

| Services April | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| 2 nd April Palm Sunday | 9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton (Meet @ Church Hall & Process | | Matthew 21 vv 1-11 p988 Philippians 2 vv 5-11 p1179 Matthew 27 v 1-54 p998 |
| | 11.00 Holy Communion Halling | | Philippians 2 vv 5-11 p1179 Matthew 27 v 1-54 p998 |
| 6 th April Maundy Thursday | 9.30 Holy Communion Halling. | | I Corinthians 11 vv 17-34 Luke 23 vv 1-49 p1059 |
| 7 th April Good Friday | 9.30 Family Service Cuxton 11.00 Ante-Communion Halling | | Hebrews 10 vv 1-25 p1208 John 19 vv 1-37 p1087 |
| 9 th April Easter Day | 9.30 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling | | Colossians 3 vv 1-7 p1184 John 20 vv 1-10 p1089 |
| 16 th April Easter 1 / 2 | 9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling | | Exodus 14 vv 10-31 p71 Exodus 15 vv 10&21 p73 Acts 2 vv 14-32 p1093 John 20 vv 19-31 p1089 |
| 23 rd April Easter 2 / 3 | 9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling | | Zephaniah 3 vv 14-20 p947 Acts 2 vv 14-41 p1093 Luke 24 vv 13-35 p1061 |
| 30 th April Easter 3 / 4 | 9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling | | Genesis 7 vv 1-24 p8 Acts 2 vv 42-47 p1094 John 10 vv 1-10 p1076 |
| Holy Communion 9.30 am Wednesdays at Cuxton & Thursdays at Halling | | | |
| 5 th April | Hebrews 9 vv 16-28 Luke 22 vv 1-71 | 6 th April Maundy Thursday | I Corinthians 11 vv 17-34 Luke 23 vv 1-49 |
| 12 th April | Exodus 13 vv 1-16 Matthew 28 vv 16-20 | 13 th April | Song of Solomon 2 vv 8-17 Mark 16 vv 1-20 |
| 19 th April | Exodus 17 vv 1-16 John 20 vv 24-31 | 20 th April | Exodus 18 vv 1-12 John 21 vv 1-14 |
| 26 th April | Exodus 24 vv 1-18 Luke 1 vv 39-56 | 27 th April | Exodus 25 vv 1-22 Luke 1 vv 57-66 |

Copy Date May Magazine: April 14th 8.30 am Rectory

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Flowers in Church

We all enjoy the beautiful flower arrangements we see in both St Michael's and St John's. Thanks to those who so skilfully arrange them. I have had a request for more volunteer flower arrangers at St Michael's. It is obviously a very enjoyable and fulfilling task. If you would like to have a go, please contact Merrilyn on 714026. It is also the case that flowers are quite expensive. So, even if you don't see yourself as a flower arranger, any donations towards the cost of flowers in either church would be gratefully received.

Meeting to Elect Churchwardens (formerly Vestry Meeting) & Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting

These will take place on Saturday 22nd April at 10.00 at St John's Church Halling. If you are already on the Electoral Roll, you need do nothing this year. If not and you would like to be on the Electoral Roll (and are 16 or older, baptized, resident in the parish or a regular worshipper in one of our churches), please speak to Joyce Haselden. You need to be confirmed and a least 21 to be a churchwarden and 16 and confirmed to be on the PCC. Unless you are under 18, you cannot stand for election to the PCC until you have been on the Electoral Roll for at least six months. Please consider prayerfully whether you ought to stand for either of these offices or to be a sidesman. We shall also need to elect two representatives to the deanery synod this year, who will *ex officio* sit on the PCC as will the churchwardens. The APCM will also hear statutory and other reports and may discuss issues which are of relevance to the mission of the Church.

St John's Draw: £10 each to Mrs Burr (11) & Mr Thorne (32).



The Evidence for Easter

How do we know that Jesus rose from the dead? A guy called Frank Morrison published a book in 1930, which has been re-printed many times. Entitled *Who Moved the Stone?* It examines the evidence in the Gospels and concludes that there can be no other explanation for

the events described than that Jesus rose from the dead. The difficulty is that, while the book supports the faith of those of us who believe, it cannot really, by means of a rational examination of the evidence alone, convince the non-believer. Morrison's evidence all comes from the Bible. If you believe the Bible, you believe that Jesus rose from the dead and don't need Morrison's analysis of the texts. If you don't believe the Bible, what Morrison says cannot logically compel you to accept the truth of the Resurrection. Having said that, it is reported that many people have been converted to Christianity through reading the book. Morrison himself was apparently sceptical before he studied the biblical texts properly. If you are open to faith, it will take you further than reason can manage on its own. Maybe you should give the book a go - £6.65 paperback from Amazon.

Bishop Tom Wright wrote a much bigger book (740 pages) *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. This examines in great detail what the ancient world believed about life after death, what the Church believes and why. It is well worth reading for all that information. As I remember it, Bishop Wright relies on the principle Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle put into the mouth of his fictional detective, "When you have eliminated all which is impossible, then whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth." If you consider all the possible explanations for why the Church came to believe in the Resurrection of Jesus, argues Wright, they are all incredible except for one – namely that in fact He did rise from the dead. Again, very impressive, but there remains a huge difficulty. Conan-Doyle's reasoning only serves the bishop's purpose if the last remaining option is actually possible. If people are so set in their minds that they are absolutely certain that resurrection is not merely improbable but actually impossible, no amount of evidence will convince them that Jesus really did rise from the dead.

Again, faith is needed as well as reason if we are to come to the truth. Nothing is impossible with God.

Incidentally, it is worth bearing in mind what C S Lewis said. Once we believe in the Resurrection, we open our minds to the possibility that miracles occur.

The physical evidence in the Bible for our Lord's rising from the dead is that, on the third day, the tomb where His body was laid was found to be empty and some of the early visitors were told by angels *He is risen*. Also, the Risen Christ appeared to hundreds of witnesses in the New Testament and many people believe that He has appeared to many more down through the ages. The spiritual evidence for the Resurrection is the coming of the Holy Spirit.

So what if you're not convinced by the Bible or by Morrison, Wright or Lewis? Why might you believe in the Resurrection of Jesus? I think that the very existence of the Christian Church is one powerful piece of evidence for the fact that Christ rose from the dead. Jesus had a small number of followers, who often didn't seem to get Him or His message. In the time leading up to the Crucifixion, they were confused and, when the time came, they ran away. One of them betrayed Him. Another denied Him. Their Leader from Whom they had hoped so much died a terrible death. It was not improbable that the authorities would round up His followers and deal with them in a similar way. So, why didn't the Church simply die out? Wouldn't it have made sense for the apostles and the other disciples to return to their homes, lie low and hope to be overlooked by the Jewish and Roman guards? But they didn't. On the next feast day, seven weeks after the Passover at which Jesus was crucified, they went out onto crowded streets and proclaimed that Christ is risen from the dead and that, if we wish to be saved, we must put our faith in Him. And they carried on doing this despite being threatened, beaten imprisoned and martyred. And Christians have carried on proclaiming the Gospel ever since, quite often, in subsequent generations down to the present day, in the face of persecution. Yet the more the Church was persecuted, the more she grew. In the second century, Tertullian put it this way, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church". If Christ

did not rise from the dead, why would His friends be prepared to suffer so much for telling the world that He lives and that we must repent of our sins and believe in Him?

And one more piece of evidence which I find overwhelmingly compelling is that Jesus dwells in the hearts of us who believe in Him. I know Him. I know from my own experience that Jesus is risen

from the dead and is present with me every day and leading me onward to my eternal home. You may know Him too. If you don't, if you are not yet convinced, try opening yourself up to Him. Ask Him to reveal Himself to you. Reason and faith together will lead you into all truth. *O taste, and see, how gracious the Lord is : blessed is the man that trusteth in him* (Psalm 34⁸).

The Rector's Retirement

There've been a few laughs lately when people have stopped me in the street and asked me if it is true that I am thinking of retiring. Actually, it's something I try not to think about. I love being Rector of Cuxton & Halling and, if it were up to me, I would never retire unless I became unfit to fulfil my functions. It seems to me daft that I shall be made to retire at the end of next year even if I am still able and willing, given the shortage of clergy. I don't know what I shall do with my life and there is a distinct possibility that I shall not be replaced when I leave. Still, whatever happens, we can trust God. I think it is important that this is my home. Insofar as we are representatives of the Incarnate God, I do believe that we clergy should live in the communities we serve. What I would really have liked would have been for our Churches here to have grown by now to the point where Cuxton could again have its own Rector and Halling its own Vicar. That really would have been bucking the trend.

I love being a priest: the life of prayer, leading worship (especially presiding at Holy Communion), administering the Sacraments, preaching the Gospel, teaching the faith, being a pastor to local people, playing my part – along with the rest of the community – in promoting the values of the Kingdom of God. Cuxton and Halling are both good places to live. Each has a strong community spirit. There are many good people supporting community associations and just generally looking out for their neighbours. You can buy nearly all your every day needs in the parish. We are surrounded by beautiful countryside and have striking views across the river. Access to town isn't too bad, though the buses could be more reliable and the trains more frequent. I love my two Churches. I love the people, great people (some now in heaven) many of whom have contributed and continue to contribute by their fellowship and enthusiasm to the many things we have achieved and are achieving. I love my house and garden. I love the surrounding woods and fields. I have many friends here. The life of my family has, for over thirty years, been entwined with that of the local Church: christenings, confirmations, weddings and funerals, as well as family parties and social events. You welcomed my mother when she came to live with me at the Rectory in 1998 and she had many friends here.

I mustn't pretend that there haven't been problems – most of them not unconnected with my inability to understand how meetings work. When we were teenagers, a group of us lads used to go out pubbing. There was one guy in our group who was always getting punched. I don't know why. I never knew him to start a fight. But there was just something about him that made people want to hit him. When it comes to meetings, I'm that guy. We've got round those problems now, however. I keep a low profile at meetings and people who do understand the dynamics of complex human interactions guide us through the process of making decisions while remaining friends. It's better that people, who have the requisite gifts for the various tasks the Church requires, perform these functions than that they should be attempted by someone who has not (like me). I believe that it is a shame that those with vocations to be priests, preachers and pastors are increasingly expected to become managers and administrators.

As I've said, I don't want to go, but I haven't so far managed to find a way to avoid retiring at the end of next year. If I don't leave on St Andrew's Day 2024, you may well see on 1st December two burly bishops frog-marching me down the Rectory drive while the archdeacon's henchman chuck my furniture into the street.

Roger.

The Life of St Maksymilian Maria Kolbe OFM.

The Path to Novitiate of Maksymilian Maria Kolbe.

On the 8th of January 1894, a pair of poor Polish weavers named Juliusz Kolbe and Maria Dabrowska, of Lduńska Wola, in the Russian Federation region of Poland¹, gave birth to a second son named Rajmund. Their residence was a single room in a framed cottage, with three other families occupying the other rooms, and looms occupying the ground floor. Juliusz was German by descent and Maria was Polish. At the time Lduńska Wola was the seat of cloth linen and cotton weaving and had been the birthplace of Maksymilian Faktorowicz (September 15, 1877 – August 30, 1938) who used an abbreviated form of his name when he founded his company, Max Factor. Shortly after his birth, the economic situation caused his parents to move Rajmund and his older brother Franciszek to Pabianice, a town approximately one hundred miles to the east. There Franciszek and Rajmund would be joined by three other siblings, two of whom died in infancy.

Both Juliusz and Maria were devoted Catholics belonging to the 3rd Order of St. Francis². In her formative years, Maria had dreams of becoming a nun, but circumstances and finances put an end to her ambition. Lduńska Wola their hometown was under the rule of Czar Nicholas II and the Catholic population was persecuted by the authorities. They were forced to speak Russian, and swear allegiance to the Czar and convents and monasteries were closed. The closing of the convents and the high price of the dowry meant that Maria was unable to become a nun. Instead, she took a seriously devout husband in the form of Juliusz and the couple were married at The Church of the Assumption on the 5th of October 1891, three years before Rajmund was born. Despite all these adversities, the family attended daily mass at the local church, maintaining a faith that was going to have a lasting effect on all their lives.

Shortly after moving to Pabianice, Maria started to train as a midwife and opened a small shop in a rented house selling household goods and produce. Juliusz took a job at Krusche and Ender, an automated mill in the town and started a small allotment on a parcel of land which provided vegetables for the family as well as a surplus that was sold at the local market. Pabianice was a larger town than Lduńska Wola with more opportunities and between 1700 and 1939 nearly a quarter of the population was Jewish, one of the largest concentrations of Jews inside Poland. It was also on arrival in Pabianice that Juliusz joined the Polish Resistance, a move, which as described later, ultimately cost him his life. Life remained hard for the family, and they often struggled, but they believed in hard work and trust in God's providence. Maria also was a firm believer in corporal punishment and a switch hung in the shop, which was used on both boys with regularity, but perhaps more so on young Rajmund, who was described as high spirited, head strong and often in trouble.

The family had no money in the early years to educate their children, but the boys were duly sent to Fr Vladimir Jakowski, a local priest who took them for Catechism and Latin³. Rajmund was a bright pupil and keen to take to his schooling. After a few years when the fiscal situation improved Franciszek earned the right to go to school, not through academic ability, where he was outshone by Rajmund, but as the eldest son. Instead, to all intents and purposes, Rajmund was pulled out of school to help his mother in the shop with general sales and bookkeeping. It was working in the shop that an incident occurred with a neighbour, the switch was duly delivered to the body and rear of Rajmund and he was dispatched to the church to meditate on his behaviour. Whilst in the church the nine-year-old Rajmund knelt before Our Lady of Czestochowa and prayed. During his prayers, Our Lady came to him in a vision that again was going to have a profound effect on him. Rajmund later described the vision in the following manner.

“Our Lady was holding two crowns. One was white, the other was red. She gazed at me lovingly and asked, ‘Which of these crowns do you desire?’ The Virgin told me that if I chose the white crown, I would remain pure for life.

¹ The Third Partition of Poland took place on October 24, 1795, in reaction to the unsuccessful Polish Kościuszko Uprising the previous year. It was split into Austrian, Prussian and Russia Partitions. Poland remains the most geographically mobile country on the European land mass and is one of the most invaded countries in the world, with the borders moving hundreds of miles over the centuries.

² Tertiaries, as members are known, desire to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, whom they serve through prayer, study and work, after the example of St Francis and St Clare. The keynotes of their lives are humility, love and joy. They are inspired by St. Francis' challenge to the Church to follow closely Jesus' earthly life, to proclaim the gospel and bring justice and peace.

³ All Catholic children have the obligation to be Catechised before their first communion and as the mass was only said in Latin it was considered quite normal for the young child to be given a grounding in the classics and ecclesiastical Latin.

The red was a martyr's crown. I thought about the choice for a minute. Then I told her, 'I want both of them.' The Virgin smiled sweetly at me. Then she disappeared.⁴

After this vision, Rajmund certainly changed. The encounter with Our Lady sent him in a new direction and often he could be found in front of the family altar on his knees praying and crying. There was also a change in his dedication to his mother's work and the support that he offered her. About three years later his mother sent Rajmund to Dr Kotowski to get a poultice for a lady that was having a particularly hard journey through childbirth. Dr Kotowski was so impressed with the young man's pronunciation of the Latin term *vencon Greca* and his politeness, that despite knowing the poverty of the family, he offered to school Rajmund in Latin and Mathematics with the hope that Rajmund with a major stroke of luck could enter the priesthood. That stroke of luck came in the form of Franciscan friars who visited Pabianice from the Austrian region of Poland during Lent 1906. On the last evening, they announced that they had plans to set up a school and seminary in Lwow. The school in the Franciscan way would be free. Its purpose was to educate boys and young men for the priesthood and missionary work, the other staple of the Franciscan way of life. Both Franciszek and Rajmund jumped at the chance and applied to the friars that evening for a place at the new school. After several tests, many prayers, letters and application forms, both were granted a place. So it was that in August 1907, Franciszek and Rajmund boarded a train to Lwow. Their father was so worried about them making the crossing from the Russian region to the Austrian region, that Juliusz spent what little they had buying the boys new Austrian suits and gave them firm instructions not to speak until they had crossed the border.

Franciszek did well in the seminary. However, Rajmund stood out as a particularly gifted and devout scholar. He studied German, Mathematics and Latin as well as Science, but mostly he excelled beyond his years in his religious studies. He also developed a great interest in military strategy, designing a defence of Lwow and at one time also drawing up plans for a spacecraft. It must then have come as a great shock to Franciszek in 1910 when Rajmund announced that he was going to leave the seminary to pursue a career in mathematics or the military. In what is described as a

pivotal moment, Franciszek and Rajmund were on their way to see Father Superior and tell him that Rajmund had chosen to leave the seminary when a friar stopped them in their tracks and told them that their mother was there to see them. Both boys rushed to the visitors' room to meet their mother, suspending the other matter till later. On entering the room their mother announced that the only other surviving sibling Józef had also decided to join the seminary. She also announced that Juliusz had moved to Kraków to be with the Franciscan monks and that she and Józef would be moving to Lwow. Józef would attend St. Casimir's school in preparation for entering the seminary and Maria would live alongside the Benedictine nuns. So, by the end of 1910, all the family's possessions had been sold or given away and the whole family had moved into religious life.

The announcement left Rajmund with no choice, but to join the priesthood and on the 4th of September 1910 he was admitted to the Franciscan order and took the holy name of Braciszek Maksymilian Maria Kolbe.⁵

Novitiate to Japan and back again.

A first Maksymilian tried to live up to the high ideals of the names he had taken. St Maximilian of Numidia was one of the earliest Christian saints dating from c.295 and is the earliest known conscientious objector and with others was executed when he refused to enlist in the Roman Army. The other ideal Kolbe tried to live up to was St. Francis of Assisi himself. This constant battle between perceived failure and his high ideals made the young Maksymilian ill and incapable of carrying out his duties as a novice and arguably affect the rest of his life. Eventually, Branisilus Stryczny intervened and under his guidance, the overly zealous Maksymilian was reigned in, but as we see later this did not last long.

In 1912 Maksymilian was dispatched to Kraków, shortly after taking his first vows⁶ so that he could undertake further studies. His stay studying philosophy in Kraków did not last long. His sheer brilliance as a scholar meant that his superiors quickly picked him out from his fellow novices and he was sent to study at the prodigious *Pontificia Facultas Theologica S. Bonaventure*. Whilst in Rome, as if the

⁵ Maksymilian Maria Kolbe or Maksymilian Kolbe are the correct Polish derivatives. However, it is often westernised to Maximilian Mary Kolbe. Braciszek means brother in Polish, the other common term is Brat but because of the western connotations its not generally used when referring to religious orders.

⁶ Franciscans' take three vows over approximately 9 years from joining the order to full life membership of the order.

⁴ Andre Frossard, *Forget Not Love: The Passion of Maximilian Kolbe*, trans. Cendrine Fontan (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 23.

study of philosophy was not a big enough challenge, Maksymilian also studied alongside the Jesuits at the *Pontificia Università Gregoriana (Scuola di Grammatica, d'umanità e di Dottrina Cristiana)*. When war was declared in 1914 Maksymilian was still studying in Rome and to a large extent escaped the destruction of humanity that Europe and the world descended into.

However, the same could not be said for the rest of the Kolbe family. Both Juliusz and Franciszek deemed it their patriotic duty to serve with the Free Polish Army. In November 1917 Juliusz was captured in battle and hung by the Russians for being a spy. Whether Juliusz was spying is a matter of debate. Franciszek on leaving the Franciscan order had joined the intelligence corp. and Juliusz may have done the same; that is unclear. What is clear is that Juliusz was born in Luńska Wola, which at the time was part of the Russian Federation. He was issued a Russian passport and therefore when caught in the uniform of a Polish soldier carrying a Russian passport the authorities deemed him to be a spy and a traitor and he was executed as such. Franciszek survived the war but never returned to the Franciscan order. He too died at the hands of the Nazi party in a concentration camp in 1943.

On the 28th of April 1918, Maksymilian was ordained by Cardinal Pomili in the Church of St. Andrew of the Valley, in Rome. Later in 1919, he was awarded his Doctorate of Theology. His early work though had already started in 1917 when he formed the Militia Immaculatae. The organisation was formed with the blessing of Pope Benedict XV and was particularly engaged in the winning of souls for the Blessed Mary through the dedication of prayer. One of the first goals that the organization had set itself was the conversion of every soul living in sin, heresy or schism. One movement which the Militia predominantly attacked with zeal was the Freemasons. The Freemasons at the time had declared complete contempt for the Catholic Church and had desecrated St Peter's square by flying a banner of Luther stamping on the head of the Pontifical Father. To the Militia Immaculatae then the Freemasons were an enemy of Christ, and this work is still in progress. In 1983, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, with the personal approval of [St.]Pope John Paul II, issued a Declaration on Masonic Associations, which reiterated the Church's objections to Freemasonry. The 1983 declaration states that "faithful who enrol in Masonic associations are in a

state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion. ... the Church's negative judgment in regard to Masonic association(s) remains unchanged since their principles have always been considered irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Church and therefore membership in them remains forbidden. CDF 1983 "stipulated that neither" CDF 1974 nor CDF 1981 "allowed an individual bishop or bishops' conferences to permit Catholics to belong to Masonic lodges."

c1919/20 Fr. Maksymilian Maria Kolbe OFM, Conventional Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Theology returned to Kraków, which, like the rest of the European mainland had been ravished by years of war. Apart from battling the Spanish Flu Pandemic, it was also battling unstable inflation and food shortages, plenty of work then for the Franciscans to be getting on with. Maksymilian was put to work by his superiors in the seminary but was soon struck down by a repeat of the tuberculosis which had plagued his time in Italy. Within a very short period, he was unable to do anything above a snail's pace and his lungs became so congested that he could not communicate above a whisper. In short Maksymilian was dying. In an attempt to save his life, the Father Superior dispatched Maksymilian to a sanatorium in Zakopane in the snow-capped Tatra mountains. Maksymilian found the compulsory bed rest difficult and as a natural workaholic was often found out of bed looking after other patients rather than in bed looking after his health. Though, as with most of his life, a controversy was not that far away and even in the restriction of the sanatorium it soon found him. At some point, Maksymilian baptised and administered the last rites to a young student on his deathbed. As it turned out the student was Jewish and the proselyte baptism then prevented him from being buried in the tomb with his ancestors.

About two years after being sent to the sanatorium Maksymilian returned to Kraków. On his return, he was filled with new zeal and fresh ideas. Maksymilian had always had a sharp mind and an awareness of the world that seemed to be beyond both his years and that of his superiors. Thus it is no surprise that the interwar year boom in communication caught his attention. The newspaper had existed in Poland since c.1837 but like the rest of Europe, the interwar years brought both a political and commercial battle for control. This meant that communication which previously had only been for the gentry was available to a larger swathe of the populus and was starting to make its way into the mainstream. Along with the

relatively new mediums of film and radio, Maksymilian saw newspapers as a great opportunity. Shortly his thoughts and actions centred on a newspaper for the faithful called *The Knight of the Immaculate*. His first venture into the world of newspaper publishing caused a great disturbance among his fellow friars. Maksymilian bought ink and paper and paid for a local publisher to do the printing. This resulted in a large bill that his fellow friars thought was incompatible with their vows of poverty and self-sufficiency. The project seemed like a non-starter until a visiting friar from America donated \$100US (\$1,335 in today's value) to the project.⁷ Maksymilian, again proving that his reputation for sharpness of mind was not unjustified, soon struck a deal with the nearby order of the Sisters of Mercy and bought their printing press off them. In January 1922 the presses for *The Knight of the Immaculate* rolled for the first time and, within a short period, it had a distribution of 5000 copies per month, which was comparable to some of the provincial papers that had been going for longer. Soon the whole process overwhelmed the friary. The constant running of the presses and the extra work disturbed the friars who had dedicated themselves to a life of charity and prayer. The battle with the friars and the constant stress of trying to balance everything and keep the peace soon made Maksymilian ill and again the Father Superior was forced to intervene. Maksymilian was transferred to the Grodno friary and with the help of Br. Alberta, who had been a printer before joining the order, and several willing friars from Kraków, the paper continued to expand. The amount of hard work should not be underestimated that was needed to produce each copy of *The Knight*. The press required seven turns of the crank to produce each page and therefore it is arguable that the paper was as much physical labour as it was a labour of love. At Grodno, Maksymilian was joined by Józef who was now Br. Alphonse with his camera. The pictures that Alphonse took were added to the paper and soon young men flocked to the friary to join and help as lay brothers. Again the friary became too busy, noisy and congested. A permanent solution needed to be found.

⁷ This does not do the value value of the gift true justice. In real terms the buying value of the US dollar has actually decreased within the time period. The nominal value of \$100 invested in the S&P 500 would return over the same period \$2,133,287 however in real terms the return is closer to \$159,764. It is fair to argue that in buying power the gift is actually closer to \$17,825. In the 1920s Poland went through hyper inflation with Markas being printed with Million values which were almost worthless. It is hard to pin a true value to the gift but about 166,123,000,000 Markas (92,290 Zloty (1924)).

In 1927 Prince Drucki-Lubecki donated some land to the friars at Terezin just outside Warsaw on the main railway line. With his usual gusto and zeal, Maksymilian soon started on the building of what would become in ten years the largest friary in the world named Niepokalanów, "Marytown, the city of the Immaculate". As the city grew so did the distribution of *The Knight*. By the time Maksymilian left for Japan in 1930 *The Knight* had a worldwide circulation of 750,000 copies and all the trappings of a modern circulation including planes and trains. So many friars were at Niepokalanów that, among the other papers and journals printed, there was an internal paper just for the friars.

In 1930 Maksymilian left for Japan and what became another pivotal moment was his introduction to radio. Maksymilian's time and work in Japan are so extraordinary that to do it justice would require a paper on its own. So suffice to say that he founded a friary in Nagasaki which miraculously survived the atomic bomb attack on the 9th of August 1945. By the time he returned to Poland the clouds of war were dark across the world. Japan had invaded China, Hitler had amassed his forces and Kristallnacht, Anschluss of Austria, and the annexation of the Sudetenland followed by Czechoslovakia were on the horizon. Despite that or indeed because of that, Maksymilian felt the urgent need to expand the work of the community at Niepokalanów and that expansion would come in the form of radio and considerably affect the events that would lead to his death at the hands of the Nazis in Auschwitz concentration camp.

Radio Niepokalanów and Death.

In 1922 from an old army hut in the Essex countryside based at Writtle, Capt Peter Pendleton Eckersley, after a visit to the local hostelry, made the now-famous "Hello CQ, Hello CQ, this is Two Emma Toc Writtle testing, this is Two Emma Toc Writtle testing. Hello CQ, Hello Ash..."⁸ and what eventually became the BBC was born. Despite this being a historic moment in English broadcasting, it was just another of the raft of stations that were appearing all over the world. In 1920 8MK in Detroit had broadcast the news, in 1921 2CM in Australia was already broadcasting concerts and 12 days after the Writtle broadcast, JF Rutherford broadcast the first Bible Sermon from California. So by the time that on the 1st February 1925, the first radio program was broadcast in Poland, they were quite late to the party. The first radio station was 'Polish

⁸ <https://www.emmatoc.org/history> Has a link to the what remains of the full audio of the broadcast.

Radio Warsaw' which launched in April 1926. In 1931 this became Warszawa 1 and 2 with a power of 120kW transmitted from Raszyn. It transmitted on long and medium waves and achieved considerable coverage across Poland with the main Warszawa 1 having an estimated range of 300km. By September 1930 Maksymilian was making references to radio in his writings and indeed in 1933 at the provincial chapter, Maksymilian raised the cost of buying transmitting equipment from either America or Japan. According to the archives, as expensive as Maksymilian thought that might be. He also thought that would be the easy part. He anticipated far more trouble in getting permission to broadcast. As it turned out prophetically he was right and the official permission never came before the war. Since the inception of radio in Poland in 1925, Polish Radio Warsaw and the military had the exclusive rights to radio licences and reception equipment had been licensed and required permission since 1924. Despite his best efforts between 1933 and 1937, Maksymilian made no progress on the radio front, though his time in Japan in the intervening years seems to have heightened his interest and there are reports held in the archives of the history of radio in Poland to build a 2kW short wave transmitter at Niepokalanów, though this does not seem to have come into fruition. At the time short wave transmitters were not unknown in Poland and there were six stations licensed from the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs though the call signs seem to be lost to history.

On the 8th December 1937, Maksymilian gave a sermon on Warszawa 1 and returning to Niepokalanów he dispatched Br. Manswet Marczewski to the Warsaw Amateur Radio Club to take a course in Amateur Radio. In October 1938 oral permission was given for a test broadcast from Niepokalanów after considerable pressure was applied to the government and military authorities. Work immediately started on a building for the radio and suitable equipment was ordered from the "Walter" radio company in Warsaw. It is hard to be definitive about who "Walter" was as the records are lost. However, it would not seem overly wide of the mark to argue that "Walter" refers to Władysław Daniłowski known as Walter Dana. It is, therefore, possible to assume that the equipment would have come from Wytwórnia Radiotechniczna AVA, an electronics company founded in Warsaw in 1929. The four founding directors of AVA are Edward Fokczyński, Antoni Palluth, Ludomir Danilewicz, and his younger brother Leonard Danilewicz. The company took its name from the combined radio call signs of the Danilewicz brothers (TPAV) and Palluth (TPVA).

When the company was being formed in 1929, the Danilewicz brothers were short-wave "hams" and students at the Warsaw Polytechnic. The company is perhaps best known for its connection to the *Cipher Bureau* and the work that it undertook in 'doubling' the *Enigma* machine after Cipher Bureau's mathematician-cryptologist Marian Rejewski reconstructed the wiring. This work led to some of the most important breakthroughs at Bletchley Park and was instrumental in the Allies' war effort.

On the 8th of December 1938 test broadcasts were reported from *Stacja Polska 3 Radio Niepokalanów (SP3RN)* just outside of the 7Mhz amateur radio bands on a frequency of 7.45Mhz at a power of approximately 60w. These test broadcasts were only managed twice before the outbreak of war and in fact, did not receive the written formal licence until after the outbreak of war. Shortly after the second test broadcast on 14th January 1939, Maksymilian wrote to Father Bede Hess stating, "Our Radio Station, which spread her glory on airwaves all over the world on the feast day of the Immaculate Conception, is now silent due to the attack of non-Catholic factors, but the Immaculate will undoubtedly win in the end."⁹

In September 1939 the Nazis occupied Poland and soon, like the rest of Poland, Niepokalanów was overrun and Maksymilian was arrested by the Gestapo along with many of the remaining friars who had not fled ahead of the Nazi advance. Their incarceration lasted approximately two months. Upon his release from prison on December 8 1939, the feast day of the Immaculate Conception of his Heavenly Queen, Father Maksymilian returned to a ransacked Niepokalanów. The Nazis suppressed his printing and publishing apostolate. Without being disheartened, his zeal remained unabated. Due to the harsh war conditions of the time, Niepokalanów was quickly turned into a refugee centre for displaced families, Jews and victims of political unrest. His solicitude for these war victims had no sectarian or religious boundaries, and it is believed that during the war, Niepokalanów was home to between one and two thousand Jewish refugees trying to flee the Nazi persecution.

On February 17, 1941, Maksymilian was arrested by the Nazis for a second time. It is not abundantly clear why he was arrested but there is a reasonable argument that he was using his considerable

⁹ <https://pisma.niepokalanow.pl/>

communication power to bring to the attention of the world the crimes of the Nazis. Only hours before the Gestapo arrived, he completed his final and most comprehensive theological essay on the Virgin Mary's identity as one who is perfectly united to the Holy Spirit by a bond of love. He was originally taken to Pawiak Prison before being transferred to Auschwitz as prisoner number #16670 on the 28th of May 1939. Soon after, in the concentration camp, Father Maksymilian would translate his theological and spiritual insights into practical words and actions for his fellow inmates by tangibly showing that there is God and therefore love and hope exist even amid horrific genocide in the camps of Auschwitz. No greater example of this incarnational theology lived out among the community can be given than the events that led to his murder. At the end of July 1941, it was reported that prisoners had escaped. The number of escapees is unclear. What is clear is that SS Hauptsturmführer Karl Fritsch selected ten men to be starved to death in an underground bunker to deter further escape attempts. When one of the selected men, Franciszek Gajowniczek, cried out, "My wife! My children!", Kolbe volunteered to take his place. According to an eyewitness, Bruno Borgowiec, who was an assistant janitor at that time, in his prison cell Kolbe led the prisoners in prayer. Each time the guards checked on him, he was standing or kneeling in the middle of the cell and looking calmly at those who entered. After they had been starved and deprived of water for two weeks, only Kolbe remained alive. This the authorities felt was too long. The cell was needed for new victims. So one day they brought in the head of the sick quarters, a German named Bock, who gave Father Kolbe an injection of carbolic acid in the vein of his left arm. Father Kolbe, with a prayer on his lips, himself gave his arm to the executioner. Unable to watch this Bruno left under the pretext of work to be done. Immediately after the SS men had left, Bruno returned to the cell, where he found Father Kolbe leaning in a sitting position against the back wall with his eyes open and his head drooping sideways. His face was calm and radiant ...'. He died at 12.30 on the 14th of August 1941. His remains were cremated on 15 August, the feast day of the Assumption of Mary.¹⁰ A survivor, Jozef Stemler, later recalled: 'In the midst of a brutalization of thought, feeling and words such as had never before been known, man indeed became a ravening wolf in his relations with other men. And into this state of affairs came the heroic self-sacrifice of Father Kolbe.' Another survivor, Jerzy Bielecki,

declared that Father Kolbe's death was "a shock filled with hope, bringing new life and strength ... It was like a powerful shaft of light in the darkness of the camp."¹¹

On the 12th of May 1955, Maksymilian Kolbe was recognized by the Holy See as a Servant of God and declared venerable by Pope Paul VI on 30 January 1969. He was later beatified as a Confessor of the Faith by the same Pope in 1971 and canonized as a saint by [St.]Pope John Paul II on the 10th of October 1982. Franciszek Gajowniczek, the man Kolbe saved at Auschwitz, survived the Holocaust and was present as a guest at both the beatification and the canonization ceremonies. Upon canonization, the Pope declared Maksymilian Kolbe a confessor and a martyr of charity. The miracles that were used to confirm his beatification were the July 1948 cure of intestinal tuberculosis in Angela Testoni and in August 1950, the cure of calcification of the arteries/sclerosis of Francis Ranier, both attributed to Kolbe's intercession following their prayers to him. After his canonization, a feast day for Maksymilian Kolbe was added to the General Roman Calendar. He is one of ten 20th-century martyrs who are depicted in statues above the Great West Door of the Anglican Westminster Abbey and he is commemorated in Canterbury Cathedral. St Maksymilian Maria Kolbe OFM is also remembered in the Church of England with a commemoration on 14 August.

Prayer:

St. Maximilian, amidst the hate and lonely misery of Auschwitz, you brought love into the lives of fellow captives and sowed the seeds of hope amidst despair. You bore witness to the world, by word and deed, that only "Love alone creates." Help me to become more like yourself. With you and Mary and the Church, may I proclaim that "Love alone creates." To the hungry and oppressed, the naked and homeless, the scorned and hated, the lonely and despairing, may I proclaim the power of Christ's love, which endures forever and ever. Amen.¹²

This is the text of a talk given by Peter Joyce to the Mothers' Union on February 15th.

¹⁰ <http://www.constantiacatholic.com/catholic-resources/the-saints/saint-maximilian-kolbe/>

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² <https://militiaoftheimmaculata.com/prayers-to-st-maximilian-kolbe/>

From the Registers

Funeral:

23rd February

Rosina Daphne Bridges

Halling

PERCY PIGEON'S PERCEPTIONS

Good day to you all. The first signs of Spring are at last here! Doesn't it gladden your heart to see bulbs colouring gardens with their cheering purples and yellows! We fly over some lovely gardens - and some with bird feeders too - these are our absolute favourites! However, the pesky squirrels have emerged from their torpor and are also seeking food to kick-start their energy. We found a tipped-out bowl of porridge in Essex Road last week. We guessed some littl'uns declined it but we didn't. It was very palatable and filling.

I hear that plans are afoot to artificially recreate a long extinct relative, the dodo. Not sure what we think about that. Is there enough seeded bread for us all I wonder. Dodos couldn't fly but they had very big beaks. Whatever next - pterodactyls flying over the Medway?

Sadly, avian flu is on the increase. We are being very careful but it is so sad that so many of us have perished. Now it seems that foxes are also suffering from this disease, so must all take great care - especially those of you who walk your dogs in areas frequented by foxes. {Also, don't touch dead or dying birds yourself.]

A couple of jokes I found on our tree mail -

How does a French pigeon say "thank you"?

Merci Coo Coo.

You know when you go into a cave or tunnel, your voice echoes?
because acoustics (a coo sticks).

It doesn't happen if a pigeon does it
Coo coo

Canon Alan Vousden Golden Jubilee

From Mark Vousden: I am writing to you as my father The Reverend Canon Alan Vousden is celebrating 50 years of ordained ministry in June 2023. As his family we are marking this milestone with a service on July 2nd. We would like to display photos from each parish he has worked in. Should you have any appropriate pictures we would be grateful if you could e-mail them to my wife clarevousden@gmail.com If more convenient I can come and collect them from you. I will need any photos by the end of April. (Or let me have them at the Rectory & I'll pass them on. Roger.)



Children's Society Collection Update

I wrote in the March magazine about the Bring and Share lunch that was held in aid of the Children's Society. It was very successful and raised £190. Since then I have finished counting the collection boxes which brought in a total of £213.75, so we now have a grand total of £403.75 for our contribution this year. Thank you

once again to everyone for this excellent result.

Julia.

Tommy's Talking Points



Here am I in the armchair in our study. I'm afraid Master isn't as good at bringing out all my beauty in these magazine pictures as our last printer was, but, take it from me, this was the place to be on the cold, wet afternoon I put paw to keyboard. The old sayings about, if Candlemas be fair and bright, there's still a lot of winter weather to come, have turned out right this year. The 2nd of February was a lovely day. Since then, we've had frost and cold, snow and incessant rain. We probably need the rain as February was the driest for thirty years and, according to another saying, February is supposed to fill the dyke. Water levels are unusually low for this time of year and we could have another drought if next Summer is like last Summer. Master keeps saying, *The world's gone mad* and I don't think he just means the weather.

We still haven't left the parish this year to meet up with our friends and go walking, though Master did go up to London to meet one of them for a snazzy lunch – much less good for his health than a nice run. He got it all wrong about the bike. Since there is such a tight connection now at Strood, he thought it would be safer to cycle that far rather than take the train from Cuxton. Actually, the Cuxton train was on time and he thought he was going to have to take his bike on the train to London because the cycle parking at Strood turned out to be secure but had to be booked in advance. Then the insecure bike racks, which don't have to be pre-booked, were pointed out to him and he left his mount tied up at the Strood corral after all. Coming back, however, his train was held up for ages at Ebbsfleet and he wished he'd had the bike with him. He probably wouldn't have been home any sooner, but riding home would have been much more enjoyable than sitting on a train wondering how long for and might there be any buses? A fellow passenger who lives in Strood poured cold water on any hope of a bus, though Master remembers when there were 26s every ¼ hr and 57s from Gravesend to Strood and probably 47s as well. He doesn't know what came of it, but a spokesman for Gravesham Council told him years ago that there would be frequent free buses between Ebbsfleet and Gravesend. The guard did advise them to apply for a refund on their tickets, however. Master awaits developments. Speaking of buses, he's been reading books about the glory days when there were rural routes all over the county and people used to go bus-riding, sitting on the top decks, just for the sheer pleasure of it. One book suggested that it was only the conversion to one man operated single deckers, saving the cost of conductors, which enabled these unprofitable country services to last as long as they did, even if passengers couldn't see over the hedges. Another author pointed out that these routes only survived a short while after conversion to single deckers and rather implied that it was the loss of people taking the bus for pleasure which made these routes unviable. Master thinks that the first idea was probably the right one, but wistfully wishes that it was the latter. More buses, fewer cars, fewer roads, people enjoying their local countryside would, in his opinion, result in a much nicer world.

I have the right to be a little miffed. He did cycle into Rochester and meet another of our friends off the train from Bromley. They then had a nice riverside walk back to the motorway bridge and returned to Rochester for a pub lunch. That's a walk I would have enjoyed and haven't done for years. I didn't get taken because he wasn't sure they'd be eating in a pub which welcomed dogs. Why not, I ask. I've never misbehaved in a pub – unlike many people! If the trains were more frequent, they'd have met here and taking me out with them.

There was a funny sight last Sunday morning. Master likes to get the most out of life, *to improve every shining hour*. So things get left to the last minute because he's tried to pack too much into the time available. He's been helping out with 8.00 services at St Francis while they haven't had a vicar. (The Rev'd Adam Pyrke is to be installed on 12th March. So this won't happen again for a bit.) Anyway, we got up early, drank a couple of cups of tea, said Morning Prayer and went out for a slightly too long run. He then decided that he would put on a new shirt for the St Francis service. You should have seen him wrestling with the packaging. He said it's well designed to keep the shirt in pristine condition. The owner never gets to wear it. Well he did eventually put it on and set off for Strood, only to discover, when he arrived, that we was wearing some of the packaging. I sometimes wonder if he ought to be allowed out on his own! Tommy.

Dates

March 25th: Lady Day Holy Communion: St John's Church 11.00 – followed by lunch in the "Five Bells".

Easter Egg Hunt: Rectory Grounds 2.00 pm Easter Monday - £2.00 child. Activities & Refreshments in Church Hall.

'REMINISCE' on Saturday 15th April in Cuxton Church Hall at 7 30pm in aid of Church funds. Light refreshments available.

Talk: The Thomas Stephens Charity. Mothers' Union Church Hall 10.45 Wednesday 19th April.

Peninsula Big Band, Saturday 13th May 2023, 7pm at St Michael's.

Thursday 18th May: Caleb Parfect event at St Michael's. (Rev'd Caleb Parfect was a remarkable Rector of Cuxton whose incumbency was during the eighteenth century.)