

Capsule captures time of pandemic

East Anglia: St Mary's parish in Great Yarmouth is planting a time capsule to capture a moment in history.

"It's 60 years since we had the roof off," explained Brian Lafferty, chair of the parish finance committee, whose idea the capsule was. "It will be 60 or 100 years before it needs replacing, so I thought, why not put a time capsule in there?"

He has received contributions for the time capsule from the SVP, the Knights of St Columbo, and nurses in the congregation, who have helped to capture the experience of the pandemic. Bishop Alan has also added a letter and a photograph.

St Mary's currently has three Nigerian priests. "That could be of great interest when the capsule is opened," comments Brian. He commissioned a report from them "on how they have settled, pleasures and pains of serving us here, freezing weather and all".

Local children also shared their experiences of being apart from their friends in this unusual time and asked catechists to invite offerings from their groups. Members of the congregation were invited to send photos as well as stories to

capture their present experience.

At the last count, the congregation had members from 48 nationalities, and an earlier project involved inviting them to obtain their national flags. "We hung them around the church," said Brian, "and it brought a real sense of belonging. Pictures of these flags are now going into the capsule, with comments from people about how they are feeling."

He explained that the purpose of the project was twofold: "We are trying to create a record of where we are and where we have been, so that someone who comes along in 100 years' time can understand. We are also raising awareness of our current situation: that we need £1,500,000 to preserve the church building for future generations."

