

St Francis of Assisi, Llay

PARISH NEWS

Mid-August 2025



The content in this Parish News is in addition to that in the Parish Bulletin, the Parish Website and the Diocesan newsletter, The Wrexham Clarion. If you have news or opinions of interest that you'd like to share here, would you please let our parish secretary know of them.

HMP BERWYN - VULNERABLE PRISONERS

Parishioner Brian Wareing writes:

In a previous article I talked about the pastoral work carried out by volunteer chaplains at HMP Berwyn, the largest men's prison in the UK with capacity for over 2000 men. This time I want to concentrate on the chaplaincy volunteers (mainly SVP members) who support the men coming to the masses held every Saturday morning within the prison. Currently in Berwyn we are increasing the support to help others considerably less fortunate than ourselves.

HMP Berwyn is increasing the capacity to help the Vulnerable Prisoner (VP) community which will double the current provision. VPs are classed as prisoners with, for example, mental health problems, backgrounds of being abused as children, drug debts, autism, fear of crowds, paedophiles or just being victimised by other prisoners. In our pastoral work, these men respond very well to being treated as full and worthwhile human beings. As with all prisoners, just having a chat over tea/coffee and biscuits with our chaplaincy volunteers can be a surprisingly bright and supportive spark in their lives. The men always tell me how much they appreciate the contact and some even ask why the volunteers come when they must have better things to do on a Saturday morning. But I reckon Christ would say what better thing can we do on a Saturday morning? Many of the prisoners come from areas some people would dismiss as full of low life and drug addicts, and just not worthy of us coming specifically to have a chat with them. But they are all God's children and need and appreciate the spiritual support we give them freely and openly. It is in direct contrast to the controlled and often aggressive prison environment that they live in every day. Treating prisoners, and especially VPs, as normal human beings by just chatting with them in a totally non-judgemental way can make a huge difference to their lives. On Saturdays now we are holding two masses: the first at 9.30 am for the 'normal' prisoners and the second at 11am for the VP community. Overall, we get around 50 to 60 men over the two masses.

If you think you can help, you need to be at the prison main gate by 8.45 am (10 minutes earlier if this is your first visit so that you can have your biometrics taken) to get through security and then be escorted to the chaplaincy and welcome the men for the first mass. After that, there will be about 20 minutes or so to chat over tea/coffee (provided by the prison) and biscuits (provided by the volunteers!). These men have to go back to their pads (cells) before the VPs come over around 10.45am. After the VP mass there will again be time for a chat with these men as well. If you wish to stay just for the first mass then you can be escorted back to the main gate by around 10.30. If you can stay for both masses this would be most appreciated and you will be escorted back around 12 noon. If you decide to come, please contact me first on 07976123738 or on brian.wareing@rosewood70.plus.com so that I can send you details of what you are not allowed to take into the prison. I also need to know several days in advance if you are coming as I have to arrange gate passes. With many thanks!

WALKING FOR ROHAN

Rohan Ingley, a wonderful, talented and cheerful 18-year-old from Abergele, died in 2018 after a long battle with leukaemia, and his parents created a charity, "Walking for Rohan" generating funds for "Young Lives Versus Cancer", and for "Ronald MacDonald House" which provides accommodation and support for parents of children in Alder Hey hospital.

Sheila Mills's grandson Jack, a friend of Rohan, does the charity walk every year, but this year, studying in Japan, climbed the 12,388 ft Mount Fuji with four fellow students, while her son Colin and granddaughter Anna did the 20 mile Llandulas to Great Orme walk, all of them creating funds for the charity. The three live in the parish and will be well known to many.

DAY OF PRAYER AT ST. BEUNO'S – SATURDAY 13th SEPTEMBER 10am – 4pm

The Day of Prayer offers a time of quiet reflection, sharing and growth for all contributing to the life of our parish, from those making tea on a Sunday, cleaning, welcoming, reading, PAC and all those roles that often go unnoticed - plus those considering becoming more involved in some way.

In this Jubilee year of Hope, encouraged by the final document of the Synod of Synodality, we are encouraged to embark on a new spirit of co-responsibility and partnership between clergy and lay people to support the ministry of our parish.

The day will begin with registration and a welcoming drink, followed by a welcome from a member of the Outreach team and a short period of quiet reflection. You will then be offered a piece of Scripture to contemplate and you can choose to sit in the garden, take a woodland walk or spend time in one of the beautiful chapels or quiet lounges.

After gathering together again, you'll be asked to share your thoughts in a group, if you want, with no right or wrong answers or discussion, just respectful listening. That takes up to lunchtime, when you can be either chatting to other attendees or spending time quietly in the garden. The afternoon follows the same format and finishes with Mass and a final refreshment.

All who attend these days say they go away rested and grateful for the time to step back and reflect.

If you are interested, you'll find all the information on the poster in the porch at the back of the church, or get in touch with stbeunosoutreach@beunos.com or Sheila Mills at mills733@btinternet.com

PREGO

Prego is not a Bible Study group; it's a prayer group and has been running in our Parish for many years. It is based on the spirituality of St Ignatius of Loyola, and during our meetings we listen to the Gospel of the following Sunday and hear what the message of Gospel means for us personally.

As members of the St Beuno's Outreach Team, Kathy Home, Sheila Mills and Michelle Woodward facilitate the prayer sessions; one of us will lead the group in a "stillness" which helps us to quieten down and be still in both mind and body. This lasts for about ten or fifteen minutes, as we all lead such busy lives these days, this is a very welcome start to our evening, giving us all a little space to spend precious time with God.

In this quiet atmosphere, we listen as the Gospel is read slowly two or three times. There is no discussion, each person hears the words for themselves and any word or phrase or image that might come to them is pondered upon in stillness and silence.

The group are invited to share any words or thoughts they may have noticed, we share only as much or as little as we chose, although this is not a requirement and some people prefer not to share. Though we all agree that it is always good to hear what others have noticed in the Gospel, this can increase and can occasionally challenge our own understanding or beliefs. Anything shared during our sessions is always done so in complete confidence.

We pray intercessions for anyone who has asked for prayers or for any situation that we feel needs our prayers.

The meetings last for about one hour and take place on alternate Monday evenings in the small hall beside the church. Meetings have stopped for the Summer and will begin again on Monday 22nd September at 7:30pm.

The group is thriving and growing, new members are always very welcome; some aren't able to come to every meeting but come when they can. If you're curious about Prego or feel you'd like to set aside some specific time in prayer, then please feel free to come along and try it out; it may not be for you, that isn't a problem, but it may be just what you're looking for.