unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary.....
Holy Mary.....

And the Word was made flesh.
And dwelt among us

Hail Mary.....
Holy Mary.....

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts; That as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his Cross and Passion we may be brought to the glory of his Resurrection; Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Hymn

**All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown, he alone
calls my heart to be his own.**

**Pride of man and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray God's trust;
what with care and toil he buildeth,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's pow'r, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.**

**God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of nought.
Evermore, from his store,
new-born worlds rise and adore.**

**Still from man to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.**

Greeting and Entrance

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you
And also with you.

Call to Confession

My brothers and sisters, to prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries, let us first call to mind our sin.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you, through our own fault, in thought and word and deed, and in what we have left undone. For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may serve you in newness of life, to the glory of your name. Amen.

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sin, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Opening Prayer

Gracious Father, revive your Church in our day, and make her holy, strong and faithful, for your glory's sake in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading (Please sit)

A reading from the book of Jeremiah (38:4-6, 8-10)

The king's leading men spoke to the king. 'Let Jeremiah be put to death: he is unquestionably disheartening the remaining soldiers in the city, and all the people too, by talking like this. The fellow does not have the welfare of this people at heart so much as its ruin.' 'He is in your hands as you know,' King Zedekiah answered 'for the king is powerless against you.' So they took Jeremiah and threw him into the well of Prince Malchiah in the Court of the Guard, letting him down with ropes. There was no water in the well, only mud, and into the mud Jeremiah sank.

Ebed-melech came out from the palace and spoke to the king. 'My lord king,' he said 'these men have done a wicked thing by treating the prophet Jeremiah like this: they have thrown him into the well, where he will die.' At this the king gave Ebed-melech the Cushite the following order: 'Take three men with you from here and pull the prophet Jeremiah out of the well before he dies.'

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (32)

R: Lord, come to my aid!

1. I waited, I waited for the Lord
and he stooped down to me;
he heard my cry. **R**

2. He drew me from the deadly pit,
from the miry clay.
He set my feet upon a rock
and made my footsteps firm. **R**

3. He put a new song into my mouth,
praise of our God.
Many shall see and fear
and shall trust in the Lord. **R**

4. As for me, wretched and poor,
the Lord thinks of me.
You are my rescuer, my help,
O God, do not delay. **R**

Second Reading

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews (12:1-4)

With so many witnesses in a great cloud on every side of us, we too, then, should throw off everything that hinders us, especially the sin that clings so easily, and keep running steadily in the race we have started. Let us not lose sight of Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection: for the sake of the joy which was still in the future, he endured the cross, disregarding the shameful of it, and *from now on has taken his place at the right of God's throne*. Think of the way he stood such opposition from sinners and then you will not give up for want of

courage. In the fight against sin, you have not yet had to keep fighting to the point of death.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Please stand if able)

Alleluia, alleluia!

Open our heart, O Lord, to accept the words of your Son.

Alleluia, alleluia!

Gospel

The Lord be with you,

And also with you.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke (12:49-53)

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already! There is a baptism I must still receive, and how great is my distress till it is over!

'Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on a household of five will be divided: three against two and two against three; the father divided against the son, son against father, mother against daughter, daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon (Please sit)

Creed (Please stand if able)

We believe in one God, **the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Intercessions (Please sit or kneel)

Lord in your mercy
Hear our prayer

Lord hear us
Lord graciously hear us

As we pray for each other let us affirm our faith in the life to come and ask for the prayers of the saints in heaven and especially blessed Mary as we say.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

The Peace (Please stand if able)

Christ is our peace. He has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross; we meet in his name and share his peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
And also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of that peace

The Offertory

Bread and wine are immediately brought to the altar. A collection follows for those not in our regular scheme or who wish to top up their giving. *(It costs over £2500/week to run our parish - please give as generously as you can but no more than you can afford. The Church of England has 5% of disposable income after tax housing and basic living as a weekly guideline. If you are a taxpayer and not a member of our envelope scheme, please consider using a yellow Gift Aid Envelope so that we can claim back the tax - £10 will be worth £12.50 to the church. An electronic payment machine is also available at the back of church. If you are not in our stewardship scheme and a regular attendee please consider joining. Please also read the notice on this subject carefully and prayerfully.)* **Thank you**

Offertory Hymn

**1. My song is love unknown,
my Saviour's love to me,
love to the loveless shown,
that they might lovely be.
O who am I, that for my sake,
my Lord should take frail flesh and
die?**

**2. He came from his blest throne,
salvation to bestow;
but men made strange, and none
the longed-for Christ would know,
but O, my friend, my friend indeed,
who at my need his life did spend!**

**3. Sometimes they strew his way,
and his sweet praises sing;
resounding all the day
hosannas to their King;
then 'Crucify!' is all their breath,
and for his death they thirst
and cry.**

**4. They rise, and needs will have
my dear Lord made away;
a murderer they save,
the Prince of Life they slay.
Yet cheerful he to suffering goes,
that he his foes from thence might free.**

5. Here might I stay and sing
no story so divine;
never was love, dear King,
never was grief like thine.
This is my friend in whose sweet praise,
I all my days could gladly spend.

Offertory Prayers

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread and wine to offer, fruits of the earth and vine and work of human hands; they will become for us the bread of life and the cup of salvation.

Blessed be God for ever.

Let us pray my brothers and sisters, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

May the Lord accept this sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his Church.

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord, accept our sacrifice as a holy exchange of gifts. By offering what you have given us may we receive the gift of yourself. **Amen**

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you,
and also with you.

Lift up your hearts,
we lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

Preface

Father, all-powerful and ever living God, we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks. We see your infinite power in your loving plan of salvation. You came to our rescue by your power as God, but you wanted us to be saved by one like us. Man refused your friendship, but man himself was to restore it through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him the angels of heaven offer their prayers of adoration as they rejoice in your presence for ever. May our voices be one with theirs in their triumphant hymn of praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

We kneel or sit for the Eucharistic Prayer

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness; grant that, by the power of your Holy Spirit, and according to your holy will, these gifts of bread and wine may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Who in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying. Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying. Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died

Christ is risen

Christ will come again.

And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross, his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of all, rejoicing at his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming in glory, we celebrate the memorial of our redemption.

As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, we bring before you this bread and this cup and we thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people and gather into one in your kingdom all who share this one bread and one cup, so that we, in the company of Holy Mary mother of God, St Margaret and all the saints, may praise and glorify you for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

By whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Communion

Our Father

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Saviour gave us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Breaking of the bread

We break this bread to share in the Body of Christ.

Though we are many, we are one Body, because we all share in one Bread.

Lamb of God

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world; grant us peace.

This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the World. Happy are those who are called to His supper.

Lord I am not worthy to receive you but only say the word and I shall be healed.

Communion is now administered out of camera shot at live streamed masses. Organist and musicians receive first during the communion music.

All who are baptised and desirous to receive communion and/or receive communion in their own churches and traditions are very welcome at the altar – if you would prefer to receive a personal blessing please come holding your service book to your chest.

Communion Music followed by Communion Hymn

1. An Upper Room did our Lord
prepare
for those he loved until the end:
and his disciples still gather there
to celebrate their Risen Friend.

2. A lasting gift Jesus gave his own:
to share his bread, his loving cup.
Whatever burdens may bow us
down,
he by his Cross shall lift us up.

3. And after Supper he washed their
feet
for service, too, is sacrament.
In him our joy shall be made complete
sent out to serve, as he was sent.

4. No end there is! We depart in peace,
he loves beyond the uttermost:
in every room in our Father's house
he will be there as Lord and Host.

Prayer after Communion (Please stand if able)

Holy Father, who gathered us here around the table of your Son to share this meal with the whole household of God: in that new world where you reveal the fullness of your peace, gather people of every race and language to share in the eternal banquet of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.

Notices (Please sit)

Blessing (Please stand if able)

The Lord be with you,
and also with you.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

The National Anthem:

God save our gracious King,
Long live our noble King,
God save the King!
Send him victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the King.

Final Hymn

Eternal Father, strong to save,
whose arm hath bound the restless
wave,
who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
its own appointed limits keep:
O hear us when we cry to thee
for those in peril on the sea.

2. O Christ, whose voice the waters
heard
and hushed their raging at thy word,
who walkedst on the foaming deep,
and calm amid the storm didst sleep;
O hear us when we cry to thee
for those in peril on the sea.

3. Most Holy Spirit, who didst brood
upon the chaos dark and rude,
and bid its angry tumult cease,
and give, for wild confusion, peace:
O hear us when we cry to thee
for those in peril on the sea.

4. O Trinity of love and power,
our brethren shield in danger's
hour;
from rock and tempest, fire and foe,
protect them wheresoe'er they go;
thus evermore shall rise to thee
glad hymns of praise from land and
sea.

Notices

Worship and Prayer *(italics for awareness and other venues)*

Sunday 17th	Ninth Sunday after Trinity
	08:00 Said Mass
	10:00 Sung Mass *
	12:30 WW2 80 Peace Party & Summer Fayre
	17:30 Evensong & Benediction for the Assumption
Wednesday 20 th	19:30 No Mass
Thursday 21 st	09:30 Said Mass
	14:00 No Open Church (restarts in September when schools return)
Friday 22 nd	09:30 Said Mass
Saturday 23 rd	09:00 Said Mass
Sunday 24th	Tenth Sunday after Trinity
	08:00 Said Mass
	10:00 Sung Mass *

* Live streamed

Those in particular need of our Prayers:

Wed: Rebecca, Marie, Jack Puttock, Paul, Gail, Naomi, Hannah, Ken Baynes, Marilyn Phillips, Sarah, Martin & Linda Roberts, Pam Cammidge, David Heinzelmann, Fr James McClusky, John, Pauline L.

Thurs: Gabrielle, Shirley Williams, Emily, Mario, Linda, Peter Colloff, Ron, Bosede, Paddy Hooper, Carole Sanders, Ian Sanders, Sheila, Dawn Bryan, Charlotte Bridge, Muriel Wall, Hanna, Janet Gray, Ciaran, Keith Ives.

Fri: Sue, Jenny Sheldon, Irene, Pat, Debbie Jeffries, Margaret Purves, Callum, Cynthia Hall, Ian Bristow, Thelma Levell, Alasdair, Catherine Willoughby, John.

Sat: Josie, Lyn Davies, Pam Searle, Ken Davis, Leonie Brown, Edward Hollis, Terry Stubley, David Hill, Lorna Green, Lucia Curthoys, Julie Barker, Beverly Watts, James Sheridan

Anniversaries of death this coming week:

Wednesday 20th Pip Sporle, Daphne Wenden
Thursday 21st Minnie Cornish
Saturday 23rd Veronica Peters, Jean Richardson

Please pray – For the recently baptised, and for those recently confirmed, especially Angus, Thomas and Matthew.

Those in need of our prayers – If you have asked for someone to be added to this list and who no longer need to be included, please let me know. Many thanks. Peter Maddox

WW2 80 - Peace Party and Summer Fayre - TODAY 12:30-17:00

Our afternoon will have four elements.

- Artisan craft and food stalls provided by local traders including a beer tent.
- St Margaret's church stalls including new and nearly new Tombola, Bottle Stall, Bookstall, Water into Wine, Bottle Stall, BBQ and Tea Room with cake and ice cream.
- Other information stalls and activities outdoors including The Royal British Legion, Sea Cadets, Bouncy Castle, outdoor chill and garden games.
- Inside Church: There will be an opportunity for serious more serious reflection, remembrance and learning. There will be three exhibition areas for the War in the East, the War in the West and thirdly local war interest and impact. The Bookstall will also be inside the church (baptistry). There will be an audio information loop running in church through the afternoon with excerpts from reporters, individuals and eyewitnesses to WW2 and its ending.

We will conclude with Evensong and Benediction for the Assumption at 17:30-18:15.

Please help contribute to a community welcome with food, craft, fun and games. Offers of help manning stalls and other tasks would be greatly appreciated.

Children and Youth

Children and young people are welcome at all services, social events or informally during Open Church. Young children can bring their own quiet toys to play with and the lobby is warm with games, books, toys and speakers so you can still see and hear the service.

Occasional events – We provide occasional events and special services such as Harvest Festival and Mothering Sunday.

Monthly service for families – 17:30-18:15 on the first Sunday (17:00 – winter months). Afterwards we make and share pizza and play games in the hall or outdoors when fine. **The next First Sunday Supper Service is 7th September.**

Monthly Sunday School “St Margareteers” – 3rd Sunday of the month, teaching, music, bible stories, craft and prayer, at 10:00 for those aged 4-10 with some provision also for 11-16. Meet in the lobby initially and adjourning to the hall and returning at communion ***ALL WELCOME.*** **Can you be an extra person to sit in with this children’s activities – you don’t have to lead but just be present and assist in a simple easy but helpful way. Once or twice a year would be wonderful. Please speak to Fr David, Anne Robinson or Lorrina Cockett.**

There is a rota – on the notice board at the back of church showing the dates and names of those who have volunteered to help with the children’s services. Please write your name on the list if you are able to fill in the gaps. If you are unable to help on the date your name is shown on the rota, would you please arrange to swop with someone else. Thank you.

There will be no St Margareteers in August, returning on 21st September.

Mission

Additional Curates Society – Please take a box and help the formation and provision of priests, especially for poorer parishes trying to be faithful to the word and sacraments.

HARP – (*Our local homeless charity.*) Please place items in the box at the back of church. You can also donate money via their website www.harpsouthend.org.uk. Please don’t leave opened and out of date items. Thank you for the support. Do look at the tableau of a homeless man we’ve been given – there is so much in it and it could be anyone’s story.

Money Notice

In helping us make our church and parish sustainable some key points may help:

1. **Planned giving** – We have 44 planned stewardship givers but around 80 on our electoral roll (2025). The diocesan ***average*** giving for stewardship scheme members is £19.50/week ours is £10.00 (less for those not in the stewardship scheme). Ours is considered one of the wealthiest parts of the diocese. Church guidance is 5% of disposable income after tax and housing costs. We all have different circumstances but “*no more than you can afford or less than you ought*” is key. Please consider this prayerfully.
If you are interested in joining our regular giving Stewardship Scheme, please take one of the leaflets and speak to Peter Maddox, either at Church or call 01702 478413. Alternatively email him at stewardship@saintmargaretsleigh.org.
2. **Electronic Giving** – Our card reader that enables donations from Debit and Credit Cards. If you wish to try, please approach Donald Fraser, Peter Maddox, or warden.
3. **Giving via the website** – We now have a donation facility set up on the church website, www.saintmargaretsleigh.org, to enable anyone to make a donation direct to the church bank account. This facility may be found on various pages on the site.

Parish and other General Notices

Parliament decisions on beginning and end of Life .

We now have the outcome the outcome of the Assisted Suicide bill with a narrow majority in favour of 23. Before coming back to that, at the other end of life our MP’s were considering the biggest change to the Abortion act in sixty years. It is a difficult and

complex issue but MPs had barely 2 minutes for each of those years to consider it. And so on Tuesday 17th June, MPs voted by 379 to 137 in favour of an amendment to the Crime and Policing Bill brought by the Labour MP Tonia Antoniazzi. This disapplies criminal law relating to abortion for women “acting in relation to her own pregnancy”. The amendment does not change any law regarding the provision of abortion within a healthcare setting. A spokesperson for Church House said that whilst women should not be criminalised for having an abortion, it is “worrying” that a change in law approved by MPs this week could lead to more late-term abortions.

This mild C of E response does not seem to recognise that Motive (means and opportunity remain) has been removed from the ending of viable life. This decision significantly reduces the protection of unborn lives. Women will be even more vulnerable to manipulation, coerced, and forced abortions. This legal change will also discourage medical consultation and make the use of abortion pills (available by “telemedicine” and no real time consultation since Covid) for dangerous late-term, at-home abortions more likely.

Conservative MP Dr Caroline Johnson, a consultant paediatrician moved an amendment to end the provision of abortion via telemedicine, so that a woman would need to have an in-person consultation before lawfully being prescribed the medicine. “If we have proper clinics, gestation can be checked, a clinician can ascertain more effectively if a woman is being coerced, and they can make the abortion medically as safe as possible”, she said. This sensible amendment from a field expert was thrown out by 117 to 379. One may be forgiven for asking where is the moral compass of this parliament? For us whatever Parliament decides, it can choose to reflect the Gospel and Church teaching but it can never change it.

Assisted dying/suicide – You will be aware of the vote to support the private members bill in favour. It went through a committee stage which seemed highly selective and yet proved many of the dangers highlighted. The committee had a majority of supportive MPs, including two Government ministers who voted in support of assisted suicide at Second Reading, and no medically qualified MPs opposed to the Bill, in a move that campaigners described as a “stitch-up”. The recent vote was much closer than the second reading as many thought it dangerously rushed and biased. Further as many good MPs argued, protections are weak for the vulnerable, creating an unaccountable body in the form a *multi-disciplinary panel* rather than court to rule on cases. The timetable is unlikely to be completed before 2029.

The outcome does not change the Church’s position. You may read my article in the November 2024 bulletin on the subject –Understanding choice and sanctity of life are key.

Whilst we have freedom, our choices are not just about us as individuals. The individual is part of the whole body not just a bit of it as St. Paul reminds us. The whole body (society) is affected by our choices. This does not negate choice but informs and balances. Hence in practical terms, the choice of one to seek an “assisted death” has an impact and consequence upon the practical and moral conduct of society. The impact of the Common’s vote is deep and widespread and should be received with compassion and respect.

However be of no doubt our country has changed deeply and gravely with this current parliament. We as Christians and other faiths are left with changed moral, political and practical choices – not least the vicar when it comes to ministry to the dying, the departed and their families. It is yet another unnecessary moral dilemma of our own making and questionable diversion of scarce resources. However to repeat, for us whatever Parliament decides, it can choose to reflect the Gospel and Church teaching but it can never change it.

This parliament is temporary and passing – the Gospel and Church are not. There are responses and articles you can read in the lobby. Fr. David.

Notices for the Sunday Booklet – Please send all notices to Peter Maddox by Wednesday lunchtime at the latest to notices@saintmargaretsleigh.org. Thank you.

I was the enemy by Mario Geroldi, A member of St Margaret's

I was born in northern Italy Lombardia in a small rural village on a very snowy night in 1933. As I grew, I was usually with my grandparents my aunts and cousins all working around the river Po. My father was a horse whisperer and when the heavily laden stone laden barges became stuck in the muddy banks of the Po he was called upon to encourage the teams of working horses to pull themselves through the mud and onto the banks. Others would use whips. He used his voice whispering quietly in the ears of the lead horses.

We lived off the land . Corn we called maize grew on the flat fields around us. Melon fruit peppers were grown in our garden and we kept geese and chickens. This was a normal sight in the villages of Northern Italy. Life was hard and strict and you had to respect your elders and priests. Italy was my small world. I had no idea what would happen when we were occupied.

When Germany invaded northern Italy they took the able-bodied men to fight on the Russian front. My father disappeared for seven years and came home unrecognisable through his experiences. During those occupied days we were living in a village Casselbutano. I was nine years old and expected to work to provide wood for keeping the cooking fire burning and heating the house in the winter. I climbed to the top of poplar trees with my machete cutting down the high branches close to the trunks I never became used to the height. It was quite terrifying for a nine-year-old. We gave the majority of the wood to the farmer and he paid us in kind so we had wood to take home to keep the cooking fire burning.

My memories are of many good friends playing in the fields freedom part-time schooling which was given to us by Nuns or priests as the occupied German forces took over our school for their accommodation so we learnt where we could.

I remember the German troops eating bread, butter, and jam and laughing at us as we had nothing. Life was hard. My mother was allowed into the cornfields after the harvesting to clear what was left on the ground. This grain was taken to the miller who of course kept some of it for himself as we couldn't pay for the mill and it was returned to us to make bread.

We were surrounded by water, small irrigation, ditches and larger tributaries of the river Po and I had to take geese down to the edge of the rivers where the reed was better and get them to eat until they were full. It was a job I hated because it kept me away from my friends playing. I sometimes got bored watching the geese feeding on the riverbanks and would take them home before the feed was complete. My mother was not happy with me and the broom handle was taken off the wall.

Life was hard. I spent a lot of my time stealing and always been chased by irate farmers. We would scrump any fruit we could find, the trees were full of mulberries and peaches and the land covered in melons so although we couldn't afford to buy them we could certainly climb trees and help ourselves. We would up end our precious bikes in the full cornfield, put the corn in the spokes and pedal like mad - grain! Friendships were good and strong. The

boys in the village were the same situation. There were no Fathers just mothers trying to hold the families together.

As the allies came through southern Italy the Germans retreated North East leaving behind them grenades and rifles. They took our only form of transport to get away. which was our bikes. We had very little and were left with less. I remember the German troops looking so young with their long trench coats trailing along the ground as they left Italy. My father had come home for a brief time but was taken again by the Germans as slave labour building the bunkers which were defending the troops as they retreated back to Germany. I was still finding food.

One of our sources was fishing. My mother thought we went out with a long twig and twine and caught the fish, but in fact we found discarded hand grenades which were jolly useful for throwing into the tributaries of the river and blowing up the small river and the fish came to the top easily.

We took them home for dinner and no more was said. We also found bundles of rifles left in ditches and under hedges which had been discarded by the retreating German troops. We were meant to tell the Carrabinieri or Police we had found them and we were told not to touch but when we told them the location we would get a food voucher you can imagine how much we valued food vouchers so we would split up the bundles of rifles and leave them scattered around our nearby countryside and tell the police where they were so we got more food vouchers. They soon became wise. My father eventually returned from Germany and my little sister was born. Liberation meant white bread. A true first for me and my mother so proud to have some to give us. I was 12 when the war finished. **80 years later, I'm no longer the enemy !**

You never were the enemy Mario, fascism and evil totalitarian regimes were (and remain so).

Mario tells a wonderful story of how using German explosives to go fishing they accidentally blew up a bridge – I don't think that made them popular with the neighbours!!

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Enquiries for baptism, first communion, confirmation, marriage and confession please contact the parish priest.

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