



October 2024

Together in Wotton

Christians living, working and worshipping together
in Wotton under Edge

Father Giorgio (George) Malecki SDS +

Sadly, and unexpectedly, Father George Malecki our Parish Priest at Holy Cross, Wotton-Under-Edge and Christ The King, Thornbury, has died whilst on holiday in Northumberland.

Father George grew up in Wotton, where his mother still lives with family members nearby, and from an early age wanted to become a Catholic Priest. Father George left Wotton to join the Salvatorian community where he was accepted as a Novitiate and later to become a Salvatorian priest. Father George worked in a number of different parishes and became Parish Priest of Christ the King and Holy Cross in 2016, his second time in the area.

We at Holy Cross and Christ the King and the Salvatorian Community are still in in shock over the sad news. We are praying for him and his mother and family. The main Requiem Mass will be held at Christ the King Catholic Church in Thornbury at 11am on Thursday 10 October, though there will be a Coffin Reception and Mass at Holy Cross on Wednesday evening .

Please pray for Father George now at peace with God; for his mother and family, the Salvatorians and all of us at Holy Cross and Christ the King at this time.

What would you like to invent to make the world a better place?

This along with other big open-ended questions was posed to our children who attend Ignite Club.

One sunny Friday afternoon towards the end of the Summer Term, we were pleased to be joined by Rev'd Jo Wetherall (pictured right). Jo is the Senior Children and Families Connector, from the Diocese of Gloucester.

Jo has been part of a project called 'Table Talk' which consist of cards with lots of questions aimed at getting young people talking about issues to provoke deep and meaningful conversations. Having thoroughly enjoyed debating the answer to the first question, one young lad jumped out of his seat and went over to Jo's group to ask 'where do you get these cards from...this is a great game...I need them in my life!'

The responses from all the children were so positive and something as simple as giving our young people a theme, a question and



time and space to talk about things important to them had clearly made a profound impact. But it is the quality of the questions that makes this game so fun! They come highly recommended from Ignite Club!

On the side of the pack there is a brief overview of the game's intentions:

'Table Talk is a conversational game that helps you discuss challenging topics, create honest and safe communities, laugh with friends, encourage and support people. Each six themes have 16 questions.'

The themes are as follows:

Home	School	World
Friends	Technology	Well-being

We thought you would be interested in hearing some of the responses that our young people gave:



Is everyone in the world treated the same?

No - the rich stay rich and they don't give anything to the poor, (but not always when they are kind).

No - some people live on the streets and some live in houses.

Should we always buy new things?

No – we can recycle

What would you like to invent to make the world a better place?

I would like to invent a super spreader message machine that tells everyone 'No Litter'.

If you had a super power, what would it be?

I chose to fly then I can see and help anyone in trouble. I would stop the bad people being bad = no baddies, no jails

If you are looking for something compact to take on your travels or some ideas for conversation starters around the dinner table then head to the weblink belowthey aren't just for children either!

<https://table-talk.org/children/>

SAVE THE DATE
Saturday 16 November
Wotton Baptist Church

We will be hosting the Tearfund Big Quiz Night, more details to follow, start thinking about your team now!



tearfund

News from St Mary's

We have learnt to co-exist with Mother Nature, when planning our fêtes! Being inside St. Mary's wonderful space is the only possible solution to our British weather.

Saturday 21 September - St. Mary's Autumn Fête was a resounding success, and we achieved another milestone in our church's history for being an important centre in the heartbeat of our community. Bells rang out, the town came, they saw, they listened to continuous music, they bought, they feasted and they

enjoyed themselves. St. Mary's is what the people of our community recognise us to be: a pillar of Wotton's life. Hard work and organisation ultimately pay huge dividends. To my fellow parishioners who worked incredibly hard achieving our success and to Wotton's people, as a whole, in supporting us, well done! A huge thank you!

Don't be surprised if plans for **St. Mary's Summer Fête 2025** are already underway.
Douglas Hinton – Fete organiser



Having returned from 2 weeks holiday in the Highlands, my first day back was like hitting the road at 50!! Straight into St. Mary's Autumn Fete. The church was buzzing. Every nook and cranny utilised including The Catherine chapel which became a 'pre loved' boutique, the Berkeley Chapel became 'Toy's R St. Mary's' and the pews strewn with home made jams and produce, plus a very



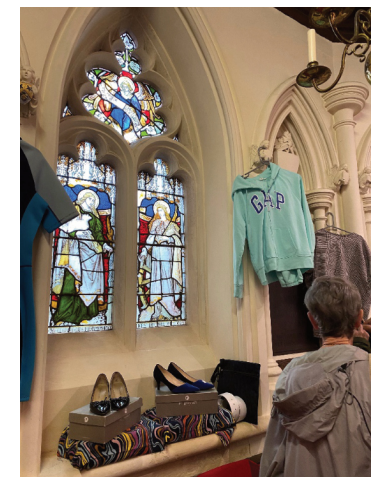
tempting bottle stall. Tea, cake and cucumber sandwiches, burgers and a licenced bar if you fancied something stronger. WOW. This is a biggest fund raiser of the year, but it is so much more bringing our wider community together under one roof.

As if that was not enough... the next day we had our Harvest Service which included a wide selection of items donated for the local foodbank, followed by a bring and share lunch.

We had hardly drawn breath from the weekend and were then welcoming Blue Coat School's new reception children in a special service on Monday afternoon. Each new arrival is buddied up with a friendly Yr 6 to look after them. Over 300 children and 130 adults attended.

I need another holiday!!!

Rev Lesley



See St Mary's Facebook page for more photos.



What's on in OCTOBER?

The Keepers is a community hub supporting the residents of Wotton and surrounding areas. It is here for everyone. Either come along to one of the organised groups below, or just pop in for a chat and a cuppa - whenever we are open. Come as you are, bring what you can and take what you need.

Monday

Parent Support Group - a support group by parents for parents. 9:15am - 10:45am

Citizens Advice - to book an appointment call 0800 800 0510/0511 or just drop in. 14th and 28th October. 10am - 2pm

Age UK Gloucestershire - a social group for those who are 50+. 11am - 12:30pm

Cruse Bereavement cafe - Bereavement support, advice and information, no need to book. 28th October. 11:30am - 1pm

Chair Yoga - join in with some gentle, supportive yoga. Open to all. No booking is needed. Pay As You Feel. Followed by refreshments (optional). 1:30pm - 2:30pm

Keepers Kidz - board games, craft and toast available. Children to come with an accompanying adult. Also runs through the holidays. 3:15pm - 4:30pm

Menopause Support Group - a peer support group for those affected by menopause. 7th October. 7pm - 8:30pm

Thursday

Lloyds Bank - drop in for basic transactions such as account balance, direct debit, standing order and bill payment enquiries for both personal and business account customers. No cash services are available. 9:30am - 3pm

Wotton Area Neurodivergent Support group (WANDS) - a group run by, and for, ND adults and parents/carers of ND children including Autism, ADHD, PDA, Dyslexia etc. 10th October. 9:30am - 11:00am

Art Shape - a 6-week creative arts course. This course is full, if interested in another art course, please contact us. Thursdays. 9:30am - 11:30am

Wotton Area Breast Support Group - anyone touched by breast cancer is invited to drop in and meet others who know just how it feels. The next meeting is on 17th October. 10am - 11am

Qigong - gentle exercises for physical strength and balance plus emotional relaxation. Pay As You Feel. 12pm - 1pm

NHS social prescriber's Drop-in - help to connect and grow in confidence. Just come in, no appointment needed. 11am - 1pm

Digital Drop-in - any help on anything digital. October 10th and 24th. 2 - 4pm

Spanish For Beginners/The Terrified - informal Spanish conversation group. Just drop in. 7:30pm - 8:30pm

Tuesday

The Keepers' Garden - the garden is open - come along to plant, dig, weed, sit or just chat with our gardener. Refreshments provided. 10am - 12pm

The Carers' Café - run by Healthcare Assistants from Culverhay and Chipping surgeries. Coffee, chat and advice if needed. Just drop in. Carers can come by themselves or bring the person they care for. 1st October. 10am - 12pm

CONNECT (previously called Dementia Connections) - for anyone who would like to make connections, including those living with dementia, long term health conditions, and unpaid carers. Activities and chat. 8th and 22nd October. 10am - 12pm

Sing 2 Remember - sing together, share memories and make friends. Come and join this supported, dementia-friendly singing session. Just turn up. 1st and 15th October. 10:45am - 11:45am

Tuesday Lunches - come and join us for a meal and chat. Open to all and Pay As You Feel (PAYF). Spaces are limited, so to book a place please call 07585 466418 or pop in to find out what's on the menu! 12:30pm - 2pm

The Keepers' Car Club is also running on Tuesdays to provide transport from your home to the hot lunches. Places are limited. To book, please call 07585 466418 or pop in.

Death Cafe - drink tea, eat cake and discuss death. It is not a bereavement support group. 15th October 7pm - 9pm.

Friday

The Keepers Tots - a session for babies, toddlers and their responsible adult. 9:15am - 10:30am

The Keepers' Garden - the garden is open - Come along to plant, dig, weed, sit or chat with our gardener. Refreshments provided. 10am - 12pm

Drop In Café - all welcome on a Pay As You Feel basis. This cafe is quieter than a Wednesday, the tables are spaced apart, board games available if wanted. 11:30am - 12:30pm

Wednesday

Drop In Café - all welcome on a Pay As You Feel basis. 10am - 12pm

The Keepers' Car Club is also running on Wednesdays to provide transport from your home to The Keepers. Places are limited. To book please call 07585 466418 or pop in.

Craft and Chat with tea and cake - held fortnightly, 9th and 23rd October 10am - 12pm

P3 Drop In - help with a range of issues e.g. housing, debt and benefit support. No booking needed. 10am - 1pm

Back to Work - help with online job searching, confidence building, CVs, covering letters and job applications. Every week apart from the 1st Wednesday in the month. 10am - 12pm

Stroud Foodbank - offering emergency food and essentials along with support and advice. 10am - 12pm

Health Visitor Drop In - available to weigh babies and answer any questions. Next drop in is on 2nd October. 10am - 12pm

Men's Shed - talk about the projects they're working on and discuss yours. 9th October. 10am - 12pm

Stroud District Housing Officer - advice on any social housing issues. No appointment is needed. 10:30am - 11:30am

Talk Club - a talking and listening club for men to help keep mentally fit. 2nd and 16th October. 7pm - 8:30pm

Wotton Area Neurodivergent Support group (WANDS) - a group run by, and for, ND adults and parents/carers of ND children including Autism, ADHD, PDA, Dyslexia etc. 30th October. 7- 9pm

COURSES AND MORE

Drop in Blood Pressure check. October 7th. 10am - 1pm

Creative writing - 4 writing workshops led by local author and playwright Mark Seaman. If you have an idea for a novel, a play, or are just interested in learning more about the craft of writing Open to anyone - no eligibility criteria. Thursdays. 11.30am - 1.00pm.

PEEP - A group that shares ideas and simple, low-cost fun activities that support your child's learning in everyday life - talking, singing, sharing books and playing together. It runs over 5 weeks and is for children under 5 and their Parent/carer Thursdays 1:30 - 2:30

OPENING TIMES

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday:
9.00am - 4.00pm

Wednesday and Friday:
9.00am - 1.00pm

CLOSED on BANK HOLIDAYS

It's important to us that everyone is included, the Hub is accessible to all and we work in collaboration with other local organisations. www.thekeepers.org.uk Reg Charity No. 1192121

Tea Bags and Toilet Rolls The September meeting of the Dryleaze Saturday Club

With the usual correspondent not in attendance due to family birthdays, this month's report is courtesy of Mrs Grace Ball with help from Book Monitor and Transport Manager, Mr John Alderson.

The Club held its Harvest Thanksgiving on Saturday 14 September. Due to works being done at Dryleaze the meeting took place at the United Church in Bradley Street, which may have meant fewer members than usual although John kindly provided lifts for anyone unable to walk.

Donations of food and other household items were passed-on to The Keepers, as were the proceeds of the collection. (Grace maintains Tea bags and toilet rolls will always come in useful.)

Those who came were faced with a table laden with flowers and fruits and given time to try to identify them all. Well known garden flowers can look very different once they go to seed.

Bernard provided accompaniment to the hymns; John collected up the hymnbooks – then had to get them out again as it was decided there was time for *just one more*. There was a time of prayer in which absent and unwell members were remembered.

Grace would like to thank everyone who helped to arrange the afternoon and who provided the scones and cakes.

The October meeting will also be at the United Church and will be on Saturday 12 October, 2.30 – 4pm when there will be entertainment from The Morning Choir.

Holy Communion at Dryleaze House

There will be a Communion service on Wednesday 16 October 16 at 11.00 a.m. at Dryleaze House. All are welcome to this quiet half hour of hymns, readings and prayers. Holy Communion for those who would like to receive it. Thoughts of family and friends and those unwell.

Because of the refurbishment of communal areas the service will be in the Sitting Area in the ground floor right wing of the House NOT in the Lounge. Red arrows will point the way."

Praying for the Churches

In September we pray for St Mary's. Please see the report of the fête; the Harvest and the Service for Blue Coat Reception children. And give thanks.



The Town Hall Tea on Bank Holiday Monday raised a staggering £543 for Christian Aid, which is the highest total ever!

As always with Town Hall Teas, it was a lovely event! From the start there was a steady flow of customers, and we noticed an increased amount of folk wanting to take cakes away to eat later. We were blessed with a small group of American visitors who were bowled over by the event and a large group of cyclists who had cycled all the way from Stoke Gifford! I don't know their ultimate destination but it had taken them one and three quarter hours to reach Wotton - they were particularly thirsty and hungry!

We had just enough cake to last until 5 pm. Thank you Lord!

Alison Sutton

United Ramblers

Alison Makepeace amakepeace@outlook.com will lead the United Ramblers walk on Monday 7 October

10am Meet at United Church in Wotton or ...

10.30am Meet at The Anchor, Oldbury-on-Severn Car Park BS35 1QA

Walk from the car park, behind the pub garden, across the rhine and around the Toot (ancient fort).

Continue along Ham Lane towards the Power Station.

Walk past the withy beds and former reservoirs to join the Severn Way and return to Oldbury via the embankment.

13.00 Lunch at The Anchor Inn, Oldbury, no need to pre-order.

The walk is about 4.5 miles with good views along the Severn and the estuary. Footwear depends on the weather, but walking boots should be fine



'Together in Wotton' is produced ten times a year on behalf of all the Churches of and Christians in Wotton.

Articles, diary items and anything of interest can be sent to judy.mills@live.co.uk and for the October edition, these should arrive by **5pm on Monday 21 October**



Walk Through the New Testament Saturday 12 October 10am to 4pm at Dursley Tabernacle

An experience that will forever change the way you view your Bible.
An interactive and engaging teaching event that uncovers the Big Picture of the New Testament - Matthew to Revelation.
An encouraging way to consolidate prior Bible knowledge and help fill in gaps.
Each person attending pays **£14** for the 'Live Event', which includes an **80 page, full colour workbook, daily reading booklet**, handy reminder of the NT storyline, and free re-admission for life! One 11-17 year old can attend for free with each paying adult. Further 11 to 17s can be admitted free, but if they wish to have a copy of the workbook they will have to purchase it.
For more information, go to the Walk Through the Bible website at www.bible.org.uk

Please let Simon Helme know if you are interested in coming.
minister@dursleytab.org.uk or 07443 568 242

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The Service at St Mary's on Sunday 13 October is at 9.30am – it will be a Taizé style service and will focus on prayer.

Does everyone know about Taizé? Where it is, and why, and what it's all about? I would love it if some of you could write back to me with "Yes, I have been there, and this is what it meant, means to me."

One of my biggest regrets is that I never went to Taizé. My three years at university were some of the happiest of my life. I was free to make my own decisions about how I lived my life, and although there were some things of which I am not proud, it was where I realised that Jesus died for me, for me personally. I spent long hours in the Chaplaincy (many, many more than I spent in the library!) and I am still in touch with many of my Chaplaincy friends nearly fifty years on.

A group of them went to Taizé. I'm not sure why I didn't go with them. I did spend an Easter in Rome which was really fun, but those who went to Taizé seemed changed by the experience. And in addition they brought back some beautiful music; a cross between a Gregorian chant and the modern worship music of the 1970s.

So what right do I have to write about Taizé? This is, I confess, a space filler. I needed to fill a couple more sides so that 'together in Wotton' would have a multiple of 4 pages (necessary for printing a booklet), and it was an email from Kate Cropper informing me that: 'on Sunday 13 October at 9.30am the service at St Mary's will be Taizé and will focus on prayer' that prompted me.

Taizé is a village in Burgundy in France, though the name has become synonymous with the ecumenical Christian community that started there in 1940.

In that year a 25 year old Roger Schütz, son of a Swiss Protestant Pastor, with his sister Genevieve were able to buy an empty house in the village, and there they hid Christian and Jewish refugees. Informed that the gestapo were aware of them they were forced to leave, but in 1944 Roger returned and established a small community of Christian men of all denominations, living in poverty and obedience.

As time went on Brother Roger, as he was known, became considered to be a Catholic, though there is still a difference of opinion as to whether or not he actually converted. In 1980 at St Peter's Basilica, and in the hearing of Pope John Paul II he is recorded as having said: 'I have found my own identity as a Christian by reconciling within myself the faith of my origins with the mystery of the Catholic faith without breaking fellowship with anyone.'

Soon after the war, in order that children who had been orphaned could live amongst them, deemed inappropriate in a community of men, Genevieve returned to act as their Mother. By 1949 there were seven young men living

together, committed to a life of celibacy and of great simplicity.

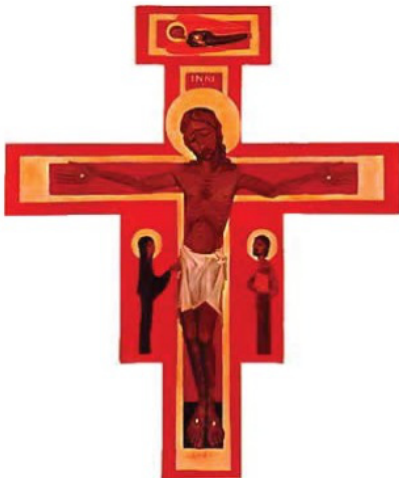
The Community continued to grow and by the 1960s thousands of mainly young people flocked to the village to share with the brothers, to pray and to grow spiritually. The number of brothers too increased and there are now around eighty of different nationalities, backgrounds and denominations. Others, sent on mission, share the living conditions of those around them in Asia, Africa, Latin America and in a district of the Paris suburbs.

Sadly it is impossible that an organisation of this type can be perfect, since humankind is not perfect, but the Community continues to address allegations of abuse and wrongdoing so that visitors can feel safe and valued.

At the age of 90 Brother Roger was stabbed and killed by a mentally ill woman during an evening prayer service. He had already appointed his successor Brother Alois. Brother Roger had always kept a low profile, rarely giving interviews and refusing to permit any "cult" to grow up around himself. Taizé was not all about him: it was all about God. It was inevitable though that his funeral became a massive affair, though his grave, at Taizé obviously, is suitably simple.

Just as each generation will find God (or allow God to find them) so successive generations can find Taizé, and through Taizé come closer to God. It's not too late for that visit.

Ed



Taizé Prayer Cross is based on icons that were brought from the Orthodox Church—painted by Br. Eric of the Taizé Community. Br. Eric was very gifted as an artist. Through his works—paintings, etchings, stained glass—he was one of the brothers who awakened sensitivity to beauty that is so linked to the vocation of Taizé.