

PARISH CHURCH NEWS

**Ss. Peter & Paul, Clare
with St. Mary the Virgin, Poslingford**

**Vicar and Rector of the Stour Valley Benefice:
The Rev'd Mark Woodrow**
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February 2024



St. Valentine – 3rd century Roman saint

*“Roses are red, violets are blue.
Some poems rhyme ---
This one doesn’t.”*

Rector's Ramblings – February 2024 (Love beyond Valentine's Day)

As we step into February, the crisp winter air begins to whisper of another kind of warmth - the gentle heat of love. Shops adorn themselves in reds and pinks, heart-shaped merchandise lines the shelves, and thoughts turn to romance and declarations of affection. But is February's love story truly limited to chocolates, roses, and cards? I don't think so.

Whilst Valentine's Day, with its charming traditions and sweet gestures, holds a special place in many of our hearts, let us not forget the broader canvas upon which love paints its masterpiece. February, you see, is a month not just for romantic love, but for love in all its glorious guises.

It is a month to celebrate the love that binds families, the unwavering loyalty and quiet devotion that flows between parents and children, siblings, and spouses. It is a time to cherish the deep friendships that enrich our lives, the laughter shared, the tears dried, the secrets whispered, and dreams supported. It is a season to extend a hand to our neighbours, the lonely and forgotten, offering them a cup of tea, a friendly smile, a simple act of kindness that speaks volumes of love.

Love, you see, transcends the confines of romantic relationships. It is a universal language, a force that bridges gaps and builds bridges, a light that shines brightest in the darkest corners. It is the thread that binds us together, the mortar that makes communities strong, the fuel that ignites acts of compassion and inspires selfless service.

So, this February, as hearts flutter and cupids aim their arrows, let us remember that love's story unfolds far beyond the pages of a greeting card. Let us seek out the faces of love in our everyday lives - in the smile of a child, the helping hand of a neighbour, the unwavering support of a friend. Let us celebrate the love that whispers in quiet moments, that speaks in actions louder than words, that binds us to one another with invisible threads of care and connection.

Perhaps this Valentine's Day, instead of chocolates, we gift acts of kindness. Perhaps instead of cards, we write letters of appreciation to those who hold a special place in our hearts. Perhaps instead of grand

gestures, we offer small tokens of love that speak volumes – a listening ear, a helping hand, a shoulder to lean on.

In doing so, we paint a richer, more meaningful picture of love – a love that is inclusive, unconditional, and ever-present. We create a community where love is not just a fleeting February fancy, but a vibrant tapestry woven into the fabric of our daily lives.

So, dear friends, let us embrace February as a month to celebrate love in all its forms. Let us open our hearts, extend our hands, and write our own stories of love that leave a lasting mark on the world, long after the last heart-shaped balloon has deflated.

With love and blessings

Mark

The Rev'd Mark Woodrow
(Rector)

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**The January Coffee and Chat morning
raised the goodly and godly sum of £136.69.
Well done, and thanks to Mary O. and all concerned!**

But please note: there will, regrettably, be no Coffee and Chat morning in February. This is because the contractors will be working on the Servery Project, which involves a refurbishment of the coffee area. The monthly event will be restarted in March.

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First love

I ne'er was struck before that hour
With love so sudden and so sweet.
Her face it bloomed like a sweet flower
And stole my heart away complete.
My face turned pale as deadly pale,
My legs refused to walk away,
And when she looked, what could I ail?
My life and all seemed turned to clay.

And then my blood rushed to my face
And took my eyesight quite away.
The trees and bushes round the place
Seemed midnight at noonday.
I could not see a single thing,
Words from my eyes did start ---
They spoke as chords do from the string,
And blood burnt round my heart.

Are flowers the winter's choice?
Is love's bed always snow?
She seemed to hear my silent voice,
Not love's appeals to know.
I never saw so sweet a face
As that I stood before.
My heart has left its dwelling place
And can return no more.

John Clare - 1793-1864

INDIA

This is not supposed to be a travelogue, but an account of my impression of a country I had never been to before, but it helps to jog my memory by reminding myself by the itinerary and the photos taken in and of this vibrant country.

I had followed TV Programmes and seen films e.g. E.M. Foster's Passage to India, Heat and Dust and A suitable Boy etc. We were ten women in our sixties, seventies, =-and eighties plus the Revd. Mark Woodrow, who infected us with his love and enthusiasm for this country, as he had lived and worked in India before his ordination for eight years.

My first impression after arriving in Kolkata was the general hubbub and confusion: people everywhere, traffic which did not follow any rules, noise, different smells, petrol smell above all, temples with the goddess Kali with her tongue hanging out, which apparently means: 'I apologise'.

There were electricity wires slung everywhere, one assumes to provide free access to electricity by means of stealing it. It was also Divali, the Hindu festival of light. It was explained to us by the guide that there are so many gods and goddesses, enough for every day of the year.

When we arrived at the hotel we were greeted by the staff with the traditional 'Namaste', which was explained by my Yoga teacher in England, meaning: I see the good in you and you see the good in me, and through this greeting would like to channel all my experiences of this amazing country. The hotel was a modern one, and it employed staff with disabilities; I believe the pianist, who entertained us before supper, was blind. There was a list of all the employees explaining their different needs.



The first evening was spent on a river cruise on the Hooghly River, a contributory to the Ganges, observing the sunset. I found the beauty and general serenity of the scene, the reflection of the sun on the water quite moving. On the banks of the river we observed people in their colourful clothing crouching by the water's edge. The boat we were on was designed to look like a golden dragon with interesting carved statues holding up the main structure of the boat.

The temples along the shore were all illuminated in bright colours. The highlight of the evening was a visit to the Sri Ramakrishna Temple, 'which when viewed from different perspectives looks like a temple, a mosque or a church. It is designed to celebrate all religions in India'. It was a lovely festive atmosphere. A Hindu service was transmitted outside on a huge TV screen. We milled around with everybody in the balmy night air. On the

return on board the boat, we were offered a freshly cooked supper and some incredibly sweet tea and had the opportunity to chat to fellow travellers.

If I would be asked what my lasting impression of India is, I would have to answer: the people. Yes, we saw wonderful palaces, temples and mosques, and stayed in a luxurious hotel, but the friendliness and natural curiosity of the ordinary people, their smiling faces impressed me. We were amused that we aroused their curiosity, probably not everyone had seen European older and taller women before, always we were asked: 'Take a photo? How old you are?' We always obliged and all of us have wonderful photos with Hindu- and veiled Moslem women and family groupings.

I was always conscious that we white women were a minority in the city scene and made me think how minorities of other background might feel back in Europe, but I never felt threatened, just that friendly curiosity.

The following day started in the narrow streets of Kumar Tuli, and we had the opportunity to observe the clay statues for the many festivals being made out of straw and then covered in clay and colourfully painted and robed. Then to the Old Book Market and to the Indian Coffee House where we were told the towns students, intellectuals and revolutionaries hang out.



The day finished with a visit to Mother Teresa's house, a very simple dwelling place, and we were welcomed by her nuns in the distinctive white robes with blue edging. This is now a memorial, with her stone covered coffin in the middle of a simple room; and a little museum explaining all the awards including the Nobel Prize she received. The care for the destitute is now on a different site.

The next morning, we had another river trip, revealing the dirt and rubbish along the shoreline in the day light, something I had not noticed so much the previous evening. Beauty and squalor all together... we ended up at a former Danish settlement. It was explained to us that not only the British East India Company, but also Danish, Dutch, and French trading companies had at various times a foot hold in India. The Danish settlement was a beautiful simple building, now a coffee house tastefully decorated with North European sensibilities and a lovely tropical garden, as well as a formerly Lutheran Church, now administered by the Anglican Church of India.

On the outskirts of this complex, we saw the first cows gazing in the dirty streets. As known, cows are holy in Hinduism, and they are free to munch everywhere.

Then there was a procession of colourful statues of the goddess Kali carried through the streets, accompanied by musicians, and then tipped into the river Hooghly. After minutes they sank and disappeared in the water. It made me aware how dirty the

water was, all sort of debris floating by. Also, the guide pointed out the many crematoriums by the water's edge.

Then we were driven to the flower market. Masses of flowers were offered, and their heads strung together on strings by nimble hands, in order to make garlands for the many temples and festivals. Again, I was hit by the beauty and squalor in one place. The rubbish was just trodden on and left.

This, I think was the end of our trip in Kolkata, but by now my memory tricks me a bit as to what we did on certain days. It states in the travel agency programme that on Day 4 we, after an early morning start took a 70-minute flight to Bhubaneswar. I just remember again chatting to fellow travellers sitting next to me, who were interested in where we came from and were happy to tell me their occupation and why and where they were going.

Bhubaneswar is a town full of temples. We visited the Mukteshwar temple with extensive carvings and the nearby Parsurameswara temple, but non-Hindus are not permitted to go inside. Then onto Udayagiri and the Khandagiri Caves.



The following day was one of the highlights of the trip, the UNESCO world Heritage Konark Sun Temple. 'Designed to be the cosmic chariot of the sun god Surya, with its seven stone horses representing the seven days of the week, and the enormous 24 stone cartwheels representing the hours of the day, the magnificent carvings and sheer size of it, together with the fact that the community that built it in the 13th century disappeared, makes it intriguing', This was indeed a most impressive site, visited by us and many other Hindus in their colourful robes in the midday heat.

We experienced every mode of transport available in India. In the afternoon we arrived at one of the holiest pilgrimage places in the town of Puri by tuk-tuk and rickshaw. The

Jagannath Mandir was built in 1198AD, but not open to non-Hindus, but we could view the site from the roof tops of one of the nearby buildings. On the return from this site, we had to make our way against the teeming masses of pilgrims, passing an open market selling all sorts of goods. I noticed the cows making good use of the vegetable stalls with nobody shewing them away. They also rested in the middle of the road. The traffic avoiding them. All this will have a lasting memory; I had never experienced anything like it before.

This was followed by a visit to an artisan colony and we were shown by the artist how these cloth paintings with the decorative patterns were created. I purchased a small painting depicting the god Krishna on top of a tree, with maidens frolicking below him in the water. It was explained to us how complicated and time consuming it was to create these pictures. I will treasure it.

The next day we had a two-hour flight to Hyderabad by Indigo Airlines. I found the choice of wordplay for the airline well chosen, not only that, the interior's main colour choice was indeed indigo blue.

In Hyderabad we stayed in a truly magnificent hotel, the Falaknuma Palace. It was once the home to the Nizam, the princely ruler of Hyderabad state, who at the time was reputedly the richest man in the world. I quote here from our travel brochure: 'From the moment we arrive we will be treated if we were royalty, being met at the gatehouse' by a splendidly dressed band 'and transported via horse and carriage up to the palace itself, through the 32 acres of matured landscapes complete with peacocks'. I especially enjoyed the cooling swim in the pool while I admired the landscaped gardens and the exotic smells of the vegetation.

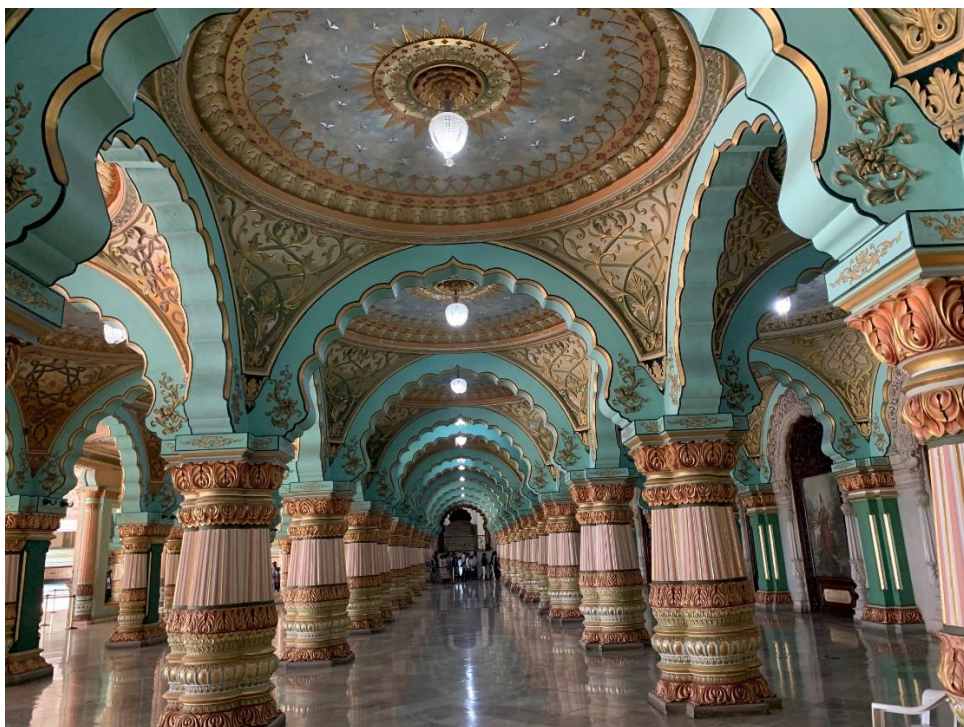


The court yard garden at night was lit up by thousands of lights. One evening during our stay we were treated to a performance of traditional Sufi music, a very atmospheric experience. I searched Sufism on Safari and got: 'Sufism is a form of Islam, a school of practice that emphasises the inward search for God and shuns materialism'. To hear that in the gardens of a luxury hotel.....

In the townscape of Hyderabad there is a quite a surprising influence of Islam. I always thought that after the partition, Moslems went to Pakistan, but apparently India still has a sizeable Moslem population. We viewed the Charminar, the oldest mosque in the city and the Mecca Masjid mosque which during important festivals can house more than 10.000 men to pray. Women apparently can pray at home. Another palace in the town is Chowmahalla, built and extended during the 18th and 19th century. It has been the home of a number of Nizams 'and is richly decorated, and includes displays of many of their possessions.

One of my high lights was a visit to the Qutb Shia Tombs, 'the final resting place of many of the city's rulers'. There was such an atmosphere of serene quietness and calm. We met many families enjoying the peace as well. It was a wonderful photo opportunity, because everybody was so friendly and wanted to be photographed with us and we enjoyed their company, even though we did not have much of a common language.

Our next stop was Mysore. We had 'a full day's sightseeing in and around magnificent monuments, temples, and of course the UNESCO world Heritage Mysore Palace, the Durbar Hall. By chance I had bought a book before we left for India, "Hidden Heritage" by Fatima Manji, a British journalist of Moslem Indian background, and became fascinated by her article 'The Tiger and the Lion' which deals with the historical background of Mysore and the involvement of Colonel Wellesley, who later became the Duke of Wellington.

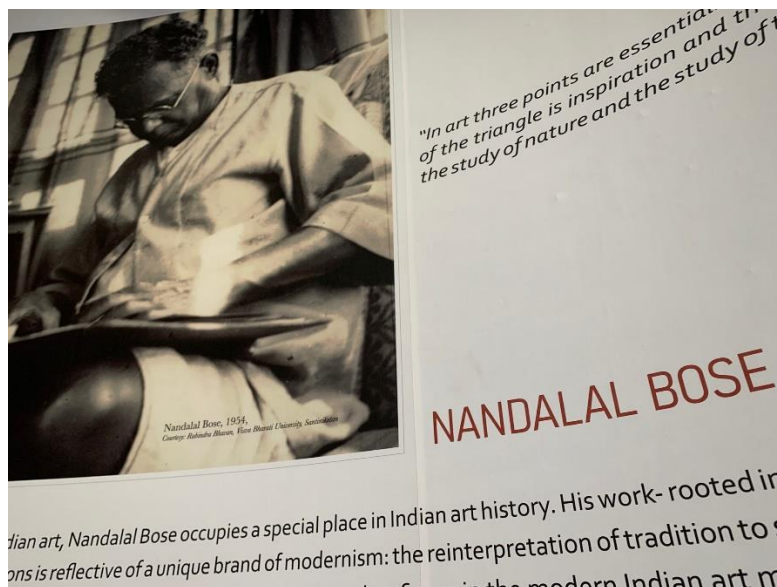


Our trip to India was named 'Eastern Adventure & Colonial India' and I glanced from her research that she had different sensibilities. By visiting British country houses and museums she discovered how many art treasures from India came over to England and are hidden there.

Our last stop was Bangalore. We travelled there by railway in First Class, so no overcrowded compartments, as shown in films and travelogues. Apparently, the monsoon had just finished and the country side with its paddy fields was lush and green.

Bangalore is the technology hub of modern India, but it was in the past the heart of British Colonial rule. We visited the current home of the Maharaja at Bangalore Palace and Tipu Sultan's Palace with its frescos and teak pillars. We had a last opportunity to practice our haggling skills on the Krishnarajendra market with its spices, copperware and flower market.

A lasting impression of Bangalore was also the visit to the National Gallery of Modern Art. Currently there was an exhibition by the artist Nandalal Bose, who according to the explanation given in the museum, occupies the central position within the development of modern art in India. In this exhibition he depicted ordinary people at work and relaxation. He was also a friend of Gandhi's.



Gandhi also, besides being an anticolonial nationalist and political ethicist, who employed nonviolent resistance for India's independence, abolished the caste system, but as it was explained to us by a Brahmin guide, which, as he pointed out, is the top caste, is still alive. So members of the 'untouchables' can never escape their caste.

To sum up my impressions of my trip I can say, India is a country of many contradictions, and I am glad I had the opportunity to visit it.

Namaste!

Heide Daniels

THE BYFORD'S

Every town has a family whose history has been interwoven with its, and Clare is no exception. The Byford family have helped influence Clare's development for 150 years and their support continues to this day. In 2022 they gifted 4.5 acres of arable land to the Park to create Charlie's Wood, and they're supporting the regeneration of an ancient pond this year.

The Byford business in Suffolk can be traced back to 1800s Cavendish. When the Great Eastern Railway opened the line between Sudbury and Clare in 1865, carter Joseph Byford started transporting grain from local farms to the trains. So began the Byford grain business, which was to thrive in Clare for over a century.

Subsequent generations of Byfords expanded into milling and farming. CW Byford built a provender mill in Malting Lane in 1906. The builders' display of skulls they'd unearthed did not go down well with everyone and the skulls were hastily reburied. They lie peacefully in Malting Lane today, alongside up to one thousand Anglo-Saxon burials in the Park.

The grain business expanded with premises in Station Road in the 1920s and a garage and workshop in the High Street to service the businesses. Adjacent cottages housed employees: mainly countrymen, many had been through the war with the Suffolk Regiment. One employee remembered with great affection is Tommy Ince, who had been a Japanese prisoner of war. His first job was as "back houseboy" for Mr Twitchett at Clare Downs Farm. Once a week Mr Twitchett drove to Frinton; young Tommy's job was to watch the speedometer at Sudbury and let him know if he exceeded the speed limit.

The business continued to prosper through recession and war. When a wealthy American tried to purchase Clare's Ancient House, planning to dismantle and ship it to the US as an example of Olde England, the Byfords saved it for the town and it now houses Clare's thriving museum. Following a successful exhibition of shops last year, the museum will be running an exhibition of Clare festivals past and present this year.

By the 1950s up to 80,000 sacks of grain a year passed through Clare station and Byfords built a silo in Stoke Road. Sadly both station and silo proved short-lived. The station closed in the 1960s, and like many of Suffolk's small grain merchants CW Byfords was taken over by a larger firm. The silo, built when corn was stored in sacks rather than bulk,

became redundant. The mill, garage and workshop closed in the 1970s, though the grain merchants continued until the following decade. The Byford family continued to be closely involved with Clare through farming, but their industrial history remains only in the memories of those involved and in their built legacy.

The mill building became an antiques centre during Suffolk's "Lovejoy years" and is now being redeveloped as flats. The silo was demolished and the site redeveloped for housing. The lorry garage and workshop became the site of Nethergate Brewery in 1979. When the brewery outgrew the site that too became housing. The railway buildings, from which the Byfords sent Suffolk grain across the country, have a new lease of life in the Park, as café, exhibition and visitor centre.

For more information about Clare's history, visit us at the Park's visitor centre (open weekends and Fridays other than in January), see our website www.clarecastlecountrypark.co.uk or join Clare Tour Guides on one of their fascinating tours www.claretourguides.co.uk. If you can help with the festivals exhibition by recording memories of Clare, please contact museum chair Antonia Brandes on 07483 310634 or antonia@brandes.co.uk. No prior knowledge is needed and any help preserving our unique social history will be gratefully received.

- Julia Burge

Help needed!

I am sure that you appreciate the beauty of our Parish Church – but, sadly, we are having a little trouble in maintaining the 'spick and span' nature that is so important in this building.

A few (very few) of us are doing our best to clean, (hoovering, dusting etc), but we really need more people to lend a hand; the more people willing to help out on a regular basis, the fewer 'turns' would be needed on a rota. It has indeed become necessary to organise a rota so that everyone involved knows when / what they will be doing. Not so long ago, those on the rota had a 'turn' once every 6 weeks, but people have moved away, become too frail, etc and are no longer able to do cleaning in the church.

So, if you are able and willing to help out, please do let me know. To allay any fears of doing huge areas, we divide up the spaces in the church.

There are already a few who have carried on, so it would be good to know 'who does what' – I know about some of you, but please still contact me .

If you would like to talk to me about this, please do.

You can contact me on 01787279172, or email gowen.mowen@gmail.com

Mary Owen

There are no entries in the Registers for January.



**Pancake Party – Saturday 10th February from 1pm in St Mary's,
Poslingford.**

Bring your favourite pancake topping and your frying pan for Pancake eating and Pancake races!

Donations of eggs, flour, and milk welcome.

Donation towards the upkeep of Poslingford Church gratefully received.

Stour Valley Benefice

Services for February 2024

Sunday, 4 February Second Sunday before Lent

Stoke by Clare: 09:00 Holy Communion / Mark

Cavendish: 10:30 Morning Prayer / Barbara

Clare: 11:00 Holy Communion / Mark

Sunday, 11 February Sunday before Lent

Hundon: 09:00 Holy Communion / Mark

Stoke by Clare: 09:00 Morning Prayer / Karen

Cavendish: 10:30 Holy Communion / Mark

Clare: 16:00 Evensong / Mark

Wednesday, 14 February Ash Wednesday

Poslingford: 19:00 Holy Communion / Mark

Sunday, 18 February 1st Sunday of Lent

Stoke by Clare: 09:00 Holy Communion / Liz

Cavendish: 10:30 Morning Prayer / Mark

Clare: 11:00 Holy Communion / Liz

Sunday, 25 February 2ND Sunday of Lent

Stoke by Clare: 09:00 Morning Prayer / Karen

Wixoe: 09:00 Holy Communion / Mark

Cavendish: 10:30 Holy Communion / Mark

Clare: 11:00 Morning Prayer / Karen

Hundon: 16:00 Evening Prayer / Karen

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The closing date for contributions to the Magazine is now
the 25th of the month
(for inclusion in the next month's issue)

Our Churches need your financial help!

Whilst Clare Parish Church has been blessed with some generous historic legacies for the upkeep and improvement of its fabric, the reality is that we are struggling to keep up with the day to day running costs of our churches, which include the contribution we are asked to make towards paying our clergy's stipends, the cost of training future priests and lay workers, and also the important regulatory and administrative support provided by our diocesan office.

Last year (2023) our Benefice was asked to find £73,429 of which (at the time of going to print, we were only able to raise £56,724).

This year (2024) our Benefice needs to raise £75,818 before we even turn on the lights and heating!

The United Parish of Clare and Poslingford share of the £75,818 looks likely to be in the region of £ 35,000.

I am enormously grateful for the generosity of everyone of you who donates and supports the fundraising activities of the church, and I write this firstly as a way of saying thank you for all that you currently do, and secondly and importantly to ask you to be as generous as you possible can in the coming year.

You can make donations at services, both in cash, cheque, and using the contactless card machine.



You can also make regular and one-off donations with a credit or debit card, securely online using this QR Code or this website:

<https://givealittle.co/c/3arlknwQC8Y9D6Feg8jlhC>

Or by Bank Transfer

Account Name: PCC Clare with Poslingford
Sort Code: 30-98-31
Account Number: 00594473



You can also sign up to regularly donate via standing order through the Church of England's Parish Giving Scheme:

<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/clare-st-peter-st-paul-suffolk/>

Thank you in advance for your support this year.

Revd Mark

BISHOPS' LENT APPEAL 2024

Faith in Action - Prayer and Giving
Transforming Lives in Kagera



For more information or to donate visit
cofesuffolk.org/bishops-lent-appeal

