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> JANUARY 2025



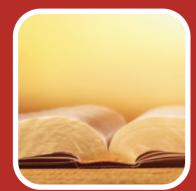
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Catholic South West is a monthly newspaper for Catholics in the Plymouth, Clifton and Portsmouth Dioceses. It is published by Bellcourt Ltd

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.

SUBMITTING EDITORIAL

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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.

Wanted Parish Correspondents

The Catholic South West is looking for a Parish Correspondent in your parish to send in local news for publication in this newspaper. All items to be emailed to csw@cathcom.org before 10th of the month

A Prayer for the Terminally III

by Fr Jonathan Stewart



EDITORIAL GUIDELINES 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 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!

LEGAL INFORMATION

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that their life is precious even to their last breath. We pray especially for those who are vulnerable and who may not have the support and guidance they need. We pray for families and friends, for those who accompany the sick and the dying; that they may be consoled. We pray for those who care for the dying; may they be strengthened and encouraged in their work. We pray for those elected to serve us in parliament; pour out your Holy Spirit upon them, that your wisdom and compassion may prevail in the decisions they make. We pray for ourselves, that we may always appreciate the gift of life in all its great and beautiful variety. Help us never to take it for granted, but to be grateful for what we have received from you. Heavenly Father, author of life, we place our cares in your loving hands today and always. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Lord of Life, we pray today for

those who are terminally ill,

that they may receive the love

and care they deserve and know

Amen

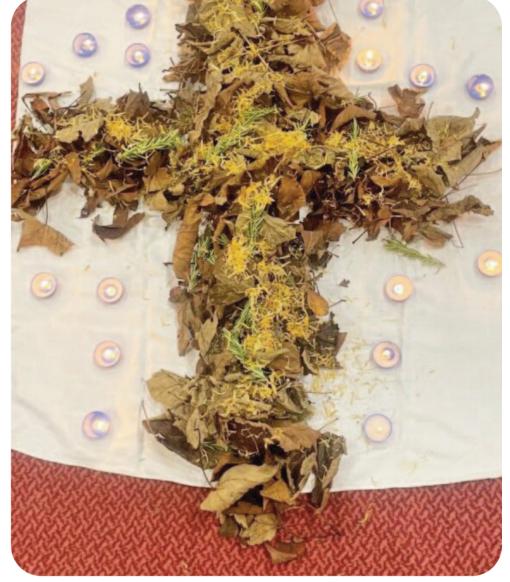
Lament and Light ecumenical service

On Monday 25th November, this year's ecumenical Lament and Light service took place at St Mary's Church in Plympton, Plymouth. This quietly powerful service is held in response to the 16 days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence. The service was led by the Rev. Lizzi Green and Fr Mark Skelton. The Anglican Bishop of Plymouth, Bishop James Grier and the Arch Deacon, the Rev. Jane Bakker were also in attendance. Bishop Grier shared some words with those present, challenging society to stand up to violence against women and girls, ultimately seeking to create a society that is a safe space for all.

Rev Lizzi Green courageously shared her personal experience, alongside comforting words of scripture and the narrative of St Mary Magdalene, who, despite suffering abuse and harsh words from those around her, showed strength and witness to Christ.

Acts of reflection, remembrance and offering took place during the service. Those present were offered the opportunity to lay sprigs of rosemary for remembrance, to light a candle and also to sprinkle marigold petals over a cross of autumnal leaves laid before the altar. A hymn was sung with words written by Rev Lizzi Green, reflecting the theme of the service, followed by an Act of Hope and then an Act of Commitment.

It was an emotional yet positive service, calling on a 'restful discomfort about easy answers, a desire to seek justice, hands to reach out to those who have been harmed and the belief that we can make a difference in this world'.



Refresher Training for Readers – the New Lectionary

The books used in Mass for readings and the sacraments have been updated using a different translation of the original text. From the start of Advent this year, all Masses will use the English Standard Version as it is felt to be a more accurate translation which is easier to proclaim. The readings themselves remain the same but the translations of them are different.

The Diocese of Leeds have used this opportunity to provide some 'refresher training' for those who read at Mass – whether they are clergy or members of the laity. They have created three short videos on YouTube, available for anyone to watch, to give an introduction to the new lectionary and to act as a training guide for readers.

The first video, introduced by Bishop Marcus, is a general description of the new Lectionary and the sacred task of proclaiming God's Word in Scripture. It is presented by the Year of the Word Scripture Champion, Fr Henry Longbottom.

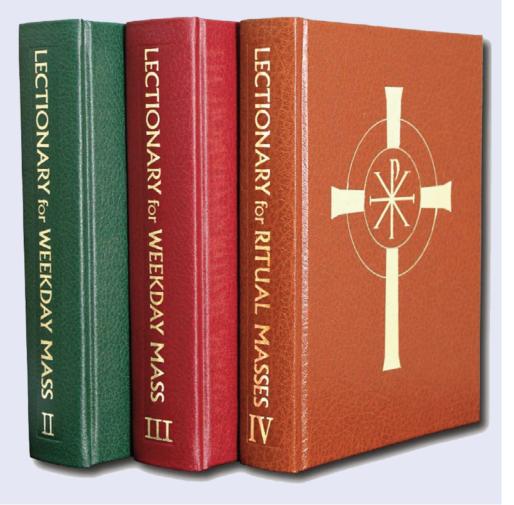
In the second in this series, Fr Henry reminds laity of the importance of prayerful

preparation to ensure the reader fully comprehends the meaning and emotions inherent in the Scripture readings, so as to give a clear, unhurried, and expressive proclamation which will be readily understood by the congregation. Reading exactly and only what is printed in black in the Lectionary, without any distracting 'instructions and introductions', allows the liturgy to flow and the Words of Scripture to speak for themselves. With a demonstration by Rowan Morton-Gledhill - Diocesan Director of Communications.

Bishop Marcus introduces the final video in the series as an opportunity for both new and experienced priests and deacons to inspire afresh all who hear them proclaim the Good News of Our Lord Jesus Christ. With a Gospel proclamation demonstrated by Fr Simon Winn.

To visit their website and watch the videos, use this QR code:





Statement on Second Reading of Assisted Suicide Bill

Following the decision of MPs to vote in favour of the Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Bill at the Second Reading today (Friday 29 November), Bishop John Sherrington, Lead Bishop for Life Issues, said:

"We are disappointed that MPs have voted in favour of the Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Bill progressing through parliament. We believe that this bill is flawed in principle and also contains particular clauses that are of concern. We ask the Catholic community to pray that members of parliament will have the wisdom to reject this bill at a later stage in its progress.

"In addition to being opposed to the principle of assisted suicide, we are particularly concerned with clauses in the bill that prevent doctors from properly exercising conscientious objection, provide inadequate protection to hospices and care homes that do not wish to participate in assisted suicide and allow doctors to initiate conversations about assisted suicide. We ask that these voices be heard in the next stages of the Bill to strengthen the deep concerns about this proposed legislation.



"We have expressed the view, during this debate, that genuine compassion involves walking with those who need care, especially during sickness, disability and old age. The vocation to care is at the heart of the lives of so many people who look after their loved ones and is the sign of a truly compassionate society. It is essential that we nurture and renew the innate call that many people have to compassionately care for others. "It remains the case that improving the quality and availability of palliative care offers the best pathway to reducing suffering at the end of life. We will continue to advocate for this and support those who work tirelessly to care for the dying in our hospices, hospitals and care homes."

Photograph courtesy of the Bishops' Conference

People 'need God' after 1,000 days of war

A Brazilian missionary priest staying in Ukraine's capital despite the dangers has shared moving details of what life is like today in the war-torn country.

Father Lucas Perozzi has refused to return to his native Brazil, rather remaining in Kyiv to minister to the faithful who increasingly "need hope" after more than a thousand days of fighting.

Father Perozzi told Aid to the Church in Need (ACN): "We go to sleep to the sound of sirens, and we wake up to the sound of sirens and bombings. The sirens sound non-stop. Psychologically, people are tired, very scared and without hope."

He added: "Then there is also the problem of the economic crisis. Things are increasingly expensive, it is a very difficult situation."

The priest said that people have gradually got used to the sound of air raid warnings and no longer seek safety in the bomb shelters - at great personal risk. He explained: "You can't live like this. For the first six months we used to run to the bunkers, but not anymore. When our time comes, it will come. Only God knows the hour. It could be a missile or a heart attack."

He added: "God is the Lord of life. That's reality, and we have come to accept it."

Father Perozzi said that his "mission... to spread the Gospel... isn't easy".

He told ACN: "People need hope, they need God, the sacred", but it seems that "nothing consoles them anymore. They have given up searching. They have become apathetic, disillusioned."

He added that the Church in Ukraine has received much-needed support from ACN, including "help to hold summer camps for children, which is very important, because they are living in a state of constant alarm.

"In my parish we held a camp in the mountains, where there are no air raid sirens, no missiles, and they can rest, they



can play, speak to each other, and we can provide pastoral care, such as Masses and catechesis."

ACN has also provided trauma counselling programmes to help people cope with the horrors of war.

Father Perozzi said: "We need to be qualified to be able to work with people who were on the frontline, with parents who lost their children, children who lost their parents... This is a new issue for us. But we do everything with gratitude - I am happy with my mission, and ready to carry it out."

He concluded: "As long as we are alive, we have the mission to proclaim the Gospel."

With thanks to Paulo Aido

Amy Balog acnuk.org

Caritas in the community: Cultivating Hope

We are drawing closer to the year of Jubilee, which has the over-arching theme of 'Pilgrims of Hope'. In the spirit of preparing for this Holy Year, Caritas Plymouth Development workers have generously shared some inspiring stories of faith in action from all corners of our beautiful diocese, which in different ways align with the Jubilee themes.

The six social justice themes for the Jubilee year are: Care For Creation, Food Poverty, Modern Slavery, Managing Debt , Forgiveness and Rest.

You can find out more about what the historic Jubilee year entails at the Catholic Bishops' Conference website by visiting www.cbcew.org.uk/jubilee-2025/

Torbay Deanery A Laudato Si Award for All Saints Parishioners Carmen and Jane

Carole Bryant, Caritas Plymouth Development Worker for Torbay Deanery has kindly shared this uplifting news about care for creation in the community! The project which has merited this award has been led by Carmen Jaye, a caring and dedicated member of All Saints Parish.

She has worked tirelessly, and with great devotion and creativity, over more than the past decade (with Jane Clatworthy being of immense help recently) to help restore the parish garden of Our Lady & St Patrick's Church Teignmouth, Devon.

The lovely space, which was once almost rubble, is now a source of joy and beauty for all who visit, as well as being a hub for wildlife such as bees.

When we spoke to Carmen about her love of gardening and passion for plants and nature, which she partly inherited from her late mother, also a long standing parishioner at All Saints, Carmen cited the following quote, originally derived from a poem by Dorothy Frances Gurney: The kiss of the sun for pardon, The song of the birds for mirth, One is nearer God's heart in a garden, than anywhere else on earth.'

Carmen would also like to thank Margaret Winfield, Veronica Sutton and all those who have helped in little ways over the years to nurture and rejuvenate this cherished parish garden.



Dorset Deanery Caritas and Parishes: Collaboration and Connection Teresa Maguire, Caritas Development Worker in Dorset has shared the following: 'The Caritas Dorset Deanery Networking and Faith Group met again this week. The group's role and purpose is to: network; exchange ideas; inspire and support each other. Although small in number this week, it is proving to be a group who are doing a great job supporting Caritas and engaging in social action. We have had representation at the network from 8 out of the 12 parishes in the deanery. We would welcome more people to join us. Meetings take place quarterly moving around the parishes. Please do get in touch.'

'I found the meeting relaxed and friendly but also very informative and wide ranging. Everyone had a chance to share what is happening in their own parishes. Although it was a small group, some positive decisions were made about future meetings.'Ann MIlward, St Anthonys West Moors

Cornwall Deanery New Volunteers For Warming Welcome Spaces

"It is always a great pleasure to meet enthusiastic people who want to do some good for those around them". This month our Caritas development worker for Cornwall has had the pleasure of working with new volunteers in Launceston, setting up a new Thursday welcome club where anyone can drop in for a free cuppa, a chat and some good company, along with a few entertaining activities. New friendships are being forged and we have already been offered some funding to buy new equipment for the session. The Caritas development worker, Tanya, has been encouraged by the wealth of things already going on around Cornwall. The keenness of parishes to work in partnership with their local communities can only lead to a joined-up approach to meet the great needs of those around us. We look forward to sharing more of what is happening in Cornwall and their faith in action.

Compassion for Carers and Combatting Modern Slavery

Alexandra Miranda, Refugee and Migrant Project Lead for Caritas Plymouth has shared the following news about the life affirming work of Caritas Plymouth in this sphere:

'Caritas Diocese of Plymouth is working to highlight the challenges that some people face when coming to the UK to work in the health and care sector, to encourage us to look out for those who may be at risk of exploitation, and to be able to signpost them to understand their rights and find sources of support. The UK relies upon migrant workers to support the care sector.

In partnership with Transformation Cornwall we held an inspiring discussion workshop in Camborne in October with local organisations committed to helping migrant workers, particularly in the care sector, who find themselves in crisis and at risk of exploitation. We wanted to work together to find ways to help migrant workers struggling to survive. Participants included other faith organisations, voluntary sector groups and statutory partners. Caritas Plymouth and Transformation Cornwall are working together to create guidance for clergy and parishes so we can all work together to prevent people becoming victims of exploitation, labour abuse and Modern Slavery.'

If you have any ideas for Jubilee related caritas in the community projects or stories of faith in action please contact caritas@prcdtr.org.uk.

Images courtesy of Carole Bryant, Teresa Maguire, Tanya Trevena and Alexandra Miranda.

Scripture Focus

By Fr Jeremy Corley



Word of God Sunday

On 26th January 2025 (the Third Sunday of the Year) we celebrate Sunday of the Word of God. This annual celebration was established by Pope Francis with his Apostolic Letter entitled Aperuit Illis (2019).

The title, meaning "He opened to them," refers to Jesus' action for his disciples on the road to Emmaus. As they were walking along downcast on Easter day, lamenting Jesus' death, he opened the Scriptures to them, showing how the Messiah had to suffer first before entering into his risen glory.

The Sunday of the Word of God is a yearly celebration when we focus especially on the gift of the Scriptures. On this particular Sunday, we are invited in a special way to open ourselves to receiving God's word, brought to us in the sacred text.

The Old Testament reading describes a key moment when the Jewish

people were rebuilding their community after the years of the Babylonian exile. They gathered in Jerusalem to hear God's word being read aloud to them in Hebrew by Ezra the priest. Just as we stand when we hear the gospel being read at Mass, so the Jews stood to welcome the message of the Torah.

But because many of them now spoke Aramaic rather than biblical Hebrew, Ezra had to translate the sacred text into Aramaic. Once they understood when they heard God's word in their own language, many of them wept, because they realised they had previously been unfaithful to God. But Ezra told them not to be sad, because God was giving them a new beginning. He said: "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

The gospel tells the familiar story of Jesus presenting his manifesto in the synagogue at Nazareth. Just as Ezra had once read to the people from the law of Moses, so Jesus now read to them from the prophet Isaiah. The prophet's message spoke of a new beginning, because God's Spirit was resting on his chosen one, bringing good news to the poor and proclaiming the year of the Lord's favour.

Whereas Ezra's reading of the Torah led to a reaction of penitence among the Jews in Jerusalem, Jesus' reading from the prophet produced an atmosphere of expectancy in the synagogue at Nazareth: "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

If the people were willing to accept it, God's Spirit would work through Jesus, to restore sight to the blind and bring release to those oppressed in mind or body. But when Jesus reminded them of God's miraculous feeding of the widow of Zarephath and the healing of the Syrian leper Naaman—both outsiders—sadly they closed their hearts to his message.

We are called to open our hearts to Jesus' message, so that we can live as his people on earth. Having heard God's word, we are called to act harmoniously with one another, like the various parts of a human body. St Paul gives us an insight into the life of the community, where each person plays a significant part. Just as a human body has many parts, which all fulfil their own function, so it is in Christ's body the church. The eye sees and the ear hears, the nose smells and the foot walks. Each part contributes to the life and health of the body.

St Paul asks: "If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?" In other words, each member of the community, however ordinary, plays a necessary part in its life.

As we hear God's word addressed to each one of us, we pray that we may hear what God wishes to say to us personally. Then strengthened by his Spirit, we pray that we may play our part happily in the life of the community, knowing that the joy of the Lord is our strength.



View from the Pew By Dr Jay Kettle-Williams

Back foot, front foot

Jesus, whose birth we celebrate at this time of the year, is acclaimed by all three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam which date back respectively some three and a half millennia, two millennia and to the eighth century. Over the intervening years, their sibling rivalry some might regard as the ultimate form of internecine strife - has surely been enough to try the patience of all the saints, let alone Christ himself.

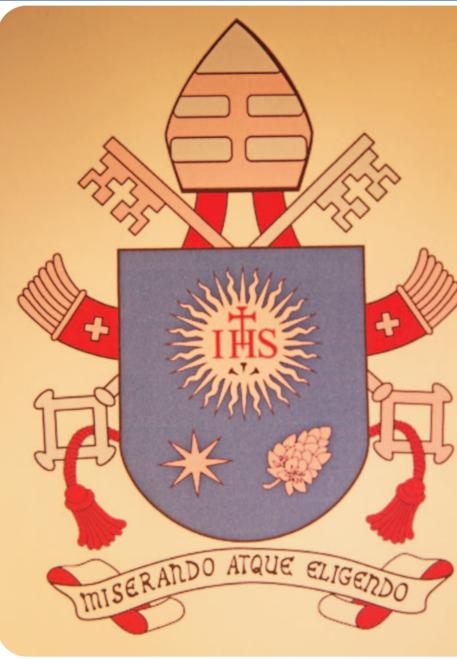
Patience, along with understanding, sits well within the Christian ethos. But neither of these two qualities has that get-up-andgo which we are ofttimes but only casually exhorted to adopt in our role as evangelists, nomenclature which I take in common parlance to mean 'promoters', 'marketeers'.

The birth of the Christ Child gives the opportunity to bring focus among those of little or no faith not to the hedonism usurping this time of the year but to the Christian message which we are charged to impart.

The world of marketing, as opposed to selling, teaches us how important it is to broadcast what you are about, to declare your essence, to get your message across, to get what you need to say out there. Business speak with terms like rationale, aims, objectives and mission statement might not be to everyone's liking when it comes to Christian evangelisation. But positioning statements, such as we do have and use in plenty, are instrumental in taking matters forward, in attracting the attention of target audiences. Perhaps we need to think more sharply along these lines.

The coats of arms and notably the corresponding mottoes, effectively positioning statements, of our bishops of England and Wales offer a fascinating field of study.

We have twenty-one dioceses in England and Wales, each led by an Ordinary (a bishop) with authority given by the Pope to exercise pastoral function over the local diocese. That gives an initial corpus of twenty-one bishops. To that number can be added any Co-Adjutor Bishops, those who assist diocesan bishops and have the right to succeed them, Suffragan Bishops, who lead a suffragan diocese within a larger ecclesiastical province but who have no assumed right of succession. Then there are others. They all add up to a grand total of some five thousand six hundred



bishops worldwide supporting some 3,000 actual dioceses.

Well, I haven't yet managed to read many of the 'mottoes' adopted by all the world's Catholic bishops - I can't even admit to having set myself that task - but those I have looked at and set about understanding are noticeable for their optimism, determination, sense of positive endeavour amid joy within Christ's embrace. They form a wonderful bank of marketing material worth translation and explanation to audiences.

But it's so sad these days when the vibes coming from churches across the land speak not of positivism but of managing decline: decline in the number of laity attending Church, decline in the number of vocations to the priesthood, decline in the revenue stream, decline in the standard of buildings. But, I say, let's out with that gloom! For God's sake!

So let's join in full and open celebration of the new birth bringing new energy to ours, the most diverse religion on the face of the planet.

Along with family, friends and colleagues I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a New Year full of health, happiness and all things positive.

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

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New toolkit to support racial & cultural inclusion in Catholic parishes

A Southwark parish has launched a new toolkit empowering Catholic parishes to promote racial and cultural inclusion in all their activities and worship.

Saint Margaret of Scotland Parish, Carshalton Beeches, is a South London parish whose demographic has changed significantly in recent years as it has welcomed more Catholic faithful from Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Eastern Europe. Fr Anthony Uche, Parish Administrator of St Margaret's, says: "We hope that this Toolkit will be of assistance to anyone wishing to promote racial and cultural inclusion more effectively in their parish. Steps to promote racial and cultural inclusion will need adaptation from one area to another. However, the overall approach which we describe is likely to be appropriate for many Catholic parishes. We would be pleased to exchange ideas with other parishes and to learn from their experiences."

The toolkit has been produced with the support of the Southwark Archdiocese's Commission for Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion. The Commission's Chair, Canon Victor Darlington, says: "The Catholic Church has a crucial role to play in speaking out against racism and promoting racial inclusion. Racism is a sin and has no place in our world. As followers of Christ, it is our duty to welcome all people, regardless of race or background, into our Church. Saint Margaret's, Carshalton Beeches, are



leading the way in putting the message of welcome and inclusion into practice. It is wonderful to see how they have transformed their parish into one which is more inclusive, welcoming and reflective of the people they serve. I am delighted with their toolkit, which is designed to provide practical and helpful tips for parishes to ensure they are welcoming to all."

The toolkit provides comprehensive practical advice and includes details of website links and resources (many available free of charge). This includes advice on setting up a parish racial and cultural inclusion group; welcoming new parishioners; obtaining racially diverse pictures, statues and Repository items; ensuring diversity in parish ministries;

dealing with racial incidents; and organising multi-cultural celebrations and events.

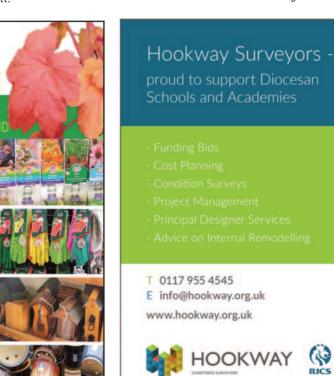
Andrea Fernandes, Co-Chair of the St Margaret's Racial and Cultural Inclusion Group, commented: "Our approach emphasises that the racial and cultural diversity of a parish is a blessing from the Lord; that the experiences, traditions and worship of different racial and cultural groups can enrich the life of a parish; and that the whole parish benefits from the experience of racial and cultural inclusion."

The toolkit can be accessed free of charge by using the QR code below and on the Saint Margaret of Scotland Parish, Carshalton website. A limited number of hard copies are available, price £12.50 including postage, from the Parish Office, Saint Margaret of Scotland Church, Fir Tree Grove, Carshalton SM5 4NG.



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Civil war in Sudan: What's happening and why?

For over a year, the people of Sudan – one of the largest countries in Africa — have suffered under a brutal civil war that has reduced the capital, Khartoum, to a war zone.

Amid the chaos and a complex set of competing political interests, children and the poor have been hit hardest.

Recently, the United Nations confirmed that 35 children were among those killed in one of the war's deadliest attacks to date. All told, at least 15,550 people have reportedly been killed in the fighting and some 10 million people have been displaced, many internally.

An overwhelmingly Muslim country, Catholics made up roughly 5% of the population of Sudan before the most recent war and played an important role in schools and education. But now, many missionaries and religious communities have had to flee the country, and parishes, hospitals, and schools have ceased their activities. In Sudan's neighboring country, South Sudan, the Church maintains a large presence and remains very active in relief efforts.

The papal charity Aid to the Church in Need, which supports persecuted Christians throughout the world, remains active in Sudan. Kinga Schierstaedt, head of ACN's projects in Sudan, told CNA last week that they know of 10 Catholic priests remaining in the Khartoum area, plus five Salesian sisters. Schierstaedt said Catholics in the country have had to be resourceful and adaptable amid an everchanging situation.

"For example, the Comboni Missionaries, who had been running a university in Khartoum, moved all teaching online and were thus able to continue teaching their students. In April of this year, the first set of students, who had all fled Khartoum and live currently either within the country or in neighboring countries, were able to complete their exams," Schierstaedt said.

Schierstaedt said ACN has documented several lootings of churches, convents, and presbyteries amid the violence and destruction.

"At the beginning of the war, many project partners told us that this mainly happened because the attackers assumed that there was gold to be found in the churches and presbyteries. They were therefore mainly after the material possessions. Secondly, churches were also often attacked because the attackers knew that refugees were staying there," she explained.

"However, we are now increasingly hearing that these acts of destruction are also more and more directed against the Christian faith. Many of the remaining priests, for example, no longer use their own vehicles for fear that they could be taken away from them," she continued.

What brought Sudan to this point?

Sudan's current civil war began in April 2023, with warring factions the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) led by two rival generals. But before this point, the country had been racked with turmoil for decades with multiple conflicts.

Because of its large size and geographical position, Sudan has long served as a crossroads between the Arab and African worlds. Historically, the country is extremely diverse, with Muslims and people of animist faiths primarily in the north and Christianity prevalent in the south. Religious and cultural differences as well as battles for the country's vast natural resources, including oil and gold, have long fueled conflicts.

Beginning even before Sudan gained its independence from the British in 1956, the country's 1955–1972 first civil war ended with the creation of the Southern Sudan Autonomous Region (which would later secede and become South Sudan).

Sudan's next major conflict, a 22-year second civil war beginning in 1983, was to be even more devastating — it was one of the deadliest conflicts since World War II, with more than 2 million people killed. Instances of famine recorded in the Darfur region in particular shocked the world.

In the midst of that conflict, Omar al Bashir, a hardline Islamist, overthrew the democratically elected government in 1989. He imposed a harsh interpretation of Sharia law on the country and persecuted religious minorities, including Christians. In 2003, he cracked down on rebels in the Darfur region, killing an estimated 300,000 people; fighters also committed numerous atrocities including sexual violence.

Fearing he would be deposed in a coup as he himself had seized power, al Bashir



Sisters from the Salesian Sisters in Sudan serve the poor and needy in the midst of a brutal war in Sudan. The sisters commiunity, Dar Mariam, has been a refuge for hundreds, though has damaged by gunfire and bombs. May 2024.

Photograph: Father Jacob Thelekkadan

tried to coup-proof himself by creating two militaries, the paramilitary RSF and the "official" SAF, whom he hoped would never collaborate with each other to overthrow him.

Finally, in 2005, a peace agreement was signed with the SPLA, a significant rebel group in South Sudan. The most important part of this agreement, Schierstaedt said, was a referendum on the independence of the south, which passed overwhelmingly and led to the separation of the two states in 2011. South Sudan, despite taking 75% of Sudan's oil wealth, remains one of the world's poorest countries, having suffered under its own civil war since 2013.

In 2019, amid popular uprisings against al Bashir, the president was, as he had feared, deposed in a military coup after 30 years in office. The RSF and SAF collaborated to achieve the coup.

Al Bashir was succeeded by a military council, and in October 2021, a new charter was signed with the aim of creating a constitution, which Sudan has lacked since 2005.

However, there was another coup and a nationwide state of emergency was declared, though the prime minister ousted in the coup was quickly but briefly reinstated. Fighting then broke out between the SAF and RSF on April 15, 2023, for control of the country. In the absence of any kind of functional civilian government, Sudanese Gen. Abdel Fattah al Burhan of the SAF has de facto ruled the country ever since.

The RSF has captured almost every city in the Darfur region and has been accused of war crimes and ethnic cleansing.

The ordinary citizens of Sudan have suffered years of bombing amid the war, as a recent story from ACI Africa, CNA's news partner in Africa, explains. Nearly 18 million people across the country are currently experiencing "acute" food insecurity.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, both major investors in the Sudanese economy, are seen as players in a proxy war as both countries are sponsoring fighters that serve their interests in the country. The Russian paramilitary mercenary organization The Wagner Group has also been active in the conflict.

"Many international players ask about how many millions of USD are needed to help Sudan in this humanitarian crisis. But they do not ask about how to stop those who 'sponsor' the war," Schierstaedt noted.

Pope Francis has renewed his appeal for peace in Sudan, calling on the country's warring parties to lay down their weapons and stop the fighting. The SAF recently rejected a U.S. call to return to peace talks with the RSF.

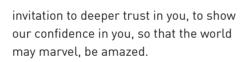
Proclamation of new Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia

On Monday 2 December 2024, at a solemn Mass in Saint David's Cathedral, Bishop, Mark O'Toole, received the Papal Bull appointing him as Archbishop of the new Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia. Bishop O'Toole's homily for the Proclamation of the New Archdiocese follows:

On 3rd September it was a real surprise to receive a phone call from the Nuncio letting me know that the Holy Father agreed that the Archdiocese of Cardiff and the Diocese of Menevia were to be united and this would be decreed on 12th September, the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary. We were of course hoping that decision would come but perhaps not as promptly as it did. That morning, I had read a passage from St Gregory the Great in which he describes his faith and his pastoral responsibilities. At one point, he says, "Who am I - what kind of watchman am I? I do not stand on the pinnacle of achievement, I languish rather in the depths of my weakness. And yet the creator and redeemer of mankind can give me, unworthy though I be, the grace to see life whole and power to speak effectively of it. It is for love of him that I do not spare myself in preaching him".

It is for love of Him, for love of Jesus, that we gather here today at this new beginning, as we receive and proclaim the Decree the Holy Father has sent us. It is because we want to have the faith of that Soldier we hear about in the Gospel, the Centurion. "Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof, but only say the word, and I, and we shall be healed". This prayer we make every time we come to Mass. It comes just before the moment of intense intimacy with the Lord, when we receive Him in Holy Communion, take His Body and Blood into ourselves, so that we have the courage and confidence to go forth in His name, to bring Him to others.

Jesus marvels at the soldier's faith, at the confidence he has in Jesus. The centurion knows that if Jesus says the Word, it will be done. The soldier knows this experience from having to direct and guide others. "I say to one go and he goes, to another come and he comes, to my servant "do this" and he does it.". We need the kind of confidence that this soldier had in Jesus. Lord we need this faith. The faith that like the Centurion's amazes you. You want us to trust you like he did. This is the faith that makes you marvel. This new beginning must be an



Help us to come to you as Kyrios, as Lord, as the One who is the source of our joy, of our energy and our life. And to "Go" forth in your name, not go 'from you' but to go forward in the power and strength of your presence to those who do not know you, who have not had the beauty of an encounter with you. To go to those who are furthest away.

Lord, help us to do this in communion with one another, walking together, assisting each one to be able to participate more profoundly and deeply, so that all may have their voice and their part in bringing others to you. This is our Mission.

"Nawr, dim ond ychydig eiriau yn iaith hynafol Cymru. Mae'r seremoni hon yn atgof dyfnach o'r cysylltiad pwysig sydd gennym ag Olynydd Sant Pedr. Mae'r Tad Sanctaidd wedi anfon llythyr atom yn nodi ein hundeb newydd â'n gilydd. Mae'r Pab Ffransis yn ein hatgoffa mai dim ond oherwydd ein hundeb â lesu y mae'r undeb hwn â'n gilydd yn bosibl. Boed heddiw i helpu pob un ohonom 'Ddod' yn llawer agosach at lesu, a rhoi'r dewrder inni 'Fynd' at eraill fel Ei ddisgyblion cenhadol.

Proclamation of New Archdiocese

Now, just a few words in the ancient language of Wales. This ceremony is a deeper reminder of the important link we have with the Successor of St Peter. The Holy Father has sent us a letter marking our new union with one another. Pope Francis reminds us that this union with one another is only possible because of our union with Jesus. May today help each of us 'Come' much closer to Jesus, and give us the courage to "Go" to others as His missionary disciples."

In the Gospel Jesus was amazed by the faith of one man - a Gentile soldier of all people, a stranger to the covenant, a man with limited understanding of the religious traditions, but a man who saw who Jesus for who He really is - Kyrios, Lord, the Son of God.

By admitting in humility his unworthiness to have Christ in his home, this man makes possible the invitation to have Christ in his heart. This man whose faith made Jesus marvel was not a disciple, did no miracles, established no churches, had no academic degree, and no religious title. His spiritual résumé was unimpressive. The man whose faith Jesus marvelled at, was a Centurion who knew who Jesus was, what he was able to do, and this gave him confidence. He asked Jesus humbly, and trusted that he would receive what he needed. He showed he really believed in Jesus.

This is still the faith that makes Jesus marvel. Who are the centurions of our day, of our Archdiocese? Who are those men, women, young people, children, who amaze us by their faith? Who are the ones who are not put off by the seemingly overwhelming task of faith in Jesus in the present age? Who, despite the messages of death and destruction, are not overcome by their unworthiness, or the unworthiness of the Church, but see in this a further invitation to trust in Jesus. and to be courageous in bearing witness to Him?

Our new Archdiocese, needs priests, religious lay men and women, yes and an Archbishop too, who have this kind of faith. A faith which amazes others, so that we do not keep doing the same old, same old. Can we do something else, can we do something fresh and different? It could be something small or particular in our own personal lives. Or could it be something big and audacious, where we even interrupt Jesus, as the centurion did, and make Him marvel. God knows we need something unprecedented and new in our generation, in our society, in our Archdiocese.

May the Lord give us the courage to do it.

+Mark O'Toole Archbishop of Cardiff-Menevia



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Catholic South West January 2025 11 **Our Lady of Lourdes** & St. Cecilia White Cliff Mill St., Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 7B **Christmas Eve: Tuesday 24 Decemb** Confessions at 17.00 followed by the Children's Mass at 18.00 Then Confessions from 21.30 - 22.15 Carols from 22.30 until Midnight Mass at 23.00 Christmas Day: Wednesday 25 December Mass at 10.00 Most Precious Blood Sidmouth Christmas Vigil Mass 7pm on **Tuesday 24th December** Midnight Mass at Midnight Christmas Day Mass at 10:30am Come and join us! All welcome

The Parish of St Cuthbert Mayne

Tuesday 24th December, Christmas Eve Vigil Mass of Christmas at 5pm at St Peter's, Bude Night Mass of Christmas at 10pm at St Cuthbert Mayne, Launceston

Wednesday 25th December, Christmas Day Mass of the Dawn at 8.30am at Our Lady of Victories, Callington Mass of the Day at 10.30am, St Cuthbert Mayne, Launceston St Peter's Bude at IOam

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Book Reviews

God. The Universe and Everything

By Roy Peachey £14.95 Product Code[•] 1982 ISBN No:9780852316429 www.rpbooks.co.uk

Here it is. Everything you could possibly want to know about God and the universe in one book. Well. maybe not quite everything, but you'll be surprised at how much we've nacked in There

GOD NIVERSA EVERYTHING

are escape stories and riddles and ancient games. There are codes, cricket and football. There are elephants, time-eaters and cosmic explosions. There's a goldfish. But, above all, there's the story of God's amazing love for us over the whole of human history:the greatest story of all time

What are you waiting for? Dive on in.

The Art of Saints By Sr Wendy Beckett £9.95 Product Code: 1514 ISBN No:9780852313855

www.rpbooks.co.uk

There have been countless depictions of the Christian saints by

centuries. In this beautiful book, Sister Wendy Beckett offers us a selection of saints, some well known,

others far less so. The works of art she has chosen – dating from the fifteenth century to the present day – give us an insight into the lives of these holy men and women as seen by a wide variety of artists. Sister Wendy also leads us to reflect on the message they have for our own lives. Above all, she calls us to remember that "All of them take their meaning from the presence in their life of Jesus.

Praying with the Bible: An Ignatian Guide Nikolaas Sintobin SJ

£12.95 ISBN No: 9781788126922 www.messenger.ie

PRAYING

WITH TH

RIRLE

Bestselling author, Nikolaas Sintobin SJ is your guide to making your bible a new way of praying.

The Ignatian way of praying with the Bible is simple and subtle at the same

time. It is accessible to young and old alike. There are no prerequisites. You can pray with it for five minutes, you can pray with it for an hour or more. This easy to read book gives you fifty tips on all possible aspects of this way of praying with the Bible

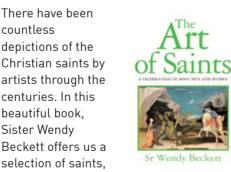
Following on from the fifty tips, is a sequence of fifty Bible texts. With each text you get a short commentary and



three suggestions for praying with the passage. Together they form a retreat called Following him. This retreat introduces you, at your own pace, to praying with the Bible, with a special focus on Jesus.

A Flemish Jesuit priest, Nikolaas Sintobin has been a teacher and a chaplain in the Jesuit high schools of Paris and Antwerp, and has specialised in Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy. He has worked as an internet chaplain for the past 12 years. He is interested in finding ways to understand and share the Gospel in our current secular and multi-religious culture: through humour, podcasts, reality TV, YouTube and blogging. Previous books with Messenger Publications include Did Jesus Really Exist? and 51 other questions (2020), Trust Your Feelings: Learning How to Makes Choices with Ignatius of Loyola (2022) and Living with Ignatius (2023).

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

CRYPTIC Across

- Cases I select at random for the book (12) 1
- Concentrated exchange of Russian using little 8 American money? (7)
- **9** Widespread looting at first during search (5)
- **10** Nets second following corner (5)
- 11 Stay in bed to read Punch, perhaps (3,4)
- 12 Obtain a new piano sound, but there's no intro to give one a clue (4,2,7)
- 15 Japanese massage some Muslims, and after time, American's back (7)
- 17 Up to now more than one's being abominable (5)
- **19** Hand needs week to bring on puppy (5)
- **20** Still, it is the road back after stagnation (7)
- 21 Decision at pontoon bridge: maybe it's one too far? (5,2,5)

CRYPTIC Down

- 1 What cohesion? Everyone's different (4,2,3,3)
- 2 Georgia's study, majoring in dance (5)
- 3 Money nearly stretches to the Orient in subscription which covers two continents (7)
- 4 Carol's nice dull bijou building (2,5,6)
- **5** Lost cat after a little way, following fish (5)
- See Jeff Endicott's lodging in address out east (7) 6 Scanned to get rub, something that's good for blocked 7
- pipes (12) 13 Virginia, one at home being the most self-important (7)

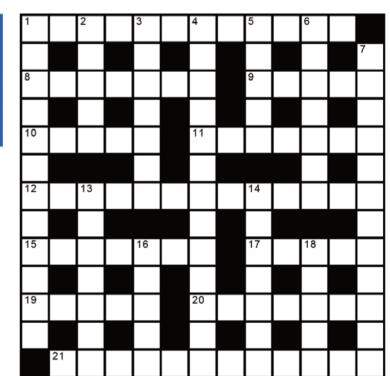
- 14 Critical point for resort in Florida (3,4)
- 16 Subject of river stems from a line on a map (5)
- 18 Sounding impatient but no good leaving when all are playing together (5)

QUICK Across

- 1 One of the OT's Wisdom Books (12)
- 8 Focused (7)
- 9 Weapon (5)
- 10 Ensnares (5)
- 11 Don't get up early from bed (3,4)
- **12** Get wind of something; suspect (4,2,7)
- **15** Japanese form of acupuncture (7)
- 17 Legends of the Himalayas (5)
- **19** Cub; pup (5)
- 20 Sloth; passivity (7)
- 21 Dilemma in pontoon to hold what you have or gamble by taking another card (5,2,5)

QUICK Down

- 1 Saying that everyone has a right to have different preferences (4,2,3,3)
- 2 Latin American dance with dancers in single file (5) 3 Unbroken landmass from the Atlantic Ocean to the
- Pacific (7) 4 Christmas song anglicized as Good Christian Men, Rejoice (2,5,6)



- 5 Alley cat, for example (5)
- Title of respect from the Ottoman Empire (7) 6
- 7 Chesty cough medicine (12)
- **13** Most conceited (7)
- 14 Resort at the southernmost tip of Florida (3,4)
- 16 Subject matter (5)
- 18 In music, 'to be performed by the entire ensemble' (5)

SOLUTION

7 Decongestant, 13 Vainest, 14 Key West, 16 Topic, 18 Tutti. 2 Conga, 3 Eurasia, 4 In Dulci Jubilo, 5 Stray, 6 Effendi, 20 Inertia, 21 Stick or twist. Down: 1 Each to his own, into, 12 Have an inkling, 15 Shiatsu, 17 Yetis, 19 Whelp,

Across: 1 Ecclesiastes, 8 Centred, 9 Rifle, 10 Traps, 11 Lay