

The Diocese of Swansea and Brecon



No. 87

Easter 2020



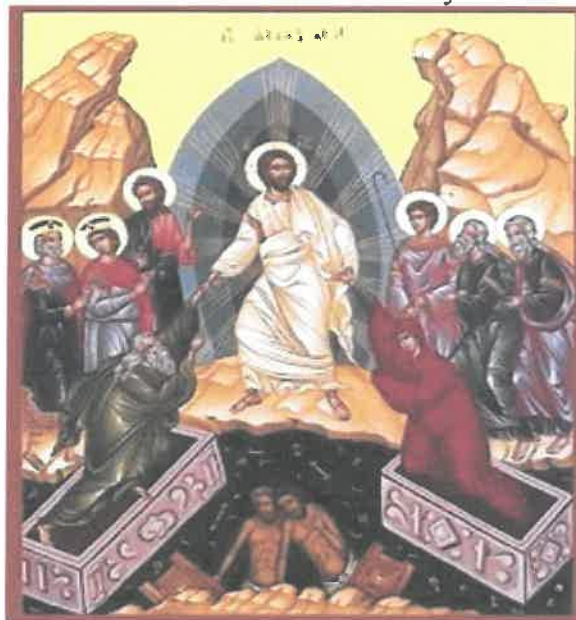
From the Editor: Chancellor Brian H. Jones

My Dear Friends,

As I write the first page of this the Easter issue of *The Newsletter*, seems highly likely from this afternoon's news bulletins that Church Services will be put on hold which will make Holy week and Easter quite different from our usual opportunity for reflection and the joy of Easter Day.

Yet, the fact of the Resurrection will remain and what we see in the icon remains. *he descended into hell* – in that gap between Good Friday and Easter Day Jesus goes to the departed souls represented here by Adam and Eve as he takes their hands and raises them to life, so that all who have gone before benefit in the hope of the Resurrection.

Most of our readers will be in the category of the over 70s who are advised to remain in their homes and limit their social activity, and the same applies to those who have medical problems.



For all of us there will not be an opportunity for Sunday worship or access to the sacrament. For our prayer life and the journey of Holy Week there are a number of places on line. I use the Daily Offices and Night Prayer on the Common Worship website. The Church in Wales provides Morning Prayer and Readings on the web. There is also an

Ap which advises how incumbents might be able to streamline services with no congregation, so we will not be entirely cut off.

Alongside the needs of worship there is the concern for people whom we know who may live on their own and who may be unwell. While we are not encouraged to visit we can keep contact on the telephone or Skype. I am a big believer in the Ministry of Cards, a simple card through the post just to remind friends that we are thinking of them. Difficult times that we share together sustained by the hope and joy of the Resurrection .

With Prayers and Best wishes for Easter.

Brian.

Family News

Congratulations 100 not out!



Canon Douglas Davies (Doug to all of us!) celebrates his 100th birthday on May 16th. Trained in Mirfield and ordained in Brecon Cathedral in 1947, the Diocese not yet twenty-five years old. I have included a photograph of Joseph Barker C.R. the Principal of Mirfield during Doug's student days at the College.

His has been a long and faithful ministry in the diocese, his ministry in Treboeth and a long period of pastoral care in Ty Olwen. Alongside him through his ministry Pat his wife and his family.

On his ninetieth birthday celebrations he put on his trainers with a sponsored run for charity. For his Centenary his family are inviting friends to walk 100 laps of Dunvant Rugby Club pitch on the day of his birthday May 16th, Doug will walk the 100th lap. There will be refreshments in the Rugby Club and very much a celebration in which we are invited to share. The sponsor money will be for U.S.P.G. which Doug has supported all his ministry. If you prefer then there is the opportunity to share the fellowship of the occasion and to sponsor the event. Like everything these days it will depend very much on the situation with the pandemic. Happy birthday! The Just Giving fundraising page is <https://justgiving.com/fundraising/fatherdavies100th>



Joseph Barker C.R. Principal of Mirfield 1940 – 47 when Doug was a student.

We send our greetings and prayers to those who are ill at this time or have recently been in hospital.

- Magdalen Vaughan has now gone into a Nursing Home Phil Davies has moved into the Old Vicarage Nursing Home in Sketty
- Elsie Hunt, David Lloyd and Lionel Hopkins have all been in hospital recently.

The Retired Clergy Group

The April meeting will be the Chrism Eucharist the Cathedral, In the recent Diocesan Bulletin Archbishop John wrote with reference to the Chrism Eucharist

'The UK government has not yet advised a cessation of large gatherings, although the Scottish Government has banned gatherings of over 500 people from next week in order to free up the emergency services. This current advice means that services, including the Chrism Eucharists, can go ahead as planned. However, the situation may alter, and clergy should remain vigilant for changes in guidance. If it does become necessary to cancel services at short notice, this will be communicated by e-mail

Subsequent meetings of the Group after Easter will have to be reviewed. At the moment the Eastmoor Resource Centre is closed for meetings, there will be more information available as the Pandemic progresses.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF CHRISTIAN WITNESS.

2020 is an important year for the Church in Wales as we're celebrating our centenary. 100 years ago, in 1920, the Church in Wales became an independent part of the Anglican Communion after centuries of being part of the Church of England. The process was known as 'disestablishment' as it broke the link between Welsh churches and the state with the historic Welsh Church Act. Events being held to mark the anniversary include celebration services in all six of the Church's cathedrals on June 7 and a visit by the Archbishop of Canterbury in April. A Centenary Appeal has also been launched which aims to raise £100,000 for two charities over the next five years.

The Archbishop of Wales, John Davies, said, "We will be celebrating this landmark birthday throughout the year in churches and communities across Wales, and I invite everyone to join in giving thanks and praise for the fellowship we have shared over the years and, at the same time committing to a future renewed with hope and confidence."

The Provincial Secretary, Simon Lloyd, said, "The Church in Wales is involved in community life in all parts of Wales - in cities, towns, villages and hamlets, in both of our languages, amongst people of all ages. We welcome everyone. From a song by a rap artist and a digital campaign to a new choral work and celebration services, the Church's 100th birthday is being celebrated in a host of different ways..

All six of the church's cathedrals will be holding a celebration service at the same time, on June 7, and it will feature a specially commissioned work of choral music by Welsh composer Paul Mealar. Unusually, the service - the liturgy - was written initially in Welsh and then translated into English, allowing elements of the Welsh poetic tradition to be weaved in.

There will be a tour of Wales by the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, who will attend the meeting of the Church in Wales' Governing Body in Llandudno in April. He will also visit a new diocesan venture, Hope Street, in Wrexham, make a pilgrimage to the shrine of St David at St Davids Cathedral and see a church-run family centre - Faith in Families - in action at Swansea.

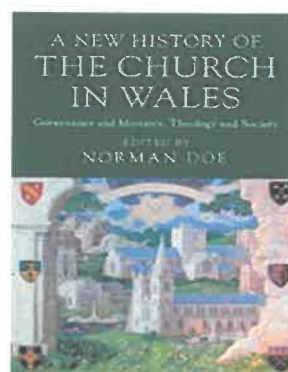
A Centenary Appeal has been launched which aims to raise £100,000 for two charities - one at home, Housing Justice Cymru, and one overseas, Christian Aid. Housing Justice Cymru will work with churches to develop night shelters for homeless people in the winter months, while Christian Aid will support the peace-

building work of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan. The appeal is the Church's first digital fundraising campaign, enabling people to donate on their mobile phones through instaGiv. So you can donate £5 by texting CENTENARY to 70660. In August, First Minister of Wales Mark Drakeford will be taking part in panel discussion at the National Eisteddfod in Tregaron on how the Church has served Wales since 1920. The event, on August 6, will also include the Bishop of St Davids and the Bishop of Bangor.

Meanwhile, a landmark book is coming out with an up-to-date history of the Church in Wales. A New History of the Church in Wales is edited by Norman Doe, Professor of Law at Cardiff University and canon law specialist. It features chapters by serving and retired clergy as well as lay experts and will be published by Cambridge University Press. The book will be launched at St Davids Cathedral on April 30. To book a place visit bit.ly/2um7LZR.

We're also sponsoring the Coda Festival Arts Award for new work highlighting climate change, Nation of Sanctuary and the work of Cymdeithas y Cymod - the Fellowship of Reconciliation in Wales. A free, bilingual booklet on faith with the HOPE Together charity is also being distributed to churches. Look out for centenary events going on at your local churches too throughout the year.

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This book marks the centenary of the Church in Wales, following its disestablishment in 1920. Part I provides a historical overview: from the Age of the Saints to Victorian times; the disestablishment campaign; Christianity in Wales since 1920; and broad issues faced over the century. Part II explores the constitution, bishops and archbishops, clergy, and laity. Part III examines doctrine, liturgy, rites of passage, and relations with other faith communities. Part IV deals with the church and culture, education, the Welsh

language, and social responsibility. Part V discusses the changing images of the Church and its future. Around themes of continuity and change, the book questions assumptions about the Church, including its distinctive theology and Welshness, ecumenical commitment, approach to innovation, and response to challenges posed by the State and wider world in an increasingly pluralist and secularised Welsh society over the century.

(I am grateful to the Editor of the Diocesan News for the use of the article on our Celebrations of the Centenary. I had my copy of Norman Doe's book as we go to print. It is available on Amazon – Ed.)

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Welcome to the Twenties

This month we enter the 2020s and no doubt there will be much speculation about how the coming decade will compare to the momentous 1920s which saw revolutionary changes in society.

In fact both the 1820s and the 1920s are worthy of examination as decades which had a great influence on the years that followed. Both were post-war decades when social and political change came about because of a ferment of unrest. Both saw fast moving and significant change in the arts and literature. And readers of this magazine may be interested to learn that they witness two significant stages in the history of the Catholic Revival in the Anglican Church.

The 1820s

The 1820s saw the full development of the Industrial Revolution in Britain with *laissez faire* economics ensuring miserable conditions for millions employed in the mines and factories. There was growing pressure for constitutional reform which would result in the 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act which removed the ban on Roman Catholics holding public office.

The 1820s can be seen as the seedtime of the Oxford Movement or Catholic Revival in the Church. Its most prominent leader, St John Henry Newman, formulated his theological views in this decade as he studied the early church fathers. In 1822 he was made a fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. He cared greatly about the welfare of his students and in 1824 he wrote, 'I have the responsibility of souls on me'. On 29 May 1825 he was ordained priest at Christ Church, Oxford. He was a curate at St Clement's church in Oxford, visiting the sick and poor while carrying on his academic work. His preaching at St Mary the Virgin drew much attention. During the 1820s the intellectual groundwork for the Oxford Movement was established. Newman wrote of

his discovery of the church fathers: 'Some portions of their teaching, magnificent in themselves, came like music to my inward ear'.

The 1830s were to see the publication of 'Tracts for the Times' followed by a metamorphosis of the Catholic Revival from a movement of academics and clergy to a root and branch revival of Catholic faith and practice within the Anglican Church.

The 1920s

The 1920s are a much more familiar decade to us. The repercussions of the First World War affected every area of life. Notable landmarks were the widening of the franchise to give women the vote and the General Strike of 1926. Despite profound changes in society, the Anglican Church continued to hold a key role in national life. If the 1820s were the seedtime of the Catholic Revival, the 1920s were harvest time. A high point of the influence of the Catholic movement was the series of Anglo-Catholic congresses held in London during the 1920s which revealed the numerical strength and the devotional depth of the movement. Particularly of note is the 1923 Anglo-Catholic congress where Bishop Frank Weston addressed a packed Albert Hall with these famous words:

If you are Christians, then your Jesus is one
If you are Christians, then your Jesus is one and the same: Jesus on the throne of glory, Jesus in the blessed sacrament, Jesus received into your hearts in communion, Jesus mystically present with you as you pray, and Jesus enthroned in the hearts and bodies of his brothers and sisters up and down the country. And it is folly – it is madness – to suppose that you can worship Jesus in the sacrament and Jesus on the throne of glory when you are exploiting him in the souls and bodies of his children.

What of the 2020s where we face a very different and much more secular society? The teaching of the early church which inspired Newman and the example of leaders like Bishop Frank Weston remain springs of renewal for our future pilgrimage. They met the challenge of their times – so must we.

George Bennett

THE NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE TRUST: 'BE EPIC, LIVE LIFE, DO GOOD'

The National Citizen Service Trust (NCS) is a youth programme that runs across England and Northern Ireland for all 15-17 year olds. It exists to engage, unite and empower young people, raising their aspirations in order that they achieve their potential, no matter what their background.

Government funds the programme and there is money set aside for every young person in the country to participate in NCS.

An initiative of the Coalition government, NCS was initially founded in 2009 to help young people fulfil their goals and build bridges between communities. First piloted with 158 participants, its mission has always been to empower young people to change the world around them, making sure they have the right tools and opportunities to do so. In 2017 and with cross-party support, NCS became enshrined in law with the National Citizen Service Act, receiving Royal Assent to transition to Royal Charter; in December 2018, NCS transitioned from a not-for-profit Community Interest Company to a Royal Charter body, achieving security as a national institution. To date, nearly 500,000 young people have taken part in NCS, aiming to ‘make the world a fairer, kinder, more compassionate place.’

NCS is based on three main precepts:-

- **Social Cohesion:** Cultivating stronger, more integrated communities by fostering understanding between people from different backgrounds.
- **Social Mobility:** Building essential skills for work and life, making sure all young people can get ahead and are prepared for whatever the future holds. We think of it in terms of investing in our country’s future talent.
- **Social Engagement:** Engaging in social action in the communities from which the young people come as well as in the democratic process, creating more understanding of their responsibilities as citizens and their potential to affect change.

The program itself runs for 4 weeks in each summer vacation. The first week is an outdoor pursuits week where the young people are encouraged to push themselves, often well out of their comfort zones – *‘be epic’!* The second week is also residential but in university accommodation where the students cater for themselves, learn life skills and have sessions delivered by local business leaders and public sector workers – *‘live life’!* It is also an opportunity for them to begin planning their social action projects that will take place in weeks 3 and 4, back in the communities from which they have come – *‘do good’*. All programs are delivered across the country in partnership with local businesses, youth centres, football clubs and grassroots initiatives.

I have been with the NCS Trust since 2016 and currently work as the Schools Engagement Manager for the North of England. There are two main aspects to my job: the first is to work with Headteachers, CEOs of Multi Academy Trusts, Diocesan Directors of Education and all those in senior educational roles to promote NCS within their schools, striving to make it a part of the curriculum and a ‘rite of passage’ for their students and also working with them to reference NCS in their OFSTED inspections. Interestingly, we have a high take-up for the Summer Program among students from Church Schools; the emphasis of NCS on social action and giving back to one’s own community is seen as fulfilling the Gospel imperative and in schools that have compulsory Community Service in the Sixth Form, very often the NCS social action projects are continued. I also address educational conferences and work with Local Authorities and Heads of Children’s Services, ensuring that young people with special educational needs, looked after children and those excluded from school and in pupil referral units are able to access the programs – very often the young people who will benefit most.

The second aspect of my job is to work with our Regional and Delivery Partners, those grassroots organisations who actually do the presentations in schools, recruit the young people and deliver the programs nationally and in my case, across the North. A significant number of our delivery partners in the region are football clubs, overseen by the English Football League Trust which engages with NCS as part of each club’s commitment to service to their local community. Very often from a sales background, my job is to provide training in dealing with schools, understanding how schools ‘work’ - from written communication to chairing meetings with school staff - educational ‘vocabulary’, presenting to a hall full of 16 year olds....and everything in between!

The NCS experience doesn’t end after participation in the Summer Program. All participants ‘graduate’ and this qualifies them to become Regional NCS Youth Board members. Youth Boards continue social action projects and their members get involved with local issues, ensuring that young people’s voices are heard. The NCS Trust has also teamed up with GetMyFirstJob, an organisation that provides apprenticeship opportunities in professions such as law, banking, medicine – areas of work that many young people – especially in my region - would not aspire to as they would have no experience of them and thus no aspiration to them.

I have had the brief for the North of England for just over a year now and I have learnt and observed so much, not least that allegiance to football teams is tribal and people from Sunderland are NOT Geordies! On a more

serious note, Blackpool has the largest Pupil Referral Unit in Europe for those excluded from mainstream education; NCS cannot be described as a Government initiative in the former pit villages of County Durham otherwise there will be a blanket boycott – the scars of the 1980s Miners’ Strike are still raw; zero hours’ contracts and the gig economy are having such an impact on families that some schools in the North East are providing breakfast and lunch for all their students; rural poverty is a very real thing and the urban areas of Rotherham, Oldham and Doncaster are still waiting for the government they voted in to fulfil their election promises to the North. But I have also witnessed the tremendous work that clubs with youth. If this is the next generation, then I for one am very grateful. Like Newcastle United, Sunderland FC, Rotherham United, Doncaster Rovers do in their communities, together with other local grassroots initiatives. However, in all this the real stars are always the young people. The media is very good at headline-grabbing negativity when it comes to this age group, but in my four years at NCS I have never failed to be impressed by their empathy, sense of justice and fair play, a real desire to play a part in shaping the future - and the overwhelming sense of optimism that comes

Ruth Sowerby



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Faith in Families

In 2020 we will be celebrating our 21st birthday. 1999 the year that we began was a big and exciting year for children and charities.

On the 18th March 1999 the prime minister pledged to end child poverty, this led to all leading parties coming together with a promise that child poverty in the UK would be ended by 2020. This historic move made child poverty a political priority and led to huge progress.

There was a dramatic rise in investment in childcare, better early years support through Sure start, crucial child benefit and tax credit support and major improvements in lone parent employment rates. The fall in child poverty leading up to 2008 was fantastic.

Sadly that trend is now in reverse

In 2019 one year before the year that the government had committed to tackle this crisis it is worse, child poverty is on the rise with rates set to reach record levels by early 2020. 32.1% of the children in Swansea and 26.8% of the children in Brecon in the communities where Faith in Families work focuses live in adverse childhood.

The Government’s own measures show that child poverty has been rising steadily since 2013 with measures of absolute child poverty showing a rise for the first time this year. This just isn’t right.

Growing up in poverty means growing ups trapped, it restricts a child’s chance of doing well at school, of living a healthy and happy life and of finding secure employment. Faith in Families aim is to tackle this and alleviate the effects in any way we can.

Through outreach, early intervention and preventative, researched and evidenced methods we are reaching thousands of children and families each year. We work collaboratively to strengthen communities, building resilience, raising confidence, health, happiness and wellbeing, meeting the social needs identified by those who live, work and play in our parishes.

Let me tell you about our Brighter Futures project – In the summer of 2018 for the first time ever we had to exclude a child from our summer playscheme because of his challenging behaviour. When school started we got in touch to discuss “Toms” story. Tom who is 8 years old was on a restricted timetable in school because they also could not manage his behaviour. This meant that Tom was missing out on education, making friends and his rights under Article 28 of the UNCRC.

We knew we had to do something about this and our Brighter Futures project started in May 2019 with three small grants from Children in Need, Charles Platter Foundation and Regional health board.

Within 2 months we had over 56 referrals from the local schools within 2 miles of each of our centres.

Through positive supportive relationships, we enable children with their parent/carer to experience different activities that will encourage their learning, address concerns, provide boundaries, the ability to express themselves and give opportunities to explore their talents and gifts. We work with the family to find ways to better manage their emotions, feelings and relationships in order to improve family life. Through this relationship we are able to have insight into any other family support that is necessary and work with our team and partner agencies that work in our community cwtches.

We have had to stop taking referrals and are now working intensely on 12 week therapeutic sessions with over 40 children with challenging behaviour.

So, as we come of age we want to ensure that those vulnerable children in our society will have the opportunity to become healthy, happy, successful adults that will have a positive future and we want the communities that we work in to be able to provide that all important cwtch to young and old.

Cherrie Bija Chief Executive Officer

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**The Life of a Signalman
on the Central Wales
line**

Excerpts from the diaries of

**James Smout
1975 - 1986**



Geraint Hughes
2019

When you chat to someone who has lived and worked in an area for many years, you learn such a lot about the events and characters of days gone by. Sadly, when someone dies, these memories can disappear with them. So it is a joy to see the publication of a book such as this, which catalogues the life of an age which has now past, but which had such a wealth of daily interest.

Geraint Hughes was a parish priest in Llanbadarn and Llandrindod, and so got to know many local people. He previously gathered the diary entries of a family member of a local grocers, and now he has turned his hand to Jim Smout, signalman. I knew Jim, and spent time listening to many of his tales of life on the railway, so the appearance of these diary extracts gives the opportunity for a wider audience to share these memories.

Jim lived through great changes on the Heart of Wales Line (which runs from Swansea to Shrewsbury.) He was trained as a signalman, but rationalisation on the line meant the signalboxes gradually closed, and so he often had to do other duties, such as booking clerk. Upon his retirement in 1986, he had worked for the railways for 38 years.

His memories include a number of Royal Trains coming along the line, with all the consequent security issues. The Royal Welsh Show is held annually in Builth, and so this brings Royals here by train from time to time.

In 1985 the Orient Express made a visit to the line, and during its stop at Llandrindod, local people dressed in Victorian costumes went to greet the passengers. Llandrindod has an annual Victorian Festival each summer. During the Festival Jim used to dress up in the uniform of a Victorian Stationmaster. You can see him wearing a top hat on the first page.

Jim remembers the days when trains carried livestock, and he had to make sure that they were delivered on time so that the animals were in good health. In the 70s, the booking office and waiting room at Llandrindod was still heated by an open coal fire, which somebody had to light in the morning. Some of his days were very long - a twelve hour shift was not unknown. He also tells us of some of the things he got up to when times were quiet.

Once you pick up this book, it is hard to put it down, and there are so many anecdotes which are sure to interest not only railway enthusiasts, but also everyone who enjoys the nostalgia of past twelve hour shift was not unknown. He also tells us of some of the things he got up to when times were quiet.

Once you pick up this book, it is hard to put it down, and there are so many anecdotes which are sure to interest not only railway enthusiasts, but also everyone who enjoys the nostalgia of past times.

Andrew Tweed.

(Since Andrew's review more diaries have emerged and Dean Geraint has produced a second volume.)



DE THE BIBLE
 COLLEGE
 كاتبة بيت لحم الكتاب المقدس

(I have been in contact with the Bethlehem Bible College for some time the only college in the Arab world that trains for the ordained ministry. I commend the College to your prayers as it wrestles with the Coronavirus as we do -Ed.)

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Dear brothers and sisters,

Greetings from the Holy Land!

We are addressing you from Bethlehem Bible College to update you with our situation in Bethlehem: Since last Thursday, the city of Bethlehem has been placed in lockdown in the aftermath of the first Palestinian cases of the Coronavirus that were regrettably discovered in Bethlehem.

Consequently, the Palestinian government announced a state of emergency for 30 days and imposed a number of measurements to contain the disease.

Since then, all educational institutions (including our College) have been closed. All conferences, workshops, major gatherings where many people come together have been cancelled. The Church of the Nativity has been sterilized, cleaned and then closed. The streets are almost empty and all tourist buses to and from Bethlehem were banned.

While Bethlehem Bible College is closed until further notice, nothing regarding the future activities and conferences – including Christ at the Checkpoint (CATC) conference- is obvious. Hopefully, by the end of the coming April, we will have a decision in this respect.

In the midst of these dramatic circumstances, please pray with us that Jesus Christ- the great healer who traveled through towns and villages curing every disease and illness- may lend His healing hand and heal every sick person... May He heal us not only from disease, but also from fear, from pride, from sorrow, and from uncertainty, and may He fill our hearts with faith that all what we need is His peace.

In His Grace,

Rev. Dr. Jack Sara (President of Bethlehem Bible College)

Our Contributors

Once again I am very grateful to our contributors for the fascinating articles that have been sent to me for this issue of *The Newsletter*. I look forward to more topical and contemporary articles for future issues. Thank you so much.

'...and finally



'God I miss Brexit!'

(with thanks to The Spectator.)

The Retired Clergy Newsletter

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Please send suggestions, comments, items of news of Retired Clergy by June 1st for the summer issue.

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