October 2026, issue no. 263

St Alban's Monthly News

www.stalbanmacc.org.uk **FREE** monthly magazine of St Alban's Parish

Our aim is to offer a variety of articles, essays, and materials that help us develop our Spiritual, Human, Intellectual, and Pastoral life (SHIP).

Our Monthly Newsletter is designed specifically for the St Alban's Community and its friends, featuring curated content that speaks to our daily life under the Catholic faith. We therefore encourage you to publish your thoughts with us, based on facts and reliable sources of information. Our ***SHIP*** content allows you to print all materials related to the liturgy, retreats, sacraments, etc. (**S**piritual), Catholic social teaching, politics, culture, etc. (**H**uman), science, theology, philosophy, etc. (**I**ntellectual), and everything linked to parish life (**P**astoral). Just remember that our aim is not simply to inform, but to FORM consciences in the light of Catholic teaching... and all these in **LOVE** and **RESPECT**.

Our Lady's message of peace delivered by innocents

Karyn Johnston



Each year, on 13 October, we remember the final apparition of Our Lady at Fatima in 1917. Thousands witnessed the "Miracle of the Sun", confirming the extraordinary events experienced by the three shepherd children: Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta. Yet, while the miracle captured attention, it is the message of Fatima that remains so relevant for today.

The children received a simple but powerful call: prayer, repentance, conversion of heart, and trust in God. More than a century later, these messages speak directly to a world marked by conflict, division, uncertainty, and spiritual confusion.

We live in an age of wars, unfettered greed in an AI technology race, growing political polarisation, economic insecurity, and a culture often characterised by anger and mistrust. Social media can amplify division rather than understanding, and many people feel isolated despite being more connected than ever. In such a setting, the message of Fatima offers a different path.

Our Lady urged the children to pray the Rosary every day for peace. This may seem a modest response to global problems, yet prayer changes hearts, and history shows that lasting peace begins within individuals and communities. The Rosary invites us to contemplate Christ's life, drawing us away from fear and hatred and towards mercy, forgiveness, and hope.

The feast of Our Lady of Fatima is therefore a challenge for us today. In a fractured world, Mary points us again to her Son, the Prince of Peace. Her message remains as urgent as ever: pray, trust in God, seek conversion of heart, and never lose hope. Through these simple but profound actions, each of us can help bring Christ's light into a world that so desperately needs it.

Celebrate the feast at St Alban's: Tuesday 13 October, Exposition, followed by the international Novena Rosary, Holy Mass and procession to Our Lady's altar where a Rosary will be said each weekday after morning Mass for the following week.

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Then contact Jean on 07881 895540



First Saturday Devotion

3 Oct 2026 and 7 Nov 2026

Join our Holy Rosary at 10:30 am, Consecration Prayer and Reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, followed by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Confessions at 11am with Holy Mass at 12 noon



All welcome to our friendly book club

The book this month is **'Raising Hare'** by Chloe Dalton, a very light and enjoyable read.

The Book Club is meeting on Wednesday, 14th October at 3 for 3.15 start, in the Parish Centre.

Newcomers are always welcome to join us.

Enquiries to Mary maryfrommacc@msn.com
Or Tess tessmcghee@btinternet.com

St Alban's Parish

ROSARY FOR PEACE

Every Wednesday at 5:30pm in Church

St Alban's Coffee Club

Our next meeting is on Thursday 15th October at 10.30 am at Nomas Café on Chestergate. You are warmly invited to pop in for a coffee and a chat with fellow parishioners. Just turn up on the day - friends and family also welcome! Jane 07855628075

Pope Leo's intention for October 2026



For mental health ministry

Let us pray that mental health ministry be established throughout the Church, helping to overcome the stigma and discrimination of persons with mental illnesses.

Harvest food collection

is happening at all weekend Masses

10-11th October

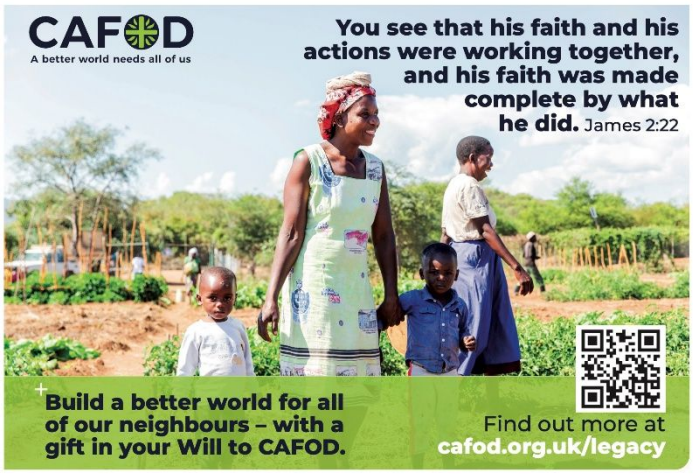
to support local food charities (Cre8, Watermill house and Silklife Foodbank). A limited amount of fresh produce is welcome but mainly packets and tins are useful.

Thank you so much for your support.

Children led Harvest Mass:

on **Sunday 11th October** the children from our parish will lead Mass. All the children will be invited to carry gifts of fruit etc in the offertory procession. If your child would like to bring a harvest box or basket, they can offer this too.

For more information contact Jane on jmfcole@hotmail.co.uk



Can you imagine waving your child or grandchild off to school, knowing they'll spend the day hungry? Knowing they'll try to concentrate in lessons but have an empty stomach, thinking more about food than what they're learning. It's difficult to imagine, but for many families around the world, this is a daily reality.

I'd like to tell you about 12-year-old Tayla from northern Zimbabwe, where drought has left communities struggling with food and water shortages. After fetching water before school each morning, Tayla often arrived hungry and tired. Without enough food or water, she struggled to concentrate in class and worried about falling behind with her studies.

Tayla told us:

> "It affected me because I would feel tired and not be good at working. Some of the mathematics would be hard."

But together, parishioners like you, Tayla's community and CAFOD's trusted Caritas partners began to change that situation.

At first, children received school meals so they could keep learning. But at the same time, local experts worked with Tayla's school and community to install a solar-powered water system – a long-term solution that means the children can drink safe water and wash their hands all through the day, without having to collect it before school. The school also uses the water to grow vegetables to provide nutritious school meals for children throughout the year.

Now Tayla and her classmates are better able to learn and play. And she's happy she can now concentrate in her maths lessons, so she can pursue her dream of becoming a doctor.As Tayla proudly says: "**We are getting more energy**".

Tayla's story shows what's possible when we come together. **But there are many more children who still arrive at school hungry every day**.

CAFOD's Family Fast Day was on Friday 2 October. This Harvest season, we have an opportunity to thank God for all we have received and to share those blessings with others. As one global family, we are called to put our faith into action by supporting our neighbours who don't have enough food or safe water.

If you left Mass without a CAFOD envelope, you can donate here: **cafod.org.uk/envelope** or scan the QR code in the pictures, to donate to help communities around the world put food on the table. And if you're a UK taxpayer, please remember to complete the Gift Aid declaration, which increases your donation by 25 per cent at no extra cost to you.

If you're able to give monthly, your gift will help even more communities build these lasting solutions.

Thank you for your generosity, your prayers and your support.

By Jerome Johnston



The Mystery of the Eucharist

We are continuing in this issue with a series written by Fr Tomasz, which explains the signs of the Eucharist.

Sign no 2: The procession

If you think Holy Mass begins with the Sign of the Cross (In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit...), you are wrong.

The first element of the Holy Mass is the procession, and it is what begins the Mass. But one might think, "What is so interesting about a procession? After all, the priest has to get to the altar somehow, and since none of us can teleport, he simply walks there". Yes, but this opening holds a very beautiful theological significance.

There are two theological associations connected with this moment of the Mass. The first is a reference to all biblical pilgrimages, and especially to the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land. Just as the Chosen People departed from slavery, so we, the people of God, gather at Mass so that God may liberate us from our sins, any weaknesses or troubles and that we may move from all that oppresses us toward freedom.

The second spiritual significance of procession lies in God himself. Notice that He didn't wait until his people eventually reached the Promised Land and meet Him there to receive their adoration and tribute. In that paschal pilgrimage God was constantly among his people at the beginning of their journey as well as during every moment of it. It was God who began this journey, led it and - for the Israelites finished it - but for us He continues to lead us through every day of our life. So, the sign of procession tells a lot about ourselves - People of the New Covenant: who walks, from where, to where, and who leads it.

Through the sign of the procession at the beginning of Holy Mass, the Church, as the New Israel, gives thanks to God for the deeds of the new Moses - Jesus Christ - who leads His people (all of us) from slavery to freedom, from darkness to light, and from death to new life. That's the reason that we always sing beautiful and joyful hymns during the procession.

A priest processing to the altar is usually accompanied by a group of people known as the liturgical ministers. Among them are altar servers, as well as other priests or deacons - especially when the Mass is particularly solemn. Such a procession follows a strictly defined order. At the very front comes the incense, followed by the candles with the cross between them. Next come altar servers, the deacon carrying the Book of the Gospel (containing the Word of God), and finally, other priests (if they are present) with the main celebrant who closes the procession.

All these elements of the procession hold beautiful symbolism. The incense carried at the beginning signifies prayers. For us, the participants in the Mass, it serves as a clear signal: as soon as we smell or even see the incense, we begin to pray and offer praise to God. The candles and the cross, following immediately behind the incense, serve to remind us that everything about to unfold before our eyes happens because Christ died and rose again. He Himself leads us into this extraordinary mystery, which, in turn, illuminates everything within us (candles) and gives us a new life (crucifix).

The Word of God (the Book of the Gospel) held aloft, signifies that during the Eucharist, Christ Himself will teach us and recount the work of salvation He has accomplished. The main celebrant (priest) at the end of the procession is known as the 'hand of God'. In him and through him Jesus wants to be present and visible among his people.

Look, a priest is a human being just like all the other faithful. Only for that single moment of celebrating the Eucharist he is taken from the people and placed in their midst, so that he may give the gathered assembly what the Lord God Himself wishes to offer them. Yet once he has done so, he returns to the people, walking in the final procession.

I believe this is a deeply meaningful symbol, showing the priest that he is simply one of the faithful whom the Lord needs for a moment to administer the sacrament - someone God has chosen to become His hand for that time. In the Eucharist, the roles of the faithful and the priest are indeed clearly distinguished. This does not mean, however, that we priests are better or belong to a higher class. It simply means that, in this sacrament, we have entirely different tasks.

Sign no 3: A singular Kiss

Anyone who has never waited for or dreamed of a kiss on a date does not know what a real date is - nor what infatuation or love truly is! After the procession a kiss marks both the beginning and, at the end of Mass, the end of the encounter with Christ at His banquet. You should watch with great joy and attentiveness as the priest greets Christ with a kiss on your behalf (for the altar is simply one of the many manifestations of Jesus's presence). This kiss reveals that everything taking place at the altar is to be regarded as the presence of the Beloved. It ensures that we come not merely to attend a religious service, a theatrical performance but to encounter God, who is Love.

Incidentally, consider how incredibly difficult it is to grasp the significance of this wondrous sign if one has previously cheapened it through adolescent curiosity, shallow sentimentality, or a voracious craving for new sensations.

For anyone who fails to grasp the significance of this kiss, the Mass becomes merely a routine encounter - the fulfilment of an obligation. It is like the hollow greeting kiss a young man might give a girl - a young man who does not truly love her but is merely pretending or putting on an act, while his heart lies elsewhere (perhaps with someone else). Without understanding this kiss, one cannot comprehend the relationship that begins between God and man during Holy Mass. This relationship reveals that the Mass is not simply a duty akin to paying taxes at the tax office - where you go, stand in line for fifty minutes, pay the money, fulfil your obligation, leave, and return a year later, yet share no actual relationship with the institution (only an obligation). This unique kiss establishes a relationship. It demonstrates that the Eucharist is not a theatrical performance, but an act of bestowing life-giving love.

I usually whisper something intimate to Jesus when kissing Him on the altar.

Book Review by Michael Sherry

Book Review – Socrates Children by Peter Kreeft

Published by Word on Fire (2023)

Box set of 4 volumes available from Amazon for £48

Vols 1 to 4 available individually from Waterstones for between £16 and £24/vol total £83

At some stage in our religious journey, it is normal to wonder what exactly philosophy has to say about the great truths of religion. Prof Peter Kreeft has been teaching and writing about philosophy for over 60 years and, because he was asked "Could you recommend just one book that covers the whole history of philosophy that beginners can understand and even get excited about?" so often, he wrote Socrates' Children. He gives us a potted account of the 100 philosophers: from the ancients (Solomon, Confucius, Zoroaster, through the Greeks and Romans — Vol. 1, pp. 183); the medievals (Augustine, through Aquinas, to William of Ockham — Vol. 2, pp. 128); the moderns (from Descartes and Pascal to Hobbes and Rousseau — Vol. 3, pp. 255); and the Contemporaries (from Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, through J. S. Mill and Wittgenstein, to Hildebrand & Chesterton — Vol. 4, pp. 344).

Beautifully presented as paperbacks, this box set of 4 volumes comes from the Catholic Evangelical 'Word on Fire' publishers. Prof Kreeft, a Catholic writer, gives the facts about each philosopher: their life and, for most, their works; their metaphysics (theory of everything); cosmology (theory of the universe and how we relate to it); logic; ethics; etc., in a few very readable paragraphs/pages. But it is not too dry — Kreeft lets you know what he thinks about the individuals he describes, what he thinks of their behaviour and of their thoughts. He is direct and expresses his likes (e.g. Aquinas & Chesterton) and dislikes (Satré & Foucault). While some of the descriptions about, e.g., epistemology are a bit dense, on an average of 8 pages for each philosopher, the narrative is never bogged down for long, and the chapters are, for the most part, easily understood and digested. By the end, the truths of Christianity make their own argument and shine through these pages, along with Peter Kreeft's clear exposition of these philosophers' struggles to understand the world, our place in it, and the meaning of life.

The Climate Emergency: Not Too Late To Act.

By Keith Taylor

Some 150 people gathered recently in the Macclesfield church of St Michael's to follow in the footsteps of Francis in his concern for the world - for our Common Home.

The event was part of the Season of Creation. We were gathered from churches and other organisations with an interest in the environment and from other concerned individuals.

Like the late Pope, when he was preparing his groundbreaking encyclical Laudato Si, we listened to the experts.

We watched a film based on presentations given to MPs as a "briefing." We heard, as they did, from leading experts on ten aspects of the problems and opportunities created by the fundamental change in our climate brought about by fossil fuels since the industrial revolution.

The experts spoke not only of the facts and causes of global warming but also of the implications for the world and for us. So they covered things like extreme weather and interestingly, tipping points - the stages in the inexorable rise of global warming where we run the danger of things getting really out of control.

But they also covered topics such as food security, health and economics. National security was Included. Military leaders do not usually figure in the discussion of climate, but here was a lieutenant general spelling out the dangers of the world disrupted by climate change.

If the film sounds like doom and gloom, certainly there is no Mr Trump telling us that it is all a hoax. The experts spoke honestly, authoritatively about a serious situation which by all accounts they rightly describe as an emergency.

However, we were told of things which can be done now to help us avoid some of the worst lying ahead. The technology transition to green energy is underway with its own impetus. What is lacking, and this is the concern behind the making of this film, and its showing in Parliament last year, is the political will among our national leaders to act and for us to ask them to do so. The evening at St Michael's was part of a country-wide campaign for a petition to Parliament to authorise a national showing, to have the film on television for all to see, such is the need to act now. It's not too late

Watch this space for details of a repeat screening of the National Emergency Briefing on Wednesday November 4th at our very own cinema Cinemac here in Macclesfield.

And if,now, you would wish to follow the example of the Pope who declared the Season of Creation listening to the experts) their full individual testimony is there (courtesy of YouTube.) Just click People's Emergency Briefing - Teaser Trailer



ST ALBAN'S LADIES GROUP



We meet in the Parish Centre on 1st & 3rd Wednesdays
2.00p.m. – 4.00p.m.

Tea & Biscuits (inc. chocolate ones!) are also enjoyed

OCTOBER

7th — *Speaker: Patty Callaghan – Papier Mâché artist*

Patty creates birds, animals and people from reclaimed newspaper, magazines and wire – her demonstration will give a fascinating insight into the World of Papier Mâché.

21st — *Tales from the Travel Industry by Richard Slater*

Informative, entertaining stories from a lifetime in travel

For further information contact Anne 7305267325

The Great Wall of China Trek is fast approaching.

Jerome Johnston

Fourteen of us set off from Manchester for Beijing via Hong Kong on the morning of Wednesday 11 November. The next day, we are driven four hours by bus to the start of our five-day trek.

There was a pre-departure meeting just over a week ago, which I left with mixed feelings of excitement and trepidation. Deep down, I know all will go well, but there are still several little things that need to be done before I leave.

I've walked regularly over the summer – completing the Sandstone trail over consecutive days; the Cheshire Three Peaks of Teggs Nose, Shutlingsloe and Shining Tor; several routes of the Bollington Walking Festival; as well Season of Creation and joining Fr Tom Cunnah on the final leg of his Anniversary Pilgrimage, to list a few. If you see someone carrying a rucksack repeatedly walking up and down Macclesfield's 108 Steps or other of the steep steps up from Waters Green to the town centre, it could well be me!

If you go to **justgiving.com/page/jeromejohnston**, you'll see that I'm taking on this challenge to raise money for the Hospice in memory of my wife Maureen, whose 10th anniversary was in June this year. So far, I have raised over £6,450, excluding Gift Aid, family, friends, former pupils and their parents, and, of course, parishioners. I'm hoping to raise £9,000, which will pay for the Hospice for only one day! Most of us know someone who has had a terminal diagnosis and have been helped by the love and care they have experienced at East Cheshire or another Hospice. They are very special place, and we owe them our support.



There is still time to help me reach my goal of £9,000! Visit my page using the link above or by scanning the QR code on the poster here or in the church porch. To those of you already supporting me, I extend my heartfelt thanks and prayers for your generosity.



YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO:

中式品嚐宴

Chinese Tasting Banquet

in the Parish Centre from 6.30pm, Friday 6th November.
Tickets £30 each (on sale soon!)
Three courses, wine, Chinese tea - all inclusive

Food generously sponsored by Mandarin House

萬利 MANDARIN HOUSE

additionally, dumplings sponsored by Batter and Bowl

Batter & Bowl

This is a joint fundraiser for St Alban's Church (heating project) and East Cheshire Hospice

Look out for ticket sale details in Weekly News

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OCTOBER 2026

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For more information visit
eastcheshirehospice.org.uk/will-month

Keep up with St Alban's Parish life

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Parish Council - for maintenance or other issues contact parishcouncil@stalbanmacc.org.uk

Monthly News Editorial Team

monthlynews@stalbanmacc.org.uk

Contributions welcome from all groups and individuals in the Parish

Copy deadline: 15th of the month prior to the month you wish your article to appear.

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