



St Mary's Magazine

Dec 2021

Tribute to Sir Daved Amess MP

It was suggested by a parishioner that we reprint the moving tribute to Sir David Amess who was killed recently. Our thoughts and prayers go to his family and friends.

As has been alluded to, Sir David was a man of deep Catholic faith. The Gospel of John, chapter 10, verse 10, reminds us that the Lord came not just to give life but to give it in abundance, and David lived his life in abundance—a joyous service both to his constituents and here in this House. We would see him late at night, often in a tuxedo, going from charitable concern to charitable concern, championing the causes he believed in. He looked good in a tuxedo—no Daniel Craig, but this was no time to die either.

My wife reminded me of the time when we went to the beatification in Rome of John Henry Newman, just before lockdown—a beautiful service presided over by Pope Francis. We were whisked to the Oratorian College on one of the mountains of Rome overlooking Vatican City, where Prince Charles addressed us brilliantly. Then the royal cavalcade rushed out. Unfortunately, the parliamentarians on the trip were left stranded. The former Member for Ealing North, Stephen Pound, a former naval commander, decided to lead the vanguard in a military operation to get us back down to our hotel. Like troglodytes we entered a cave and ended up in a vast Franciscan monastery. Our party became separated; it was now more like an Ealing comedy under Stephen's leadership. My wife reminded me that I abandoned her and her safety—a lifelong Labour activist, my wife—to three Tory MPs getting stuck in a lift, including Basildon Man, as she said, because he was still etched on our 1992 election memory. The other two MPs, by the way, were for North Dorset and Fylde, so I will catch

Mark and Simon up about what went on in that lift, because my wife said, “What an utterly, utterly wonderful man.”

He participated fully in the liturgy of the Church. He participated fully in the sacraments of the Church. While I have the attention of those on the Front Benches, let me say that Catholics believe that extreme unction helps guide the soul to God after death, so maybe we could come up with an Amess amendment so that no matter where it is, in a care home or at a crime scene, Members, or anybody, can receive that sacrament.

David believed fundamentally in the social teaching of the Church: dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity to the nth degree when it came to Southend, a preferential option for the poor, and care for the environment. That meant that he came with unique views on things such as life, death, Europe and animal protection, sometimes in chime with his party, sometimes in chime with the country, but sometimes not. He channelled the 14th-century mystic Julian of Norwich, who said, “All things shall be well and all manner of things shall be well.” That is difficult for us all here today. His cheeky catchphrase was, “Don't worry; it will be fine”—not quite Bruce Forsyth, but he was a friend of Bruce Forsyth and his family.

He did not die a martyr, but he died, as has been said, doing the things he loved and helping constituents. He would have known that the theologian Karl Rahner said that power is a gift from God. That portcullis on the top of our letterheads gives us all that power, whether on the Front Bench, in opposition or on the Back Benches. Let us recommit to Sir David today that we will use that power for the common good.

He died on the feast of St Teresa of Ávila. She said this, famously:

“May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.”

David used those gifts, and he passed on that love.

Sir David, may the choirs of angels come to greet you. May they lead you to paradise. May the Lord enfold you in his mercy. May he grant you eternal life. Eternal rest give to him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Reprinted by the kind permission of Mr Mike Kane, MP for Wythenshawe

Poem

I love you in the morning and the noontide too,

I love you in the evening and all night through.

*My love's not perfect and my love's not true,
But Oh dear God, I do love you.*

*You took a bit of clay and you fashioned me
To live in this world in harmony.
To follow you was my intent
But somehow my way has become twisted and bent.*

*You sent your Son to die for me
Upon a cross on Calvary.
You sent your Spirit with gifts of seven
To help me on my way to Heaven.*

*I thank you, Lord for giving me life,
I thank you for its troubles and strife.
I thank you, Lord for letting me find
That to my faults You are ever kind.*

Kay Hulbert

The World's Biggest Coffee morning



Held on 24th Sept at St Mary's

Raised **£247.59** for

MacMillan Cancer Support



Congratulations

To **The Secret Garden Club**

For being awarded

Best Community Garden—Silver

Best Individual Container—Silver

If you would like to join them please
contact Pauline Fell

Book Review: Blessed Carlo Acutis – 5 steps to being a Saint

Mgr Anthony Fuigueiredo. CTS 2021 £5.95

Affordable/Ideal Stocking filler – Available from St Anthony Communications

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Carlo was born in London of Italian parents on 3rd May 1991. He died in Italy aged 15 years on 12th October 2006 of a most aggressive form of leukaemia acute promyelocytic leukaemia.

During his short life, Carlo reached extraordinary holiness and was declared Blessed by Pope Francis on 10th October 2020. This followed the cure of a young child of an eating disorder, through Carlo's intercession..... so what is the story of his life?

Carlo's parents were not religious, but HE DRAGGED THEM TO CHURCH! One of the first great influences of his life was his Polish babysitter, Beata, a faithful Catholic who looked after him in those early years. She recalls, visiting the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Pompeii when he was five years old, and of him dedicating himself to Our Lady of Pompeii.

An otherwise “normal” child, Carlo was a natural joker, loved sport and the great outdoors, was brilliant with the internet and computer technology but was careful to avoid immoral sites. The family lived between their homes in Milan and Assisi and, Carlo insisted the family be consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Carlo had five steps on his road to Sanctity – “His Highway to Heaven”.

STEP ONE: Carlo had a great devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. He held a firm belief in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and received his first Holy Com-

munion on 16th June 1998. His prayer to Jesus on receiving the Sacrament was: "Come right in – make yourself at home!" And Carlo was consoled by the final words of Jesus while He was on earth: "I will be with you always, until the end of time". Mt 28:20.

STEP TWO Carlo was a daily communicant and always spent time in ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT. "I like to speak to Jesus about all I am living and feeling". "Sadness is the gaze turned towards oneself- happiness is the gaze turned towards oneself God." Carlo had a great devotion to Saint Francis of Assisi.

STEP THREE Regular CONFESSION was important to Carlo. "In order to rise up high an air balloon needs to shed its weight – just like the soul, which in order to raise itself up to heaven needs to remove small weights venial sins". It is important to go to confession often, because the soul is very complex."

STEP FOUR Devotion to the BLESSED MOTHER. "I never fail to keep the most gracious appointment of the day: recitation of the HOLY ROSARY.

STEP FIVE – Charity Money, Carlo would say is nothing more than shredded paper! What counts in life is the nobility of the soul. That is the way we love God and our neighbour.

So these are Carlo's FIVE STEPS ON THE HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN. He said: "God has written for each one of us a unique and unrepeatable story, but he has left us the freedom to write the ending".

Jane Gillett

Thanks to all those who organised and helped at the recent Jumble Sale. £478 was raised.

An Island Quiz


1. One with an Archangel's name.
2. Not actually an island.
3. Like a colour.
4. Had an early scout camp.
5. Spiritually excellent.
6. Joined Canada in 1949.
7. St Paul was shipwrecked there.
8. Where Gracie Fields lived.

9. With the South extending further North than the North.
10. Not a lady.
11. With perfume and chocolate making monks.
12. Not a supermarket.
13. A cosy jumper.
14. Not the French mountain range.
15. Contains three countries.

Tom Barbour

Seen in a Church Bulletin

Ladies, don't forget the Rummage Sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Potluck Supper Sunday at 5pm— prayer and medication to follow.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What is Hell'? Come early and listen to our choir practice.



We would like to thank those who came to our Parish Meeting and who filled in our questionnaires. We have received about 89 ideas, which included things that individual can do as well as what the Parish might be able to do. It has been an interesting exercise and we will be feeding back to parishioners soon. We would ask your help in finding out what many of you are already doing and what you would be able to do in the future.

Tim Cain, John Bird, Pam Taylor, Anne Bothwell, Cathie Joseph

Alton Clothes Bank

Part of the Living Simply award is about living in solidarity with the poor. Cathie has started the Alton Clothes Bank, which will be distributing free clothes to those in need.

You can find the Clothes Bank on Facebook with this link <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1190156804842983>

People have been incredibly generous and there is obviously a need for this as many requests have started to come in.

In the first week 8 families were helped and 98 items rehomed.

Thank you to all those who donated clothes.

What is needed now are more volunteers who would be able to help. If this could be you, please get in touch with Cathie Joseph.

Shops of Bygone Alton

I start with a correction about the old Fire Station once opposite Iceland, it housed three, not two engines. In those days men could be seen racing on their bikes to the station to fight a fire.

This time we start at Cross and Pillory / High street, from the HSBC bank, once named the Midland. Then we have Bourne Estate Agents and Vodaphone in past life Walker Stores Supermarket. There was also a Keymarket supermarket which was where Iceland is today, later becoming Woolies.

Alton Pharmacy was Harrington's Ladies wear, a bit up-market but lovely, my mother would wander in for a look at the lovely hats, her weakness, often a new hat was purchased.

Charter Estate agents was Julius Caesar hairdressers (that was his real name)! It later had hairdressing/barbers once side of the entrance, the other a wool and haberdashery.

Then we had Mortara's open fronted wet fish shop. The Card Factory was Timothy Whites Chemist/Pharmacy in the first half then hardware at the back half. It was a very large shop, which today has been partitioned off. Upstairs was storage and staff room, a dumb waiter was invaluable to save the legs on those stairs.

Nero's was Smeeds wine shop, later becoming newsagents and books with the Porter family. The now empty Warehouse Factory was Woolies before it moved to where Iceland is now.

Greggs was Parslow bread and cakes. Boots was Johnson's Drapers, another large shop where seamstresses altered clothing etc. A distant relative of mine worked there for many ears as a seamstress, later moving to Treloar Hospital (now a housing estate Alton Chawton Park Rd), where she made curtains to pull around beds.

Clark's shoe shop I cannot recall in earlier life.

Beyond the Banks was car repair and fuel named Kerridge.

Just beyond Baker's Alley if the Bakers Arms Public House.

Boots Opticians is where Kingdons Ironmongers was located. It was a very old shop and stretched a long way back, its back yard came out on Vicarage Hill by the new Library. My younger brother and his wife both worked there in the office. Kingdons replica shop can be viewed at Milestones museum, Basingstoke.

Peacocks area was a job centre at one time.

Now there were many more shops like Stoodleys Clock and Watch Jewellery on Crown Hill, now Bakers, High St, Ransoms Cycle Shop, Gye Radford DIY, Butts Stores.

The BonBon, Anstey Rd only closed in the last few years!

Here I will stop and ask people to respond to any important ones I have missed, please.

I just want to mention the Reliance Laundry, Borover Lane, now flats, my mother sent her sheets there, soiled ones collected and returned clean weekly

Behind Borover Gardens and Albert Rd was a huge hop field, later houses were built and named Whitedown Estate and house building goes on and on.

The No14 Green Bus ran between Alton and Aldershot and Winchester. We were used to go to Chawton at times, long before the by pass was built, mostly though, we walked.

Pearce Sawmills was on the corner of Butts Rd and Ackender Rd.

The memory has not been too bad and I hope its been of interest, I did walk the town a few times to jot down what was now in place of shops that I remembered.

God Bless each and everyone. Take care and stay safe.

Love and prayers

Pam Barbour

Sister Clare Crockett (1982 –2016)

Sr Clare was born in Derry during the Troubles. She loved singing and dancing. A popular member of the school she was the one everybody wanted to know.



She was not particularly religious saying that when the nuns were teaching the class she was usually very busy talking. Anyway, from

the age of 14 she was convinced that she was going to be a world famous actress and she studied theatre and landed some acting roles.

Sr Clare would readily admit that she was something of a wild child, loving to go out partying and drinking.

At the age of 17 she got the chance to go of a free trip to Spain with a friend. It was only when she went to pick up the ticket that she realised it was a pilgrimage and they would be staying in a monastery! To add insult to injury, her friend was unable to go due to a ruptured appendix, so Clare left with the group, reluctant and resentful.

The pilgrimage was to Spain during Holy Week and Clare was encouraged to attend the Good Friday service. It was when she knelt down to kiss the Cross that she says she felt a thump and felt she could give God nothing but her life.

Still, she fought back against this feeling telling God that she had plans to be an actress, finally giving in to His wishes the following year, in 2001, when she returned to Spain and entered the Convent of the Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother.

She worked in Spain, the United States and Ecuador doing pastoral care duties, hospital chaplaincy, teaching and missionary outreach and was much loved by colleagues and pupils.

It was in April 2016, having lived through devastating floods that had left the school in total disaster, that Sr Clare was killed along with 5 young women, when the school in Ecuador where she was teaching, collapsed due to a severe earthquake. She and some of the sisters had been discussing death only that day at lunch and Sr Clare had said, *“Why should I be afraid of death, if I’m going to go with the One I have longed to be with my whole life?”* Her body was returned home to Derry to be buried in the City Cemetery.

Since then there have been numerous reports of miracles of healing and fertility attributed to her after people had prayed to Sr Clare.

Apostleship of the Sea

Thank you very much for your generous donations to our annual appeal for the Apostleship of the Sea. This year we packed 6 items into each shoe box and wrapped them ready for distribution. The boxes include woolly hats, warm socks, rosaries, chocolate/sweets, a book and toiletries.

Here are some of the boxes ready, there are still items to be packed. I am sure that they



will be greatly appreciated by those seamen who are far from home this Christmas.

The Next World

The answer to the second question in the old Penny Catechism concludes by telling me that God made me so that, after this world, I should be “happy with Him for ever in the next”. The “next world” has several synonyms – heaven, paradise, the hereafter – all promising eternal happiness.

The final phrase in the Apostles’ Creed confesses belief in “life everlasting”. The preceding references to “the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body” may require some elucidation for those unfamiliar with Christian doctrine, but there is no doubt about the meaning of life everlasting. If one is blessed with Faith, then the end of the Creed is an absolute guarantee of life hereafter. It’s a wonderful reassurance of man’s destiny, it confirms the purpose and objective of life in this world, it means, for those in God’s favour, living happily ever after.

Many years ago, the Independent Schools’ Headmasters’ Conference addressed the question of what, in broadest terms, was the ultimate purpose of education. The consensus was that the objective of a good school was to prepare its pupils to make the best of life in the outside world: “to prepare for life”. Imagine the surprise of the assembly when Fr Paul Nevill, the headmaster of Ampleforth in my time, stood up and said that his intention was to prepare his boys for death!

Fr Paul believed that there were more important issues than academic excellence, sporting prowess and artistic achievement, followed by successful careers. Paramount was his hope that, after leaving Ampleforth, the boys would continue to know, love and serve God, and by so doing, would be ready for death whenever it came. That should be their most important moment: the beginning of life everlasting.

I like to think of life on Earth as a race on the running track: the decisive time is when you cross the finishing line. There will be setbacks along the course of your life, when you fall out of God's favour, but it's "the hour of our death" that counts. It is the runner's position at the end of the race that goes on record. We should all aim for what athletes call a "personal best". We should take courage from St Paul, who in his second letter to Timothy wrote "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith".

Having established a belief that the next world exists for all of us, why is it necessary to pray for "the souls of the faithful departed" so that "through the mercy of God, they may rest in peace"? Such prayer is most obviously manifested in requiems and subsequent masses for the repose of the holy souls. For anyone not believing in the hereafter, these devotions must seem to be nonsense. However, even for believers, prayer for the dead must be regarded as unnecessary – a waste of time – without the doctrine of purgatory. We are all saints, destined for heaven eventually, but we are also sinners in need of "purging before admission to paradise". Hence the necessity for those in this world to help the faithful departed on their way. With the exception of Our Lady, no one has had, or will have, an uninterrupted passage into Heaven. One can admire the Church's wisdom in celebrating All Souls Day next to the feast of All Saints: it is a reminder of our duty towards the souls in purgatory.

To quantify a period of time in purgatory is, of course, impossible because time, as we know it in this world, does not apply in the next; nor can indulgences – remissions of purgatory as a result of prayer and good works on earth – be measured in our terms. After purgatory, our souls are promised eternal life. The old Catechism tells us that the phrase "life everlasting" in the Apostles' Creed means that "the good shall live for ever in the glory and happiness of heaven". "For ever", although

very encouraging, is a difficult concept – like infinity to the mathematician.

We are all frightened at the prospect of "the hour our death" and pray about it to the Mother of God thousands of times in our lives. In purely human terms, we are hoping for peace and freedom from pain but, more importantly, we are praying that we shall be in that state of grace which will ensure life everlasting in the next world.

Morris Hopkins

Christmas Fair

A photo of the hall before the Christmas Fair. It is such a lot of hard work to get this organised and set up. Thanks to Pauline and all the team for their time and effort.



Have a wonderful Christmas, keep safe and enjoy the season. Thank you for everything you have done over this year, supporting charities and events. We look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

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15. Great Britain.
13. Guernsey
12. Iceland
11. Caldey
9. Ireland
7. Malta
5. Holy Island
3. Isle of Wight
1. St Michael's Mount
2. Isle of Portland
4. Brownsea island
6. Newfoundland
8. Capri
10. Isle of Man
13. Jura

Quiz Answers