South West

Serving the Church in the South West DECEMBER 2023

'Peace – we just want peace' Page 4



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50p

(where sold)

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CONTACTS & DETAILS

Catholic South West is a monthly newspaper for Catholics in the Plymouth, Clifton and Portsmouth Dioceses. It is published by Bellcourt Ltd

AIMS

To build community in the South West by sharing stories relating to Catholic life around the South West. To encourage readers to get more involved in - or start - projects and initiatives in the local area. To provide thought-provoking articles to help readers deepen their Faith.

GET INVOLVED

We need your help! Articles: We need your local articles we can only include what we get. So if you have an article or just a photo with a short description - please send it in. Ideas: We need your ideas for the paper and we need your ideas in the paper. If you have any thoughts on what we should include - or if you are thinking about starting a new initiative - get in touch - we'd love to support it! Readers: If you can encourage other readers in your parish please do so. Advertising: We rely on advertising - if you know of anyone that would benefit from promoting their business, event or anything else to parishioners throughout the South West, do let us know.

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DATES

Catholic South West goes to parishes on the last full weekend of the month. It is printed around the middle of the month - so if you would like to advertise or send in editorial please do it as early as possible.

FROM CSW

Dear Reader,

As Christmas approaches, there is often so much preparation we have to do. Preparation for family, friends, presents, food and so much more. Frequently, this is a hectic, busy and exhausting preparation. Somewhere in that, we have to find quiet, peace and time to reflect in preparation for celebrating the birth of Jesus in a meaningful way. We're called not only to find a way to do this, but to invite others to do the same.

To help us reflect on our preparations, we have our Scripture Focus on page 5

- "Prepare for the Lord's Coming" - and View from the Pew on page 7.

There are also articles with news from around the South West, information from the Synod on Synodality on page 9 and book reviews on page 11. CSW TEAM

World Day of the Poor



Pope Francis established the World Day of the Poor in 2016.



World Day of the Poor Message, 2023

Pope Francis reminds us that the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) is not simply a story from the past but continues to challenge each of us in the here and now of our daily lives. He writes: "It is easy to delegate charity to others, yet the calling of every Christian is to become personally involved."

More information: www.cafod.org.uk/pray/world-day-of-the-poor

EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

Lord Jesus."

1) Think of the readers: If you are writing about an event, think about the readers that don't know anything about it. Outline what happened, but focus on why people go, why it is important to them, or some teaching that was given. Make sure readers learn something from your

Pope Francis declared Sunday 19th No-

vember to be the seventh World Day of the

Poor, with the theme of "Do not turn your

face away from anyone who is poor" (Tobit

In his message for this World Day of the

Poor, Pope Francis reflects on the exam-

ple of Tobit. He considers how the Book of

Tobit teaches us to be realistic and practi-

cal in whatever we do with and for those suffering from poverty, writing that "car-

matter of a hasty hand-out: it calls for re-

establishing the just interpersonal rela-

"..whenever we encounter a poor person,

we cannot look away, for that would pre-

vent us from encountering the face of the

tionships that poverty harms."

ing for the poor is more than simply a

4:7)

article - they don't just want to know who was there and what snacks were available!
2) Keep it brief: Make sure you make your point - but keep it brief and punchy.
3) Pictures: Send pictures as they are - even if they are very big to email. Don't reduce them in size or put them inside a Word document. They look fine on the screen but terrible in the paper!

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Peace; Celebrating the Harvest; and Remembrance at Our Lady & St Neot Liskeard

On Wednesday 20th September, our Bethany Group went on a Mini Pilgrimage around our four churches. Starting at Our Mother Church at Liskeard, Saltash, Torpoint and Sclerder Abbey and then returning to Liskeard. We took with us our Peace Dove which had been given to Fr Gilmour on a Pilgrimage in the Holy Land, he had taken with some of our parishioners back in 2019. At each of the churches we were given a warm welcome the peace dove was placed in front of the altar and a prayer for peace was said. At Sclerder Abbey Fr Richard kindly joined us with our prayer for peace and conducted Benediction for us – it was beautiful to sing the 'Tantum Ergo' again. The Peace Dove is now doing a tour of the four churches and for November it will be visiting Saltash 'Our Lady of Angels'.

For the Bethany Group meeting in October, several ladies from the group visited the Anglican Church of St Wenna, Morval {between Liskeard & Looe} to see the flower and craft festival themed 'Community Life'. One of our parishioners and Bethany Group member did a floral display representing unity between churches of all denominations of the Christian Faith. This proved very popular, and several members returned over the few days it was on to see it again. Also,

others from our church in Liskeard who had not been able to go on the Thursday afternoon the group went visited St Wenna. St Wenna is a beautiful little church down a country lane in the middle of nowhere. This allows the church to be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The church warden explained how it was important to keep the church open and St Wenna was not going to be the sixth church closed; when a young mother had lost her baby and wanted to find a church to pray and sit quietly for an hour. She had tried 5 churches, and all were closed St Wenna was the last one she tried and found it open. How long the grief-stricken mother stayed in the church she did not know it could have been minutes or hours. but words could not express the relief and spiritual assistance she gained from visiting the church.

Sunday 1st October, we celebrated our Harvest Festival with non-perishable food items placed in front of the altar, afterwards these items were donated to the foodbank. Joining our Mass of celebration was deacons from Devon & Cornwall including our own deacon, Peter Skoyles. Our ploughman's lunch after Mass collected £110:00 for St Petrocs to help keep them in their work, caring for the homeless in Cornwall.





Continuing with our harvest theme, on Saturday 28th October Fr. Gilmour joined Brian Oldham and the Liskeard Old Cornwall Society in Liskeard Cattle Market for 'Crying the Neck' This is the Cornish Festival – a pagan religious celebration to welcome the Harvest at the end of summer recalling the last cutting of the sheaf and honouring the harvest so next years crop will be a good one. The neck is never held aloft to the West as this might bring a poor harvest next year.

Crying the Neck has its roots as the Celtic Festival of 'Samhain' welcoming the harvest at the end of summer, when people would light bonfires and wear costume to ward off ghosts.

Introduction was given by Brian Oldham; Opening Prayer in Cornish by Rod Sheaff; Opening Prayer in English by Fr. Gilmour; Reading in English by Fr. Gilmour; The neck is then raised aloft to the North, East and the South; The Lord's Prayer in Cornish by Rod Sheaff; The Lord's Prayer in English by all present; Blessing by Fr. Gilmour; and all sing 'Trelawny'.

The Cornish Anthem 'Trelawny' is nowhere near as ancient and refers to the Cornish Bishop Trelawny who spoke out against James II and was imprisoned during the time of the 'Great Political Unrest' in 1688. Bishop Jonathan Trelawny is buried in the small church in Pelynt between Looe and Polperro – not far from Sclerder Abbey – in fact it was Trelawny's descendants that built Sclerder Abbey. Bishop Trelawny's Crosier hangs above his tomb in the church at Pelynt.

Sunday evening 29th October in the Town Hall saw the launch of the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal with Liskeard Silver Band and Polperro Fishermen's Friends – a lovely evening was enjoyed by all – and was supported by many parishioners from Liskeard.

Our Bethany Group will meet on Wednesday 15th November in the St Neot's room Liskeard, where there will be a talk by Mr Trevor Newbury on the history and work of the Royal British Legion. Refreshments will be available – for a small charge, to give the R.B.L. a donation towards their valuable work.

A Christmas Bazaar is being planned for Saturday 2nd December in the St Neot's room Liskeard. Raffle tickets are now available, a donor has offered to provide the prize money so all proceeds will help the parish. There will be a variety of stalls and our handmade Advent Candle Table Decorations.

Gaza Christians: 'Peace – we just want peace'

A Sister at Gaza's Catholic parish – now caring for more families following the bombing of the local Orthodox church – has made a heartfelt plea for peace.

Speaking to Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) by telephone, Sister Nabila, who is caring for Christians sheltering in Gaza's Holy Family parish complex, said she is extremely worried.

The parish has no electricity or running water and has resorted to drinking water from a well – which they fear could run dry at any time – or bottled mineral water, which costs three times its original price.

Sister Nabila expressed particular concern for around 100 traumatised children they are caring for and who have known nothing but war throughout their lives.

She said: "We just want peace, peace. We have had six wars in Gaza. Children only know war."

Holy Family parish has been providing aid and shelter to wounded and displaced Christians affected by the ongoing violence over the past two weeks – most of whom have lost their homes.

Along with another six religious Sisters and a Catholic priest, Sister Nabila has been working tirelessly to support the almost 700 displaced persons that they are caring for – including 50 persons living with disabilities.

The number of those taking refuge in the Holy Family's complex increased by around 200 after the compound of St Porphyrios Greek Orthodox Church was hit by a missile that killed 18 people.

Among those killed when the Greek Orthodox compound was hit was a teacher who taught at Rosary Sisters' school, where Sister Nabila is principal, along with her entire family.

Other children who had been attending parish catechesis also died.



Holy Family Church in Gaza

Despite the shelling, Sister Nabila remains resilient, saying that "staying busy and helping others is the best way to cope with the devastation".

Sister Nabila told ACN that spiritual support for the people is providing hope.

Mass is celebrated twice a day, and people have been constantly praying the Rosary –

seeking peace through the intercession of the Virgin Mary.

She concluded: "Peace, peace, we just want peace. There is so much evil, so much suffering. It's terrible. Right now, we only have God."

> Maria Lozano and John Newton

Pope Francis calls Gaza parishioners every day

Pope Francis is continuing to be in contact, every day, with the Catholic community at Gaza's Church of the Holy Family, that is currently sheltering around 700 Palestinians who have lost their homes in the ongoing bombardment by Israel.

Following the attacks by Hamas on 7 October in which 1,400 people were killed and 200 others kidnapped, Israel's retaliatory strikes on Hamas infrastructure in Gaza have killed more than 10,000 people, including over 4,100 children. Tens of thousands have been displaced.

Parish Priest Fr Gabriele Romanelli says there is no safe place in Gaza "neither in the North nor in the South."

Fr Gabriele, who was in Jerusalem at the time of the Hamas attacks has been unable to enter Gaza to be physically with his flock, but says he speaks to them every day if possible. At times communications have been cut off, leaving the community isolated, but at the present time they have resumed.

Fr Gabriele says his parishioners are as well "as one can be in a time of war, in a place of war, but the place they feel safest is with Jesus.. They know, that there is no safe place in all the Gaza Strip, neither in the North nor in the South, but they feel the presence of Jesus, the closeness of Jesus and of the whole church."

Fr Gabriele reiterates their gratitude to the Pope, whom he says "calls them every day, to say 'hello', to ask how they are doing and to give his blessing." Above all, Fr Gabriele says, they pray and they ask that we continue to pray for peace.

"They have a Mass in the morning, one in the afternoon, the constant recitation of the Rosary" in different groups and with some of the 700 refugees who are sheltered in the church and parish grounds.

Fr Gabriele appeals that those who have a voice - diplomats, politicians, journalists, people of good will, men and women throughout the world - not only pray, but also work for peace.

In his address to the United Nations in New York yesterday, Vatican envoy Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, expressed sorrow at the terrible humanitarian situation in Gaza. He decried the loss of innocent Palestinian lives as well as "the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, and the indiscriminate suffering of the population," which has been deprived of basic needs.



"As in any conflict the Holy See calls for the absolute protection of each and every civilian. It is imperative that hospitals and medical facilities, refugee camps, schools, as well as places of worship and their premises, are not targeted by anyone," he added.

The Apostolic Nuncio reiterated the appeal made by Pope Francis: "I beg you to stop: cease using weapons! I hope that avenues will be pursued so that an escalation of the conflict might be absolutely avoided so that the wounded can be rescued and help might get to the population of Gaza where the humanitarian situation is extremely serious. May the hostages be freed immediately."

"Let everything possible be done to avoid a humanitarian disaster, while keeping humanitarian corridors open to allow aid to reach the entire population and to heal the wounded."

Scripture Focus

By Fr Jeremy Corley



Prepare for the Lord's Coming

On the First Sunday of Advent (3rd December), we begin our Advent journey—the Church's countdown to Christmas. In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah asks: "Why, Lord, leave us to stray from your ways and harden our hearts against fearing you? Return, for the sake of your servants."

In numerous parishes, many of our former church-goers have strayed from the practice of their faith, perhaps because they have lost their sense of prayer. During Advent we can beg God: "Lord, bring back the lost and the straying."

The prophet prays for God to show himself: "Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down—at your presence the mountains would melt." Isaiah thinks of how God revealed to the chosen people his majestic power in thunder and earthquake on Mount Sinai, at the time of the exodus. If only God showed himself again like that!

Today we can pray: "Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come

down," to bring peace where there is war and violence, and to bring justice for those living in severe poverty. If only God would show himself, to inspire faith in people who have forgotten him, to bring hope to those in despair, and to bring love to those feeling neglected.

We will only be ready for the Lord's coming if we stay awake, as we are reminded in the Sunday Gospel. At the end time, Jesus will come again in glory, and he has warned us to keep alert.

Using the image of an important traveller returning home, Jesus issues a warning to the house staff: "You do not know when the master of the house is coming—evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn. If he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep."

During the short days and long nights of December, it is easy to feel weary. Festive preparations and Christmas parties can occupy our time. Yet in the Advent season, we hear the counter-cultural call to stay awake. We are not only waiting for our celebration of Christ's birth. We are also waiting for his second coming in glory. This will be the final reckoning, when he will judge the living and the dead. Are we ready? Many in our society seem to live as if God did not exist.

The call to be prepared resounds on the Second Sunday of Advent (10th December). We hear Isaiah's familiar summons: "Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord." Until now, the red carpet has not yet been laid out, and the location is just a wilderness. Yet God plans to come into this desolate place.

John the Baptist echoes the prophet by calling us to prepare a roadway for the Lord, even in this barren and unpromising place. The wilderness today could be our society, which often seems to have little concern for the things of God. Or the wilderness could be our own hearts, which can sometimes be barren and unproductive.

Isaiah promises: "Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it." We look forward to God's glory being revealed, not in a spectacular display of military power, but in a tiny baby, born to save us. The shepherds will behold the newborn Saviour lying in a manger, and they will hear the angels singing: "Glory to God in the highest."

In our own day, we can look forward to God's glory being revealed, when peace replaces war and violence, and when justice comes for those living in severe poverty. God's glory will become visible when faith arises among people who have forgotten him, when hope comes to those in great need, and when love comes to those feeling isolated.

We can pray the Advent hymn to express our longing for the Lord: "O come, O come now, Lord of might, who to your tribes on Sinai's height, in ancient times did give the law, in cloud and majesty and awe. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel."



Journey of Change: A New Way of being a Parish

You may have noticed that due to a reduced number of active priests serving the Nottingham Diocese more parishes are working together or merging under the guidance of one parish priest. This places an extra burden of work and responsibility on the priest and is extra work for any staff and volunteers, so how has The Holy Family Parish in Nottingham managed this change so far?

Our new Parish of the Holy Family was formally created in 2022, merging the former parishes and churches of St Augustine's, Our Lady & St Edward's (both in St Ann's) and Sacred Heart in Carlton; three communities forming a diverse and large geographical area, with three partner Catholic Primary schools. All three churches had already been working together in different ways for several years, so formal merger was a natural progression.

A Pastoral Leadership Team had already been formed, bringing together parish clergy, religious and staff with representatives of all three communities, and a joint PPC had already been meeting for several months. After the formal merger, the most recent change was in April 2023, when we went down to one Parish Priest serving the parish, along with other clergy as part of the Pastoral Leadership Team. We then faced another challenge – to reduce Masses to an achievable schedule for the Parish Priest.

The decision was made by our Pastoral Team and PPC to close the Mass centre in Sneinton, a very difficult decision as there had been a Catholic presence and Mass celebrated in the area for over 80 years. Then we needed to reduce our Masses by another two, so, in April 2023 we went from six Sunday Masses to three. We were worried about the potential loss of congregation, loss of sense of community and also a loss in income. Yes, the process was hard but our initial findings, after 6 months, have been a revelation. The October 2023 Mass count showed that the average attendance over the four weeks was the same as 2022 and our income over the first 6 months... was the same as last year!

Some of our congregation have found a Saturday Mass elsewhere but they are still part of our community and support us in other ways, as we do them, and some attend a weekday Mass and continue on rotas. The churches, with one Sunday Mass in each (no Saturday evening Mass), are even more vibrant communities, all working together, people moving around



Holy Family Parish: St Augustine's Church, Woodborough Road – Grade II listed building – a gem in the City of Nottingham, embracing the changing face of the Church.

churches, sharing resources, joining in events, and notably readers and musicians ministering at more than one church. It's great to see full churches – God is definitely present amongst us. Parishioners are making new friends, reviving old acquaintances and there are many more opportunities for people to come together. IT'S WORKING!!!

How did this happen? Our Pastoral Team meets fortnightly, overseeing the parishes areas of liturgy and prayer, catechesis and faith formation, pastoral care and outreach. They deal with the day to day running of the parish and try to resolve any problems. We make mistakes as a team, and so resolve them as a team. The Parish Pastoral Council works more strategically, authorising major expenditure and projects, dealing with buildings, social life and inclusivity. On merger, the finances of the parish were brought together and the Finance Committee keep a close eye on these. Crucial to all of this was the decision taken a few years ago to employ a parttime Adult Formation Coordinator and more recently a full time Community Coordinator. Bringing in professional expertise makes a huge difference to the smooth running of the parish and our ability to creatively engage with the community.

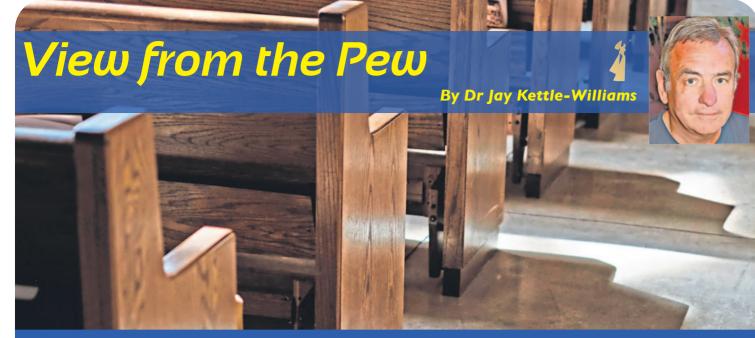
Our Parish Priest's vision; "is that the communities that make up the parish work together to support each other in the daily life of the parish and in having a positive impact on the local area; our churches should be seen as essential places for the local community and part of the wider family of the Church that welcomes people. Alongside our essential Catholic primary and secondary school provision, we have the ability to reach out to and support hundreds of people, so that they become more aware of God's presence in their lives and how belonging to a Church community can make a difference to one's life. A healthy and thriving parish is one in which clergy and lay people work together, so that there is joint responsibility for the running of the parish the days of the Parish Priest deciding everything himself are longgone. Partnership means the priest letting go of some of his authority so that the church is led by those whose church it is."

Why have a Community Coordinator? The role involves all the usual day to day running of the parish and church admin (the list is too long) with added interest in working in the community, meeting representatives from organisations and seeing how we can work together. Practically, the Parish Priest and Community Coordinator share the same office which is open most days for people to pop in, so we work in unison. Tasks and meetings are dealt with and attended by whoever is available or by both. No two days are ever the same; meetings, discussions, questions, roof leaks in three of our ten buildings, one building with no heating or water but hey-ho, we wouldn't change a thing!! Well, perhaps find a pot of money to fund the extensive essential building and mission work that we have planned. We never stand still.

Yes, it's a busy parish but communication and transparency are key, along with a strong vision and impetus to journey together.

So, a message to those who are about to go through the process or going through the process of merger; trust in the Holy Spirit, embrace the change and find ways to make things work - your community, too, will thrive.

> Diane Williams, Community Coordinator, Holy Family Parish, East Nottingham



Live and Let Live

Hinduism is an Indian religion described as the oldest religion in the world. A distinguished Hindu gentleman, whom I met some years ago, quickly picked up on my amateur but keen interest in comparative religion. He explained that Hinduism evolves by adopting and adapting characteristics which it admires in other faiths. In that way, he went on to explain, Hinduism develops its dharma, the cosmic law underlying the correct behaviour and the ensuing social order espoused by its adherents who will continue, he insisted, to grow 'pan ethnically' in number. At that point I backed off from potentially stumbling onto the geopolitics pathway. However, the Hindus do currently number 1.2 billion or so, constituting some 15% of the global population.

Judaism, on the other hand, is an Abrahamic, monotheistic and ethnic religion, although not necessarily ethnically restrictive. It comprises the collective spiritual, cultural, and legal traditions of the Jewish people. Judaism originated as an organised religion in the Middle East evolving from Yahwism some seven or eight thousand years ago. The Judaism we recognise today retains observance of the Mosaic covenant established all that time ago between God and the Israelites. The current Jewish population worldwide stands at a little more than fifteen million.

The Abrahamic group of religions also includes Christianity (with currently some 2.4 billion adherents worldwide) dating back over two thousand years, and Islam (with some 1.9 billion adherents) dating



back some thirteen hundred years. All three religions are of comparable ilk centring as they do around the worship of the God of Abraham, the Hebrew patriarch often mentioned in the religious scriptures of each of these three Abrahamic religions.

To an outsider, to a Hindu holy man such as a sadhu for instance, it must be unfathomable that these three Abrahamic religions, so closely related and with so much in common, have so often been fragmented and at such variance over time in internecine strife ... perhaps that's no more so than over the last one hundred years, yet still ongoing as recent calamitous events attest.

Nobody can but despair of war, particularly of the conflict and horrendous carnage of late in the Middle East, across the very land where Christ was born, where Christ fulfilled his mission, supported by his ever-growing band of disciples, to bring peace and understanding to humankind. Therein lies the sick irony of our Middle Eastern tragedy.

But Hindus and others of faith or none can't fail but recognise the commonality which Jesus represents for those of us actively worshipping within the Abrahamic tradition. Jesus, whether He be hailed as a teacher – as Jews have come to accept – or as prophet – as He is among Muslims – or as the Saviour, to give him his place among Christians, is therefore recognised as a personage common to all. Moreover, Muslims believe that Jesus, apart from being a prophet of God, was born to





a virgin (Mary), and that He will return to Earth before the Day of Judgement to restore justice and to defeat 'the false messiah', the Antichrist.

As of today's date in our Christian calendar, Mary - having shown herself submissive to the will of God - is heavy with child, and we anxiously await the Virgin Birth as the period of Advent moves on.

But this year as in many years previous, Commercial Christmas took root and a firm hold early. Some stores put up trees and other decorations as early as September prefacing Advent by three months, effectively reducing the Christian celebration to a mere act of Mammon. So, when the new-born Jesus opens his eyes, just think what He'll be looking at in our world of today. What will the fresh eyes of an omniscient observer make of things?

Hopefully the forthcoming birth of a teacher, a prophet-cum-saviour will bring those of us in the Abrahamic tradition further focus, new life, a fresh start and renewed hope.

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> Dr J L Kettle-Williams is an experienced business communications consultant and wordsmith (tutor, writer, translator).



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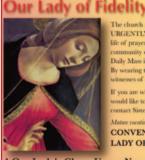
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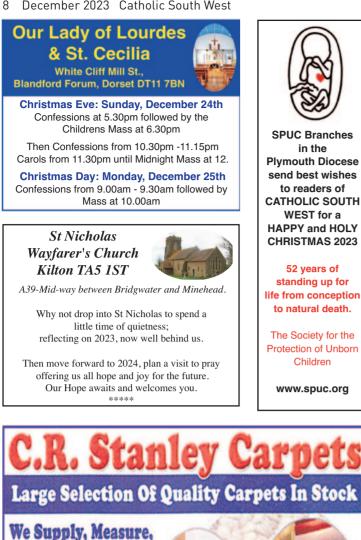
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A catholic charity has unveiled plans to launch a new award recognising fortitude and faith in the face of persecution - which will be presented by the papal ambassador to Great Britain.

As part of Aid to the Church in Need (ACN)'s #Red-Wednesday 2023 celebrations on 22nd November which are set to include a special evening Mass at St George's Cathedral, Southwark - the charity will be presenting its new Courage to be Christian award.

Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendia, the Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain, said: "It is a great honour for me to be invited to present the first ever #RedWednesday 'Courage to be Christian' award.

"Religious freedom is of the utmost importance and Aid to the Church in Need is doing a wonderful service by honouring those who have shown such extraordinary commitment to their faith in the face of persecution."

#RedWednesday events in London will start at 5.30pm with a gathering in the Cathedral's Courtyard before Mass at 6pm, which will be concelebrated by Archbishop Buendia and Archbishop John Wilson of Southwark.

The presentation of the award will occur at the end of Mass and will be followed by a reception at 7.45pm.

Canon Michael Branch, Dean of Southwark Cathedral, said: "We look forward very much to hosting #RedWednesday here at St George's Cathedral and warmly invite everyone to come and join us to thank God for the life and witness of those who have suffered so much to remain true to their Christian faith.

"The theme of this year's #RedWednesday is the persecuted Church in Africa and I am sure the Mass will have a particular appeal to those with connections to that wonderful continent living in and around Southwark."

In 2022 more than 34 percent of ACN (UK)'s support went to the African continent, where projects, including help for widows and orphans who lost husbands and fathers at the hands of jihadists in Nigeria, have been backed by the charity.

The lead up to ACN's 2023 #RedWednesday events started on Sunday 22nd October when Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme from Maiduguri Diocese in north-east Nigeria led a Rosarv service.

ACN is encouraging Catholics to pray 100,000 decades of the Rosary for persecuted Christians in Africa in the run-up to #RedWednesday later this month.

The charity has also launched a £100K4AFRICA challenge calling on individuals, schools and communities to help the charity raise £100,000 for projects by Christmas, with matched funding meaning that every penny donated will be doubled.

Dr Caroline Hull, National Director Aid to the Church in Need (UK), invited everyone to join the Mass and events on Wednesday 22nd November.

She said: "We are very excited about the #RedWednesday Mass and events at St George's Cathedral – a wonderful opportunity to bear witness to the importance of religious freedom and to stand shoulder-toshoulder with those who suffer just because they are Christian.

"And it is a huge honour that our new Apostolic Nuncio has agreed to lead us by presiding and preaching at the Mass as well as presenting our first-ever #RedWednesday 'Courage to be Christian' award.

"It is amazingly kind of Archbishop John and Canon Michael to open the doors of the cathedral for what will, I am sure, be a fantastic occasion."

Summary report calls for greater 'co-responsibility' in Church

The Vatican's nearly month-long Synod on Synodality assembly, convened by Pope Francis, has concluded with members approving an ambitious text calling for greater "co-responsibility" among all believers in the evangelizing mission of the Church — and proposing concrete reforms to achieve it.

Titled "A Synodal Church in Mission," the 42-page summary report included notable proposals to establish new ministries for the laity, increase lay involvement in decision-making, create processes to evaluate bishops' performance of their ministry, change the way the Church discerns "controversial" issues, and expand the footprint of synodal assemblies going forward.

"The exercise of co-responsibility is essential for synodality and is necessary at all levels of the Church," the final report stated. "Every Christian is a mission in the world."

The synod's report noted fears that have emerged around the process. "Some fear that they will be forced to change; others fear that nothing will change and there will be too little courage to move in the rhythm of the living tradition. Some perplexity and opposition also hide the fear of losing power and the privileges that come with it," the document said.

The assembly also identified the need to determine why some Catholics did not participate in the synodal process, which was initiated by Pope Francis in 2021, and has included consultation at diocesan, national, and continental levels. Only 1% of Catholics worldwide took part.

Controversial issues

The final document was provided to members earlier today after writers attempted to incorporate more than 1,150 proposed amendments into the text. The 344 voting members present approved the text on the evening of Oct. 28, voting to include each paragraph proposed with the required two-thirds majority

After the final vote, Pope Francis spoke briefly to the assembly, thanking its members and organizers, and telling those gathered that the Holy Spirit is the protagonist of synodal process.

Two sections that received some of the most opposition concerned proposals related to the possible inclusion of women in the diaconate.

Sixty-seven members voted against the proposal that "theological and pastoral



research on women's access to the diaconate should be continued," taking into account the results of two commissions Pope Francis established to study the topic. "If possible, the results should be presented at the next session of the assembly," the report proposed. Sixty-one members opposed a proposal that said a "deeper reflection" on the diaconate's status as "a proper and permanent degree of the hierarchy" would "also illuminate the issue of women's access to the diaconate."

Notably, the final text did not include the term "LGBTQ+ people" after the phrase was included in the working document that guided assembly discussions. The summary report did, however, emphasize the assembly's "closeness and support to all those who experience a condition of loneliness" as result of "fidelity to the Church's tradition and magisterium in marriage and sexual ethics" and called upon Christian communities to listen and accompany those in these situations. Regarding resistance to certain proposals, Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, the relator general of the Synod on Synodality, said that if the results were considered in the context of parliamentary voting in a democratic state, "we would be very happy indeed" with the outcome.

Setting the stage

According to its introduction, the 2023 assembly's summary report "is in no way a final document" but will be used as the basis of the Synod on Synodality's final stage — another Vatican assembly in October 2024. That assembly is expected to produce a final text that will be presented to the pope for his consideration.

"This is an experience that does not finish today but will continue," said Cardinal Mario Grech, head of the secretariat for the synod. Hollerich noted that he hopes next year's document makes more concrete proposals but said that "even that document will be a step of a Church on the move."

"And that's the important thing, I think. That we move."

In the meantime, synod members will return to their respective dioceses, where

they have been tasked to get feedback on the summary report and to foster a synodal culture.

"I think people will leave tomorrow or the day after tomorrow going home with a heart full of hope, with a lot of ideas, and I'm looking forward to seeing them back next year," Hollerich said.

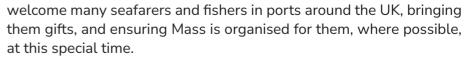
Jonathan Liedl



Light up Christmas for hundreds of seafarers and fishers.

Look around you: 90% of the things you use has been brought here by sea. It's extraordinary to think how much we depend on the shipping industry. But so often, men and women of the sea are forgotten.

This Christmas, the port chaplains and ship visitors of Catholic charity Stella Maris will



And it's all thanks to you. Your gift to Stella Maris helps us to share God's love with seafarers and fishers and make their Christmas special.

Please visit www.stellamaris.org.uk for more information about how you can light up Christmas for seafarers and fishers. Please also keep them in prayer. Thank you, in advance, for any support you can kindly give.



Pope Francis: Pray for me! Favourably!

In The Pope Video November edition, Francis opens wide his heart to admit that he needs the faithful people's prayer to be able to carry out his mission. "Pray to the Lord that he will bless me," the Bishop of Rome states before admitting that "your prayer gives me strength and helps me to discern and to accompany the Church, listening to the Holy Spirit."

Here are the Pope's words in full: Pray to the Lord that he will bless me.

Your prayer gives me strength and helps me to discern and to accompany the Church, listening to the Holy Spirit.

The fact that someone is Pope doesn't mean they lose their humanity. On the contrary, my humanity grows each day with God's holy and faithful people.

Being Pope is also a process. The person becomes aware of what it means to be a pastor.

And in this process, he learns how to be more charitable, more merciful, and,

above all, more patient, like God our Father, who is so patient.

I can imagine that at the beginning of their pontificate, all the Popes had this feeling of trepidation, apprehension, knowing that he will be judged harshly.

For the Lord will ask us Bishops to give a serious account.

Please, I ask you to judge benevolently. And that you pray that the Pope, whoever he might be, today it is my turn, may receive the help of the Holy Spirit, that he may be docile to that help.

Let us pray for the Pope, so that in the exercise of his mission, he may continue to accompany in the faith the flock entrusted to him by Jesus, always with the help of the Holy Spirit. Let us make, in silence, this prayer: your prayer over me.

And pray for me! Favorably!

To watch The Pope Video visit thepopevideo.org



Former Faiths Minister says lockdown of churches was "outrageous"

Former Minister of State, Lord Greenhalgh, has told the Catholic Union that the closure of churches and other places of worship during the pandemic was "outrageous".

Lord Greenhalgh, who had responsibility for Government policy on faith and communities between 2020 and 2021, said that "people at the heart of power did not understand faith".

His comments come as the UK Covid Inquiry hears evidence from senior advisers and civil servants about the decisions taken during the pandemic. Last week, former Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Helen MacNamara, told the Covid Inquiry that decision makers had suffered from a "narrow perspective".

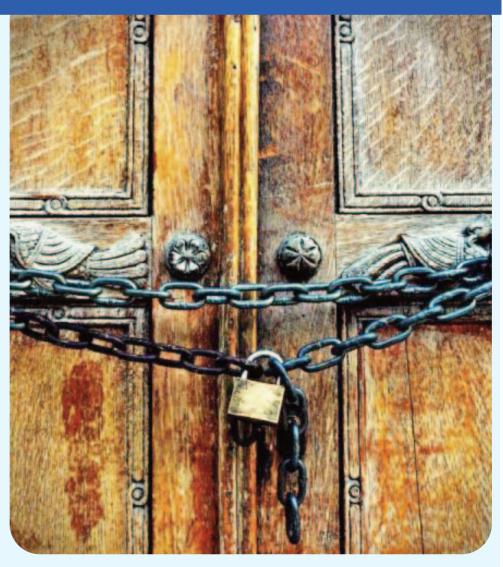
Last month, the Catholic Union launched a survey on the impact that the closure of places of worship had on people's lives. Over 700 people have taken part in the online survey so far. The results will shape the Catholic Union's written evidence to the Covid Inquiry.

Speaking to the Catholic Union, Lord Greenhalgh said that places of worship did a "phenomenal job" at controlling the spread of the virus, especially compared to rates of transmission in other settings that weren't subject to the same restrictions.

Lord Greenhalgh's comments add further pressure to the Chair of the Covid Inquiry, Baroness Hallett, to properly consider the decisions around the closure and reopening of places of worship as part of the independent inquiry.

Catholic Union Director, Nigel Parker, comments: "Before Covid, few of us could have imagined our churches being forced to close by law. Yet that is the situation we faced at times during the dark days of the pandemic. The inquiry into the UK's response to the pandemic needs to consider the decisions around the closure and reopening of places of worship, which had such a huge impact on so many people. The Catholic Union led the charge in getting our churches open again, and we're now committed to making sure they are never forced to close again. I encourage everyone to take part in our survey to make sure the voices of Catholic are heard as part of this Inquiry.

To complete the survey search online for Catholic Union Covid Survey.



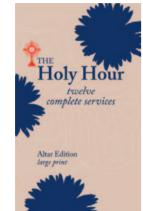
Book Reviews

Holy Hour Altar Edition

By Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

£14.95 Product Code: 1790 ISBN NO:9780852315187 www.rpbooks.co.uk

The Holy Hour: twelve complete services will rejuvenate the **Eucharistic** Adoration in parishes and encourage a greater love for the mystery of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. It will engender a



deeper understanding of the place of the Eucharist in the life of the Church. Includes hymns.

Called by God: Preparing for my Child's Baptism

(Keepsake) By Ellen McBride & Sr Margaret Jones £3.95 Product Code: 1869 ISBN NO:9780852315576 www.rpbooks.co.uk

Called by God seeks to reclaim the real meaning of baptism as the beginning of a new life in Christ, With scripture readings and reflections, a



detailed look at the elements of the rite of baptism, and discussions and advice on raising children to know the person of Christ, it aims to meet parents wherever they are in their own journey of faith. The parents' booklet gives time and space for parents to reflect on the sessions and will act a reminder and keepsake of this time spent preparing for their child's baptism.

"A really good approach to working with parents in preparing for their child's baptism. A very timely, valuable and comprehensive resource for catechists. The reflective and prayerful sessions will encourage parents and catechists to search deeper into the real meaning of baptism."

Mary Crowley, Catechetical Adviser, Agency for Evangelisation, Westminster

"A really helpful pastoral guide to prepare families for the baptism of a child which provides a basis for evangelisation. With real insights into the history and development of the sacrament of baptism, Called by God will be invaluable to those tasked with sacramental preparation."

Canon David Wallace, Director of Pastoral Liturgy, Archdiocese of Glasgow

> Stick with Love By Arun Arora £10.99

Product Code: 111644 ISBN NO:9780281089857 www.rpbooks.co.uk

The Archbishop of York's Advent Book for 2023.

Martin Luther King famously declared that 'I have decided to stick with love . . . Hate is too great a burden

Arùn Arora to bear'. In these

luminous daily readings, Arun Arora helps us consider the biblical picture of the Church as the people of God, drawn from every tribe, every tongue and every nation.

Themes of racial justice, hospitality and welcome are explored alongside the stories of saints from across the globe. Beginning with reflections from Isaiah and Revelation, the meditations lead us on to consider the missionaries, martyrs and mystics who light our Advent way.

Diary 2024 Through the Years with 12 Parables of Jesus

> £7.96 Product Code: 1960 ISBN NO:9780852316399

reflection by Fr

the parables we learn that inside the story of our everyday life lies the deeper story of our salvation.

If the parables work, they leave us wondering not just about the dynamics of an interesting story but about deeply personal and social questions we face every day. Parables are not fictional diversions from real life but deliberate probes into the lives we actually live. They call us to think again about how we see and how we behave, to think again about attitudes and behaviour in our community or society that we accept lazily or uncritically. The parables of Jesus make the ordinary important:Jesus speaks out of a theology of ordinariness when he begins his theological thinking with things as they are. Religion is not primarily about special cultic activities or secret wisdom; it is about loving the God who created us and loving the neighbour we find ourselves beside. Liturgy can be left to one side when more important business, like forgiving our brother or sister, is waiting as the real religious agenda.

Our 2024 diary is A5 in size and has a practical full week to view across a double page spread.

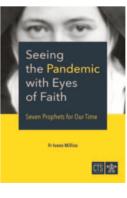
Included in the diary is an introduction from Fr Denis, year planners for both 2024 and 2025, key dates and feast days, notes pages, and a ribbon page marker. All of these features make it the ideal faith companion, appointment organiser and thoughtful gift.

Seeing the Pandemic with Eyes of Faith

Fr Ivano Millico £5.95 CTS Product Code: PA63 Please refer to this code when ordering over the phone ISBN: 9781784696542 www.ctsbooks.org

Fr Ivano Millico looks at the **Covid pandemic** through a prophetic lens enlisting the help of Saints who have lived through moments of great personal

or societal crisis.



So much has been said and written about the Covid Pandemic which has generated more heat than light, criticising the government or the Church and dividing people into believers or deniers.

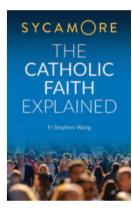
Fr Ivano Millico looks at the events of the last year through a prophetic lens enlisting the help of Saints who have lived through moments of great personal or

societal crisis. St Therese of Lisieux, Job, St Charles Borromeo are just some of our guides as we search together for what God is saying to the Church and the world through the ongoing Pandemic. These words of hope and warning aim to ensure that this time brings each one of us closer to God and neighbour.

SYCAMORE: The Catholic Faith Explained

Fr Stephen Wang £16.95 CTS Product Code: DO944 Please refer to this code when ordering over the phone ISBN: 9781784696160 www.ctsbooks.org

In SYCAMORE you will find answers to the most common questions about life and faith, whether vou want to deepen the faith you already have or are exploring the faith for the



first time. Written in a conversational style with beautiful colour images.

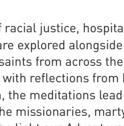
Do you want to understand the Christian faith? Have you ever wondered about the meaning of life?

Whether you want to deepen the faith you already have, are exploring the faith for the first time, or are just curious, in SYCAMORE you will find answers to the most common questions about life and faith. What is happiness? How can we know that God exists? What do we really know about Jesus? Can we trust the Bible? What is faith? Does prayer make a difference? Is there such a thing as right and wrong? What is the meaning of love?

In addition to the essential questions about life, SYCAMORE explains simply the central beliefs and practices of Catholic Christianity. Understand the seven sacraments, the moral and social teaching of the Church, the Christian vocations, the Virgin Mary and the saints, life after death, and the hope of heaven.

Comprising twenty short chapters, SYCAMORE is written in a conversational style, using stories and examples to bring the ideas alive. Questions for reflection are also included, alongside specially selected passages from the Bible, and over a hundred beautiful images.

This book can be read on its own or used by those who are following a SYCAMORE course in their parish or community.



By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R

This stunning hardback diary features a thoughtprovoking Denis McBride on twelve

parables of Jesus. Through

Author Edna breaks into prisons

A Catholic Author has been invited to join a programme that could see her books made available to prisoners throughout the United States.

Holy Name of Mary, Middlesbrough parishioner Edna Hunneysett, who was a mature student at Maryvale, has published six books, including some written to help parents of young people with mental health issues, especially in a church setting.

Edna was inspired to write her first publication Our Suicidal Teenagers: Where Are You God? after being awarded a distinction at Maryvale for her MA dissertation and the adjudicators hoped that she would get it published in some form. She wrote her six-year true-life story and included the dissertation.

This latest opportunity comes following a successful partnership between Stockton bookshop The Book Dragon, who are the UK's sole distributor for the American Commissary Edition Programme, and

Twenty-First Street Publishing Group who are leading this exciting initiative for all eligible self-published and indie authors. Prisoners will be able to read ebooks from authors whose books are sold in the Book Dragon's Stockton store and that are rated at four stars or higher.

Three of Edna's titles - Our Suicidal Teenagers: Where Are You God?; Greener Beyond The Hill; and Greener Pastures and Brown Blazers – have all been included in the programme.

As part of the deal, Edna will write a special foreword and discussion questions for her new readers.

Edna's seventh and latest publication Greener Expectations will be available in the Book Dragon bookshop from 1st December. www.the-bookdragon.co.uk

If any authors would like to participate in the Book Dragon programme, contact Kirsty McKay on 01642 670906 www.thebookdragon.com



C R O S S W O R D

You can use both sets of clues to solve the puzzle: the solutions are the same. **CRYPTIC Across**

- One of the twins seen tucking into Lincolnshire 4 sausages (4)
- 5 British sect's on edge (6)
- Number, including the Queen, he fiddled, so some 8 sav (4)
- 9 Subordinate created with care, it's said (8)
- 10 Complex soggy eagle, or a great seabird... (7,5)
- ...low mental age resorting to a noble pastime (4,4,4) 12 **13** Headgear of Oregon revolutionary angry medic donned earlier (8)
- 15 Menaham's dad soldier imprisoned today (4)
- **17** Party members after allegations, lose face (6)
- 18 Yeats's land in Ulster, knowledge of the Scriptures will bring it all back (4)

CRYPTIC Down

- Nothing in vehicle list is of the age of the new king 1 [8]
- Philistines prevailed here, but Mongolia is free (5,6) 2
- 3 First family: one on bridge,... (4)
- 4 ...for the other, it's the brink, mate (3)
- Publish again in the matter of offspring (7) 6
- 7 Neal's Harems: massages for old Assyrian kings (11)
- 10 Push off and lose one's way (3,4)
- Fruit in here has variety enclosed by old railway (8) 11
- **14** One pub promoted Italian port (4)
- One of twelve in Israel to get higher than black belt 16 (3)

QUICK Across

- Isaac's firstborn (4) 4
- 5 Rim frontier[6]
- 8 Roman emperor between 37 and 68 AD (4)
- 9 Female domestic servant (8)
- 10 Common seabird of Europe; ancestor of many domestic breeds (7.5)
- **12** Variety of football played at a particular public school (4,4,4)
- **13** Headgear associated with Mexico and SW USA (8)
- 15 FatherofMenaham(4)
- **17** British political party members: Irish RC 17th century outlaws (6)
- **18** Poetic name for Ireland (4)

QUICK Down

- Pertaining to two dynasties in 17th century Britain, 1 and one in the 21st century (8)
- 2 Site of King Saul's last stand (5,6)
- Robert ----, Scottish architect and furniture designer 3 (4)
- 4 Verge;threshold(3)
- 6 Releaseoncemore(7)
- 7 Assyrian king, the fifth of his name, who captured Samaria and took the Israelites into exile (11)
- **10** Go away and stay away (3,4)

12 13 15 17 18

- Building, greenhouse, associated with fruit (8) 11
- 14 Italian Adriatic port (4)
- Son of Jacob and tribal ancestor (3) 16

SOLUTION

6 Reissue, 7 Shalmaneser, 10 Get lost, 11 Orangery, 14 Bari, 18 Erin. Down: 1 Carolean, 2 Mount Gilboa, 3 Adam, 4 Eve, Goose, 12 Eton Wall Game, 13 Sombrero, 15 Gadi, 17 Tories, Across: 4 Esau, 5 Border, 8 Nero, 9 Handmaid, 10 Greylag

.neU **ər**