

SEPTEMBER  
2025  
50p  
(where sold)



# Catholic *South West*

*Serving the Church in the South West*



## *Inside*



*A Reflection on Peace  
Page 2*



*Ordination of a new  
deacon in Cornwall  
Page 3*



*new Head of Caritas  
Page 10*



*The Fool's Pilgrimage  
Page 11*



## *Jubilee of Youth* Page 7





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.

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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.  
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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](mailto:csw@cathcom.org) before 10th of the month



A Reflection on Peace

This month, Canon Paul has reflected on the topic of peace – an issue which is close to the heart of Pope Leo XIV.

“You only have to switch on the news these days and the first thing you hear is war, war in the Middle East, war in Eastern Europe, war in all sorts of different places, some better known than others and it makes me despair. I wonder what that’s all about and what we can do about it. I’m reminded of Jesus’ words to his apostles in John’s Gospel when he is saying goodbye to them, ‘peace I leave with you, my own peace I give you, a peace the world cannot give, that is my gift to you’. He goes on and says ‘do not be troubled or afraid’. That gives me comfort in one sense as the Lord tells me not to be troubled by this, but he also tells us about the gift of peace – not a gift that we make of ourselves, but something that God gives to us. A God-given peace that we’re called to share with others. It makes me think how do we do that? How do we put that into practice in our own lives?

I was reminded of this by Pope Leo when the first thing he said going out onto the steps in front of St Peter’s Square was ‘Peace be with you all’, emphasising the ‘all’ which is a brave thing to do. That’s his prayer and wish following in the words of Jesus.... I’ve taken one quote from Pope Leo XVI that describes something of what we are called to be doing as Christians in today’s world about peace: ‘Our world,

wounded by war, violence and injustice needs to hear the gospel message of God’s love, and to experience the reconciling power of Christ’s grace. In this sense the Church herself in all her members is increasingly called to be a missionary church that opens its arms to the world, proclaims the Word and becomes a leaven of harmony for humanity.... We are to bring to all peoples, indeed to all creatures, the Gospel promise of true and lasting peace.’ We need to be that leaven in the world. In our communities/parish communities or as individuals, we can be agents, leaven, for peace in the way in which we live. How this applies to each individual can vary dramatically depending on our opportunity and our connections with people, but I would say we need to live peacefully, in peace with others so that others may live in peace.

One of the other things that Jesus shows us is that prayer for peace is powerful. The Lord in his final prayer for his disciples, for us, says ‘may they all be one’. Jesus was praying for peace, that we may all be one in harmony and together. Another thing we could do apart from just being leaven in today’s world, is being messengers of peace, showing people how to live peacefully. The other way is to pray for peace.

Here is a prayer from CAFOD, who do so much for peace, slightly adapted. I would ask you to follow it in your heart and to

pray for peace, justice, and love to prevail:

Lord watch over the people who have been forced to flee their homes and face violence and fear.  
Lead them to a place of safety, bring comfort to those who grieve, and bring healing to those in pain.  
Convert the hearts of those who commit violence and wage war, turn them away from persecution towards peace.  
Turn hatred to understanding, and anger to compassion.  
Through your love transform horror into hope.  
Fill us with your spirit and send us the gift of your peace.  
Our Lady Queen of Peace, pray for us.

May you live in peace today, may you pray for peace today, and may the Lord bring peace to all. Peace be with you. God bless you.”

Canon Paul Cummins

You can listen to the full reflection by scanning the QR Code below:



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!

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# Congratulations on the ordination of a new deacon in Cornwall



On 13 July, the diocese celebrated the ordination of Raphael Krasnodebski as Permanent Deacon at St Mary's, Bodmin. Fr Jacek Kostuch noted that he is the first Permanent Deacon in Cornwall for 17 years and only the second in 20 years. Congratulations to Raphael and his family on this joyous occasion.

Please pray for him in his ministry.

## What does a deacon do?

A deacon performs a number of liturgical duties within a parish. Deacons assist priests at Mass by proclaiming the Gospel, preaching the homily, and serving

as ordinary ministers of the Eucharist. Deacons can also baptise, witness marriages, and preside at funerals or burial services. They may also be called upon to lead the celebration of the Liturgy of Hours, Eucharistic Adoration, and benedictions, and offer blessings in the name of the Church.

## How do you become a deacon?

If you are interested in becoming a deacon, your first port of call is to speak to your parish priest or to contact our vocations team:

<https://priesthoodplymouth.co.uk/>

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Dalai Lama turns 90 **page 3**  
 Carlo Acutis **page 7**  
 Welcome the holies! **page 11**  
 St John Vianney 4 August

## To be a pilgrim

As we move into the summer months, many dioceses across the country will be embarking on pilgrimages. Throughout history and across the world, people have set out on journeys in search of something greater than themselves. The motivations are many and diverse – some want to develop their understanding of themselves and the world, some to deepen their faith or to heal.

For Catholics, a pilgrimage is a spiritual journey to a holy place. The most popular and sacred destinations are Lourdes (with an estimated 200 million visitors since 1860 when pilgrimages there began), Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain and of course, the Holy Land which the current fighting has made impossible to visit. Unlike a holiday, where relaxation and sightseeing might be the goal, a pilgrimage is about inner renewal. As the journey progresses, so does the soul's transformation.

At its heart, a pilgrimage is an invitation to encounter God in a profound way. The effort required – planning, travelling, stepping outside your comfort zone – becomes part of the prayer. Along the way, pilgrims often find moments of quiet to reflect and listen, away from the noise of daily life. Many pilgrimages include the Sacraments: daily Mass, opportunities for Confession, and Eucharistic Adoration. Walking in the footsteps of saints or standing in places marked by Marian apparitions can awaken a deeper love for God and a renewed sense of faith.

Pilgrimage also reminds us that faith is not a solitary journey. Visiting shrines and cathedrals where generations have prayed creates a tangible connection to the Church's history and to the Communion of Saints. Whether travelling alone, with family, or as part of a group, pilgrims experience a unique fellowship along the way. Sharing meals, prayers, and stories fosters bonds that can last a lifetime. As one pilgrim said: "I left as a stranger and returned with a family."

For many, pilgrimage is a response to a deep need for healing – physical, emotional, or spiritual. Sites such as Lourdes in France or Holywell in Wales have long been associated with miraculous cures and profound grace. Even when physical healing does not come, pilgrims often discover a peace that brings inner restoration. In overcoming hardships and intentions to God, they find a renewed sense of hope.

Pilgrimage is not always easy – and that is part of its power. It involves early mornings, unfamiliar places, and sometimes long, demanding walks. These challenges strip away comforts and distractions, creating space for God to work in the heart. Small sacrifices – giving up control of schedules, enduring simple accommodation, or walking through rain – become acts of love and trust. In a world that prizes convenience, pilgrimage reminds us of the value of perseverance and humility.

Not every pilgrimage requires boarding a plane or walking hundreds of miles. Across the UK, there are countless opportunities for local pilgrimages. Historic shrines like Walsingham in Norfolk, the holy well of St Winifred in Wales, and Scotland's Carlin Grotto attract thousands each year. A pilgrimage can be as simple as setting aside a day to visit a nearby church or cathedral with a prayerful heart. The essence of pilgrimage is not in the distance travelled but in the disposition of the heart – a willingness to seek God and allow Him to transform the journey.

If the idea of pilgrimage has ever moved you, perhaps now is the time to respond. Whether you are seeking healing, clarity, or a deeper relationship with God, a pilgrimage offers the chance to step away from the ordinary and encounter the extraordinary. It is a reminder that the Christian life itself is a pilgrimage – a journey towards the ultimate destination: heaven.

So, where might God be calling you? To the quiet of Walsingham's shrine, the healing waters of Holywell, or perhaps a Camino route through the rolling countryside? Wherever the path leads, the promise is the same: God walks with those who seek Him.

Scan the QR Code below for inspiration about where to go in the UK.

If you have been given the Catholic Post for free in your parish, PLEASE would you be able to donate £1 to your parish for it, or even £10 per year!



## Synodal Journey - Implementation Phase

At the end of June, the "Pathways for the Implementation phase of the Synod" was published after a meeting between Pope Leo and the Synod Secretariat. It is an outline of the on-going Synodal journey from 2025 to 2028 in relation to the 'Final Document' from the Synod of Bishops published at the end of last year.

Bishops have the prime responsibility for overseeing the phase in their dioceses, but this does not mean that the journey is not moving forward in the Diocese of Plymouth. Canon Paul Cummins, our Diocesan Administrator, has asked a small team to pull together a variety of pathways for our Diocese, based on the Final Document, so that these can be presented to our new

Bishop, when he is appointed, for his discernment/guidance.

However, we don't need to wait for a Bishop to continue our ongoing journey of Synodality. The building up of the body of Christ and the mission of the church is a task entrusted to each of us as the people of God, through our baptismal vocation. We are all encouraged to practice synodality in our daily lives, enabling us to walk with Christ along the road together, with listening and talking, and being moved by the Holy Spirit.

To read the Implementation Phase of the Synod scan the QR Code right.







# St Vincent de Paul Society is active in many countries throughout the world

The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) is active in many parishes in the Plymouth Diocese, but we are often reminded that the SVP is active in many countries throughout the world. My wife and I spent Christmas 2024 and the New Year upside-down... that is, we spent the festive season in New Zealand, staying with our eldest daughter and family. We have visited many times over the years, including at Christmas a few years ago. Making the most of the southern hemisphere summer, escaping for a while from the rigours of a Devon winter. The seasons are upside-down, the sun and moon move across the sky right-to-left as you look north... in other words towards the Equator. One could enumerate other differences between the Antipodes and the UK, but some things are the same: people need people. In other words, there are needy people in New Zealand, and the SVdP as it is known in NZ has a major role to play, just as it has in the UK.

In fact, as in Australia too, the SVdP has a national profile, its work and its shops being familiar to many, not just to Catholics. So much so that everyone is familiar with the Vinnies, as they are usually called. At least, that's what we've observed in Hamilton, NZ's fourth city, from joining in with SVdP activities during several of our visits. As reported in a previous article in Vincentian Concern a few years ago, two activities we've enjoyed helping with have been: the Milo van, and the community lunches. The Milo van toured around the poorer districts of Hamilton on weekday evenings, following a different route each evening. At each stop, the volunteers on board distributed sandwiches, cereal bars and fruit donated by local food stores and bakeries. These were snapped up by the youngsters, whilst adults were also given loaves of bread, and eggs. Why 'Milo' van? Because the SVdP team also distributed hot Milo, a chocolate malt drink, from the back of the van! Unfortunately, the 2020 pandemic and lockdowns put an end to this. As for

the community lunches: we remember fondly the Maori hangi lunch prepared by a local Maori club, at which local homeless people and poor families ate a traditional Maori meal to the sounds of a Maori group singing their traditional songs. We just helped with the drying up! The other memorable lunch was the one donated by a local McDonalds, served by off-duty McDonalds volunteers: obviously a very popular free lunch!

Being in Hamilton during Christmas this time, the community lunches were not due to restart until after we returned to the UK. However, on the Sunday before Christmas we were welcomed at the main Mass in Hamilton RC Cathedral by the President of Hamilton SVdP Chris and his lovely Samoan family. We were taken to sit in the front row, and invited to take part in the offertory procession; as we arrived at the sanctuary, Carol and I and the celebrant had garlands of sweets hung around our necks - a Samoan custom! A few days after Christmas we were able to spend some time at the SVdP centre in Frankton, a district of Hamilton. They were about to inaugurate their newly modernised and extended hall; the whole centre has been revamped since our last visit in 2017; the furniture shop has been reconfigured, and the 'op shop' (charity shop) is still an important element of the centre; we also noticed the Vinnies launderette! We had an interesting meeting with John, the General Manager of Vinnies, Hamilton, hearing about their many activities and the generous sponsorship of local companies: indeed, a new sponsorship donation for Vinnies, Hamilton, appeared on my Facebook page just a couple of days ago. John had arranged for an associate to come to talk to us about a scheme by which SVdP acts as a sort of intermediary between power companies and families who struggle to pay their power bills; the power companies find it difficult to deal sensitively with struggling families, and these families trust SVdP. This scheme is



Mike and Chris (right), the President of SVdP, Hamilton

in use across NZ, and is being introduced in parts of Australia; the company administering it hope to extend the scheme to the UK in future.

One thing we were really pleased about was getting our two older Kiwi grandsons to spend a couple of hours helping out at the Vinnies food bank while we were involved in the meetings described. We left them in the capable hands of the staff... but when we returned later we were at first alarmed to see that our teenagers were filling little sachets with white powder! It was just sugar; another lad was making up portions of butter. The reason was that the Vinnies food parcels aim to supply a family with its needs for a couple of days; while we were there, a man with mobility problems came to collect his food parcel, and an SVdP driver was loading up his van, to deliver to families on his round. Our grandsons found the experience interesting; hopefully on another occasion they might be able to help at a community lunch; it is so important that we involve young people, to ensure the future of SVdP. Our lads showed us how they made up a parcel with packets and tins of food, working on a printed list. The last couple

of items on the list were soap, toothpaste and loo paper. Carol and I were reminded of an occasion during one of the pandemic lockdowns when we made up an emergency food box in response to an urgent text message from a single mum we had been helping: she was desperate for some basic food items to enable her to feed her hungry boys over the weekend, before their Universal Credit payment was due. We were able to raid our food cupboard for spare items. Literally as we were about to drive off to deliver these emergency supplies, the mum rang me to ask if we could spare some loo paper. We SVP members need to bear in mind that the dignity of needy people suffers, and has to be respected.

A couple of observations in conclusion: there are needy people the world over; SVdP is just like SVP in the UK in its commitment to give help where needed: our vocation is the same, and we are privileged to have SVP sisters and brothers everywhere who are. Just like us, inspired by Frederic Ozanam and the other founders of SVP, and of course by St Vincent himself.

Mike Zollo  
President, SVP Totnes and Newton Abbot



SVdP Coffee Morning



SVdP food bank



# Buckfast Abbey: Parish Picnic Organised by St Neot Group based at Liskeard



On Wednesday 18th June 2025, Our St Neot Group gathered in Our St Neot Room, Liskeard, for reflection on the Caritas theme 'Rest and Forgiveness.'

'And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So, the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."' Mark 2:27-28

Rest is an important idea in the Bible because it protected slaves, servants and animals from exhaustion and because it provided a day for worshipping God each week with one's family or community. Not all of us can take time off easily, especially with so many people holding multiple jobs or long-hours jobs just to cover the bills. Those in retirement may have caring responsibilities and other commitments. Many people cannot do paid work due to ill health or because of other caring responsibilities but they do not benefit from rest either.

How can you help yourself and others to rest: Is there half an hour you can set aside to sit and be with God each week or month? Choose a day when you don't open your emails first thing in the morning or late at night. If you live alone, make some time to join a new group online or in person. If you live alone, make time to visit a local place where you can relax in the company of strangers.

The purpose of the Year of Jubilee is to turn our anxieties away from our debts (or our debtors), our jobs, our busy lives, and reflect on God as our provider. We rest because God rested. Our pray and worship sustain and support us to make a difference in the name of God.

"Be kind and tenderhearted... forgiving each other." Ephesians 4:32

A rabbi asked his students how they could tell when night had ended, and day was on its way back. "Is it when you can see an animal in the distance, and tell whether it is a sheep or a dog?" "No," answered the rabbi. "Is it when you can look at a tree in the distance, and tell whether it is a fig or a peach tree?" "No," "Well then," the students demanded, "When is it?" "It is when you look on the face of another human being and see that he or she is your brother or sister. Because if you cannot do that, then no matter what time it is, it is still night."

The Jubilee Year is an opportunity to make peace with us and with others. The sacrament of reconciliation is a way to help us find that forgiveness and peace. The Jubilee Year is an opportunity for collective penance and reconciliation. We are invited to stand together to confess our sins, to ask for forgiveness, to forgive those who have offended us, and to make peace with each other.




On Wednesday 16th July 2025, twenty-four parishioners from Liskeard visited Buckfast Abbey for our parish picnic / teddy bear's picnic – Pilgrim Bear Francis came along also!

We all arrived in time to attend Mass and look around the Abbey before adjourning to the picnic benches outside to have our picnic and a walk around the beautiful gardens. At 02:00pm we gathered around, the beautiful statue of Smiling Mary looking down at the baby Jesus in her arms, to sing and pray. We started with a prayer for peace across the world and sang "Make me a channel of thy peace" and said a decade of the rosary: The Crucifixion: we finished by singing "As I kneel before thee" and a final prayer. Though the clouds were grey and there were spots of mizzling rain, the weather on a whole was kind to us and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the day of peace, friendship and reflection.

Article by Rosemarie de Boyer and photos by Alfie Hillson







# Justice and Peace – Choose Hope

CAFOD parish representative in Launceston, John Ashdown, has shared his account of a recent mass lobby of parliament on the CAFOD campaign to cancel the debt of impoverished countries. A mass lobby is an event where lots of people meet with their MPs on the same day to have conversations about issues we all care about.

Supporters of more than 100 organisations from across the UK went to Westminster to ask MPs to take action on climate, debt and nature. Climate and debt is two of the six social action themes of the Jubilee year.

John writes “On an extremely hot day in Westminster, I joined 5000 others at a Mass Lobby of Parliament. This was a unique opportunity for Catholics across the country to ask MPs to urgently take action to tackle the intertwined crises of unjust debt and climate change.

Today, 1 in 4 countries globally are in debt crisis, spending more on debt repayment than health, education, policing and their environment. At the same time, we are witnessing the impacts of the climate crisis through an escalating number of devastating droughts, floods and hurricanes in all parts of our world. Throughout the afternoon, as a CAFOD representative, I had a meeting with Wes Powell who was representing our North Cornwall MP, Ben Maguire. He took on board the concerns raised and agreed to represent our views with Ben.

It was a worthwhile meeting and I came away feeling confident that our views would be taken on board and raise in Parliament.”

CAFOD Cancel the Debt petition: You can find out more about this CAFOD campaign scan the QR code below



For all your advertising requirements please contact Nick on 01440 730399 [nick@cathcom.org](mailto:nick@cathcom.org)



## SEASON OF CREATION 2025 – ‘Seeds of Peace and Hope’

In 2015, Pope Francis instituted in the Catholic Church the “World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation” which starts the ecumenical Season of Creation. This takes place each year from 1 September to the Feast of St Francis of Assisi on 4 October. The Holy Father Pope Leo XIV recently issued a message for the tenth World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, to be celebrated on Monday 1 September 2025, on the theme “Seeds of Peace and Hope”: Message of the Holy Father for the tenth World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation



Image courtesy of Andy Nisbet

He says: “Environmental justice – implicitly proclaimed by the prophets – can no longer be regarded as an abstract concept or a distant goal. It is an urgent need that involves much more than simply protecting the environment. For it is a matter of justice – social, economic and human. For believers it is also a duty born of faith, since the universe reflects the face of Jesus Christ, in whom all things were created and redeemed. In a world where the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters are the first to suffer the devastating effects of climate change, deforestation and pollution, care for creation becomes an expression of our faith and humanity.

Now is the time to follow words with deeds. “Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience” (Laudato Si’, 217). By working with love and perseverance, we can sow many seeds of justice and thus contribute to the growth of peace and the renewal of hope.”

During the Season of Creation we would like to invite you to pray and reflect on care for creation and how we can steward the Earth’s resources for future generations and the common good.

**SEASON OF CREATION 2025: RESOURCES**  
Pope Leo – Holy Mass for the Care of Creation Holy Mass for the Care of Creation (9 July 2025) | LEO XIV Diocese of Plymouth environment resources Environmental Policy | Diocese of Plymouth  
A report on Laudato Si Week 2025 in the Diocese of Plymouth Laudato Si Report 2025  
Season of Creation Celebration Guide Your Guide to Celebrate the Season of Creation 2025 – Season of Creation CAFOD resources for Season of Creation including family prayers World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation 2025





# Jubilee of Youth

For me, the location itself turned the days into a pilgrimage of memory. The last time I was in that field was World Youth Day 2000 with Saint John Paul II, packed in with 2.5 million young people, the largest gathering in the history of Europe. Coming back twenty-five years later was unexpectedly emotional. In 2000, I travelled with the Diocese of Westminster, backpack on my shoulders, utterly unprepared for sleeping overnight in a vast field and without a care in the world and little sense of how those days would mark me. We slept little, laughed, sang, and prayed much and friendships were forged that I never thought possible. Seeing a new generation at prayer where we once stood made one truth unmistakable: Christ's promise to be with His Church endures – always and for everyone.

Around one million pilgrims were estimated at this year's Youth Jubilee. Pope Leo XIV led a dialogue-style prayer vigil in which three young people from Mexico, Italy, and the United States asked about friendship, the courage to choose, and how to meet the Risen Lord in daily life. The Holy Father's answers, rooted in Scripture and Saint Augustine formed a simple pathway.

On friendship. "Our life begins with a bond," he reminded us. We grow through relationships and the cultures that shape us, which must be read with discernment embracing what is noble, rejecting what harms. Friendship with Jesus is our "guiding star," the love that makes human friendships sincere, generous, and true. Hence the appeal: "Dear young people, love one another in Christ!" Because "friendship can truly change the world. Friendship is a path to peace."

On the courage to choose. Choosing is not merely selecting something; it is deciding who to become—ultimately, "choosing someone." We learn to choose by remembering we were first chosen: life is a gift, born of Love. Anchored on that rock, choice "always leads to the greatest good." Courage flows from Christ's love: "It is Jesus you seek when you dream of happiness." The Pope pointed to radical, meaningful vocations – marriage, priesthood, consecrated life where self-gift makes us truly happy. His invitation was direct: "Find the courage to make difficult choices and say to Jesus: 'You are my life, Lord.'"

On encountering Christ. Jesus is the friend who forms our conscience. To meet Him: listen to the Gospel; examine your life; seek justice; serve the poor; remain united to Jesus in the Eucharist; adore

Him in the Blessed Sacrament; study, work, and love according to the example of Jesus. The Lord gathers us into a people: "not just any community, but a community of believers who support one another." The world needs missionaries who witness to justice, peace, and hope. With Augustine, the Pope led us in a simple prayer of availability: "Thank you, Jesus, for calling me... Grant, O Lord, that those who meet me may encounter You." His parting wish at the vigil was equally simple: "Persevere in faith, with joy and courage. Stay with us, Lord."

At Sunday's Mass, he returned to the Emmaus story. Like those disciples, we meet the Risen Christ in Scripture and "the breaking of the bread." Life is fleeting, yet we are made for continual renewal "through the gift of self in love," not a static existence. Don't dull the heart with "cheap imitations"; open to the One who knocks. Created things are good, Augustine teaches, but "seek the One who made them; He is your hope." Fullness lies not in hoarding but in receiving and sharing, lifting our eyes to "the things that are above," growing in compassion, humility, patience, forgiveness, and peace. "Hope does not disappoint," because God's love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Jesus is our hope; He stirs the desire to do something great. Remain in His friendship through prayer, adoration, Eucharistic Communion, frequent confession, and generous charity following the examples of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati and Blessed Carlo Acutis, soon to be saints. Entrust everything to Our Lady of Hope; return home as witnesses who "aspire to great things... do not settle for less."

Alongside the youth gatherings, the Holy Year opened a new chapter in mission: the first Jubilee for Digital Missionaries and Catholic Influencers. For two packed days, creators: catechists, photographers, podcasters, YouTubers, parish media teams—prayed together, crossed a Holy Door, and reflected on their vocation. Digital evangelisation, we were told, is not merely producing religious content; it is creating encounters of hearts, cultivating relationships, fostering community, and making space for the presence of God to be felt and shared.

Pope Leo thanked these missionaries for bringing the Gospel into news feeds, comment threads, and livestreams where many take their first tentative steps toward faith. He asked them to be artisans of encounter: refuse contempt, credit sources, protect the vulnerable, and let the Eucharist shape the pace and tone of online work. "Be good Samaritans on



the web," he urged, reminding us that nothing born of human creativity should ever be used to undermine human dignity. "Our mission – your mission – is to nurture a culture of Christian humanism, and to do so together."

The point landed: digital evangelization is not a technocratic project but a spiritual, relational one, flowing from hearts touched by grace. The Jubilee left us with a renewed sense of mission and a resolve to nourish Christian hope in the spaces where people now live significant portions of their lives.

Why does all this matter? Because a Jubilee is not a one-off festival; it is a launchpad. If the Church can gather a million in a field, she can also renew your own heart and parish.

These are not merely dates on a papal calendar; they are open doors for us all. Even if you cannot travel, every diocese has Holy Doors and local Jubilee initiatives. Plan a simple pilgrimage by foot or bus. Host "24 Hours for the Lord" with confessions and adoration. Pair each themed day with a work of mercy: feed the hungry, visit the sick, write to

prisoners, welcome newcomers. The Jubilee is meant to stretch our hearts and our schedules toward God and neighbour.

And don't forget the digital front. After the commissioning of the first "digital missionaries," take small steps with outsized reach: post a two-minute homily clip each Sunday; repurpose the parish newsletter into short, daily social posts; ensure Mass and confession times are easy to find and share. Young people are already online, meet them there with reverence. As one speaker put it, "Post like someone will decide to try confession because of what they see today."

Tor Vergata's million voices have drifted back to classrooms, offices, and parish halls; the influencers to studios and smartphones. Now the Jubilee's real work begins where there are no cameras: at the food pantry, the youth room, the sickbed, the kitchen table. From Rome's open fields to the world's open feeds, the Holy Year invites us to be missionaries of hope, to worship God with reverence, to love our neighbour with creativity, and to carry Christ to the sidewalks and screens where He already waits to be found.

## What's Next in the Jubilee Calendar

- **Sept 14 – Commemoration of the New Martyrs and Witnesses of the Faith.** Hold evening vespers; read names; light candles for each continent; take a collection for persecuted communities.
- **Sept 15 – Jubilee of Consolation.** Honour those who suffer and those who serve them. Celebrate anointing of the sick; visit the homebound; pair youth with elder companions.
- **Sept 20 – Jubilee of Justice. Pray for those who uphold the common good.** Host a holy hour for conversion and courage in public life.
- **Sept 26–28 – Jubilee of Catechists.** Renew promises at the font; bless catechists before the tabernacle; offer formation and simple hospitality.
- **Oct 4–5 – Jubilee of the Missions & Jubilee of Migrants.** On the Feast of St. Francis, make the parish international

for a day: multilingual intercessions, shared foods, collection for mission territories.

- **Oct 8–9 – Jubilee of Consecrated Life.** Thank local religious communities; invite them to share their charisms at a "vocation fair."
- **Oct 11–12 – Jubilee of Marian Spirituality.** Candlelit rosary and procession like at Lourdes or Fatima, catechesis on Mary as Jesus' first disciple.
- **Oct 18 – Jubilee of the Roma, Sinti, and Travelling Peoples.** Build friendship: listen, share a meal, ask how the parish can serve concretely.
- **Oct 24–26 – Jubilee of Synodal Teams and Participatory Bodies.** Parish councils and diocesan assemblies: pray together, review the mission, and set one daring goal for the next six months.



# Scripture Focus

By Fr Jeremy Corley



## Paul's appeal for an enslaved convert

On 7th September (23rd Sunday of the Year), we hear from the shortest and most personal letter by the apostle Paul. In his Letter to Philemon, we see Paul's sense of tact as he appeals for the well-being of a runaway slave.

Sometimes people ask why the early church did not totally ban slavery. This is like asking why the church today does not abolish poverty. The early church was then a small group in society which could not solve every social problem.

If slaves had been immediately released in that society, many could have been left destitute, finding it hard to gain employment or housing. Instead, the church worked like a leaven in society to change attitudes, by highlighting the dignity of each human being, created in the image and likeness of God.

Paul's letter refers to a slave named Onesimus (meaning useful), who had run away from Philemon his master.

This Philemon was a Christian convert who had probably already hosted Paul during his apostolic ministry in Colosse (western Turkey).

We don't know the details of why Onesimus fled and sought refuge with Paul, but Paul evidently welcomed him. In fact, during the time when Paul was in some kind of imprisonment, Onesimus became a Christian convert and then performed useful services for Paul.

We see Paul's personal feelings in the affection he felt for Onesimus: "I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart, though I would have been glad to keep him with me." But Paul also felt affection for Philemon, a leading member of the church in Colosse, who had supported Paul's mission. Rather than using the strength of his apostolic authority, Paul appeals to Philemon's love.

From a rational perspective, Paul realises that the current situation cannot continue, because runaway slaves risked being

arrested. So Paul writes to Philemon to forgive any wrong that Onesimus had done (such as theft) and to receive him back—"no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother."

As a fellow-Christian, Onesimus was now a brother in the Lord, but already he was a brother in the flesh—perhaps a distant blood-relative. On both grounds, Paul appeals to Philemon to welcome him back. Just as Philemon had been hospitable to Paul, he is now asked to receive Onesimus with kindness.

History does not record the result of Paul's appeal, but the inclusion of this letter in the New Testament suggests that the outcome was positive. Hence it is likely that Philemon granted Onesimus his freedom. Thus we see the leaven of the gospel working gradually to improve the lives of suffering people.

Later we hear of Onesimus in Paul's letter to the church at Colosse. Paul tells them that together with Tychicus, he has sent

them "Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you" (Colossians 4:9). This suggests that Onesimus was a respected member of the church, and also free to travel.

This short personal letter by the apostle Paul shows one tiny step along the road towards the abolition of slavery. Over the course of time, the sense that all Christians are brothers and sisters brought about a change of attitude, so that slavery was no longer seen as right or just. Moreover, Paul's love for both Onesimus and his master Philemon contributed to the reconciliation that brought about the release of the enslaved man.

Today we cannot quickly solve all the world's social problems. But let us recognize the dignity of all people made in God's image and redeemed by Christ, and let us seek to live our lives with love, as Paul did.

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# View from the Pew

By Dr Jay Kettle-Williams



## I'm not a betting man but ...

I bet you a pound to a penny that in your family as in mine, albeit going back a generation of two, there was a maiden aunt. Maybe more than one. Born around the end of the 19th century or very shortly thereafter, our maiden aunts would have been denied marriage by the enormous toll exacted by the Great War, let alone WW2, on the nation's manhood.

The maiden aunt I most clearly remember was a true doyen, a prominent matriarch in our family's goings-on, albeit somewhat mainly active behind the scenes. Great Aunt Carrie, whose silver-topped walking stick I have to this day, always wore black in the style of Queen Mary, Mary of Teck (Victoria Mary Augusta Louise Olga Pauline Claudine Agnes; 26 May 1867 – 24 March 1953), who was Queen of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions and Empress of India from 6 May 1910 until 20 January 1936 as the wife of King-Emperor George V. But Great Aunt Carrie was of more lowly stock.

I remember accompanying her one morning down the high street. I must have been about 12 at the time. As we were walking by a bus stop, a woman, breaking free of the queue anticipating the arrival of the omnibus, approached my aunt: 'Excuse me,' she said, 'I think we know each other. You're Carrie, aren't you?' There followed a few moments of heated exchange: the more the woman insisted on them knowing each other, the more my aunt persisted in insisting they did not until she finally and unceremoniously dismissed the woman. We continued on our way. 'Aunt,' I mentioned after a moment or two, 'I thought you might have been a bit rude to that woman whom you never knew.' She looked straight at me, 'Never knew?'

Never knew?! My boy, I've known that woman for forty years. But I will not be addressed in the street. She should have known better.'

'The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there' was the opening remark by L.P. Hartley in *The Go-Between* (1953). Indeed, I do wonder what Great Aunt Carrie, were she still around, would say to some of the exchanges on the streets of today.

Behavioural patterns, customs, fashion and practices can change across cultures and with time: generally speaking most people these days don't walk about wearing robes, wimples or doublet and hose with daggers in one hand and swords dangling by their sides. It was, for instance, the practice for men to dictate social mores: Jesus chose only men to be his apostles. Be that as it may, we should not bring a developed western mindset to judge what generations, long since eclipsed, took to be the norm. L.P. Hartley refers obliquely to presentism in a few almost proverbial words, introducing us to the idea that those who trod this earth before us would perceive the world and understand its mores in a fundamentally different way from ourselves.

Presentism refers to two distinct but related concepts. In historical analysis, it describes the tendency to interpret the past through the lens of present-day ideas, values and perspectives, often leading to a biased or inaccurate understanding of past events. In philosophical terms, presentism is a theory that asserts only the present exists, and that the past and future are not real, but imagined. In literary and historical analysis, on the other hand,

presentism is a term for the introduction of present-day ideas and perspectives into depictions or interpretations of the past. But my point is that you can no more really assess the social mores of yesteryear by today's yardstick than you can assess today's social mores by the yardstick of yesteryear.

Religion is taken by modern Western thought as the compendium of beliefs based on a set of texts with certain text being orthodox and other apocryphal and that these texts prompt an orthodox interpretation or dogma to which the majority of that sect generally adhere. So when outdated codes of yesteryear are invoked and applied to our current-day society, the ensuing 'counter-presentism' (my own coinage) begs informed interpretation not by the self-appointed but by those 'scholars' called, trained and duly commissioned from within what for us is our royal priesthood.

Hartley certainly hit the nail on the head: my Great Aunt Carrie did things differently in that foreign country of hers, the past.

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

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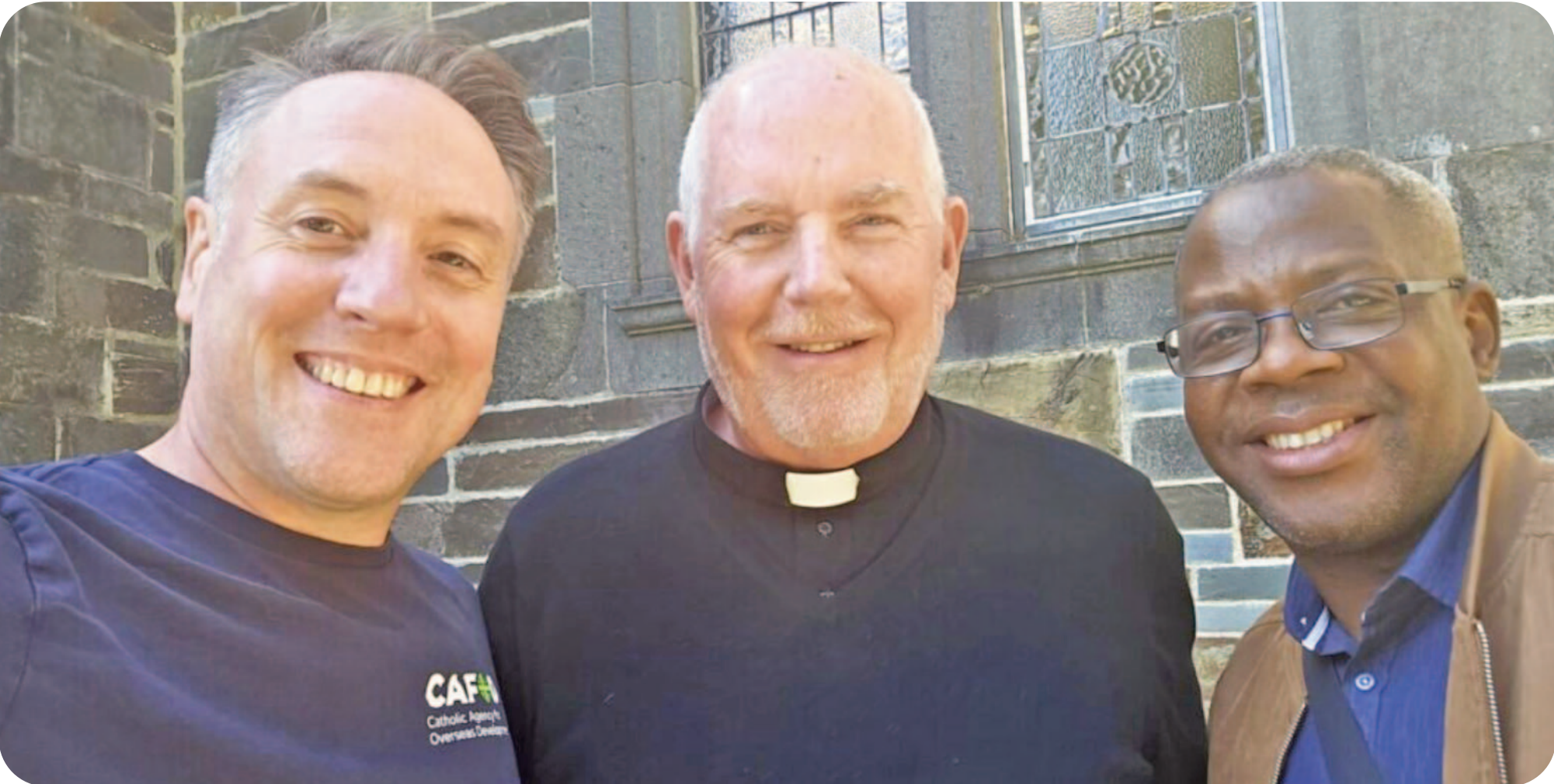


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# A new Head of Caritas Diocese of Plymouth



The current Caritas Manager, Deborah Fisher, is retiring at the end of August and Simon Giarchi has been appointed as the new Head of Caritas Diocese of Plymouth, with the aim of growing the Mission of Charity across the diocese, building on the last five years' work by Deborah.

Simon is joining Caritas Diocese of Plymouth following nearly 20 years of service as CAFOD's manager and

coordinator for the diocese. Across his two decades he has worked with many clergy and parishioners from across the five deaneries of the diocese. He is well known to many people here in the diocese through his time at CAFOD but also from his deep roots in the Catholic community here, having been brought up in an active Catholic Christian family, studied in Catholic schools, and attended parishes across the region. He is a former pupil of several Catholic schools in Plymouth and

been a parishioner in Holy Trinity and Cathedral parishes in the city too.

After school Simon began his working life as a media professional, he interned at the Northern School of Film and Television in Leeds, was an apprentice in Television Production in Padova Italy, completed a HND in Film and Television Production at Bournemouth Filmschool and a degree at the Arts University Plymouth. As well as his studies he worked in film development, some TV Shows and a radio show. Following a calling to change his career to the charity sector Simon fundraised for various national charities such as Help the Aged (now Age UK), Action Aid, Save the Children, Oxfam, Crisis, Shelter and the Samaritans. After this he became CAFOD's first Diocesan Manager for the Diocese of Plymouth, when the CAFOD Southwest Region was split to follow the diocesan structures of Plymouth and Clifton.

Simon is a passionate advocate for working for the common good. He is steeped in Catholic Social Teaching and has worked closely with our bishops, episcopal vicars, formation teams and catechists to craft resources, reflection guides, produce presentations and initiatives to inspire, educate and empower the adults and young people of the diocese to put their faith into action.

This work on CST has grown over the years and has resonated in the diocese, particularly through Live Simply and promotion of Papal Encyclicals such as Laudato Si and Deus Caritas Est.

Prior to the establishment of Caritas Diocese of Plymouth, Simon worked alongside Mary Conway and the Justice and Peace Commission and helped support the diocese to take environmental action alongside local and regional partner organisations and stakeholders, such as Devon Church & Society Group, Plymouth Green Churches Action Group, Transforming Plymouth Together, Devon and Cornwall Refugee Support Council, Plymouth Centre for Faith and Cultural Diversity, Vinolved and Citizens UK.

Throughout Simon's two decades of work at CAFOD he has helped to build a thriving and energised volunteer network across the diocese and is looking forward to bringing these skills to the work of Caritas Diocese of Plymouth alongside our inspirational volunteers, staff and network members.

Simon will be joining Caritas Diocese of Plymouth in mid August. If you would like to get in touch please email [caritas@prcdtr.org.uk](mailto:caritas@prcdtr.org.uk)

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# The Fool's Pilgrimage – A Return to Silence



I've just returned from my latest silent retreat — not merely an absence of sound, but a gentle shedding of the self. An opportunity to sit in contemplative stillness and let the mental clutter and inner noise melt away.

A great chance to create some 'mindful' 'mind space'.

I've been going on retreats since 2012. I've missed a few years (the pandemic didn't help), and on some years I've even managed more than one. But every time I go, I'm reminded why it matters.

And each retreat, builds on the ones that came before.

People often ask me:

"Why?"

"I don't get it."

"What's the point?"

Good questions. I've asked them myself.

The idea of sitting in silence for an extended period can seem odd — especially in a world that praises busyness, productivity, and constant connection. But perhaps that's exactly why it's so powerful.

We are full — of noise, opinions, to-do lists, and background distractions. And when we're full of noise, it's hard to hear anything meaningful — our own thoughts, our inner wisdom, or whatever name you give to that deeper voice inside.

Silence isn't emptiness. It's spaciousness. It's about making room. It's learning how to listen.

And once you do, it changes how you hear everything — even after you return to the so-called "real world." You start to cut through the static. You become more present, more attuned. You start to really hear people — and yourself.

The point of a retreat isn't to achieve anything specific. No goals, no productivity hacks, no ticking boxes. It's simply the chance to be.

There's a beautiful line attributed to Jesus: "Come away by yourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile."

That's what a retreat is — rest. Not just physical, but mental, emotional, spiritual.

You come as you are — no masks, no performance, no need to explain yourself.

Even though others are there, the silence creates space for deep personal contemplation without interruption.

In that space, things rise to the surface: Gratitude, appreciation.

Grief.

Unfinished business.

Moments you didn't know you were holding on to.

And also — joy. Peace. A deep sense of "enough-ness."

Even something as simple as eating becomes mindful. In silence, every bite is a meditation. You taste more. You notice more. You find gratitude in a carrot — not just for the flavour, but for the whole journey: the seed, the soil, the sun, the farmer, the cook... the life that becomes nourishment.

So when someone says, "I don't get it," I understand. It can feel awkward at first. Boring, even. That chattering mind doesn't go quietly. But if you stay with it — something shifts. You start to notice what's in the gaps between your thoughts. A breath. A birdsong. A phrase from a book that lands differently. A memory

returning. A tension easing.

Silence isn't the absence of life. It's a return to it.

Spiritual or mindful practices aren't about escaping reality — they're about waking up to it. About seeing the goodness and meaning in the ordinary. And that's hard to do when your head is full.

But we can learn. We can practice.

You don't need to disappear for a whole weekend to begin. Just try this: Set a two-minute timer on your phone. Close your eyes. Breathe. What can you hear? Smell? Feel — in your body, your emotions?

Silence isn't about shutting the world out. It's about turning down the volume long enough to hear what really matters.

And you don't have to be perfect. Fidgeting is fine. Thoughts will come. Just be willing to pause. That's all it takes.

Namaste have a great day.



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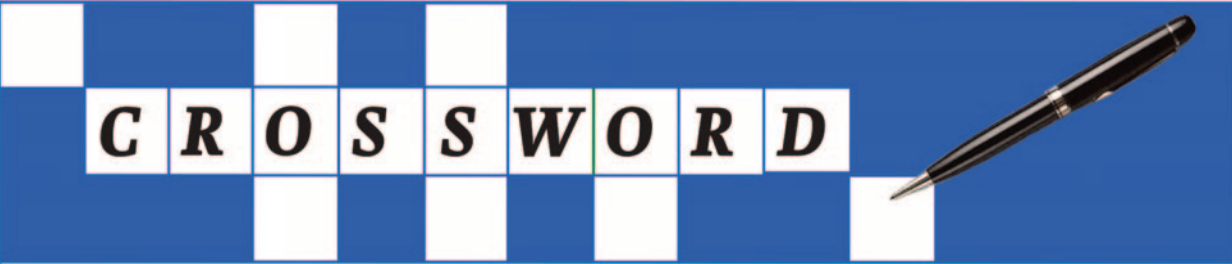
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You can use both sets of clues to solve the puzzle: the solutions are the same.

### CRYPTIC Across

- 1 Enemy of Gideon's defeated during the witching hour, said one (9)
- 6 Musical about a High Priest (7)
- 7 Riddle to penetrate? (5)
- 9 Change in a little while going back to protect the testament (5)
- 10 Fielder's body parts used to take wickets in the end (3,4)
- 11 Foot part's essential to dancing, they say (6)
- 13 Grand aura about directions for the Holy Roman Emperor (6) 16 Hymn book each sailor kept (7)
- 18 One has a habit of getting into minicab bother (5)
- 20 Harsh being back at sea (5)
- 21 Bigbrewersarenuts,ridiculous(3-4)
- 22 Tyre here company backs after one phone order (9)

### CRYPTIC Down

- 1 Recommendation when weather's bad in French wine area? (5)
- 2 Poles follow east Maine river banks to estate (7)
- 3 Saint Poles back from 2, and the Spanish, see in the morning (6)
- 4 One's no good in charge at first, but is very sweet (5)
- 5 Christian Roman's spreading mostly rubbish between Europe and America (7)
- 6 Paul's fellow soldier damaged pup's chair (9)
- 8 It runs in Iraq on Brussels tariffs top two phones supported (9)
- 12 Disturbance with fish supper only half wolfed down (5-2)
- 14 Spooks wreck a comeback, totally, for ancient language (7)

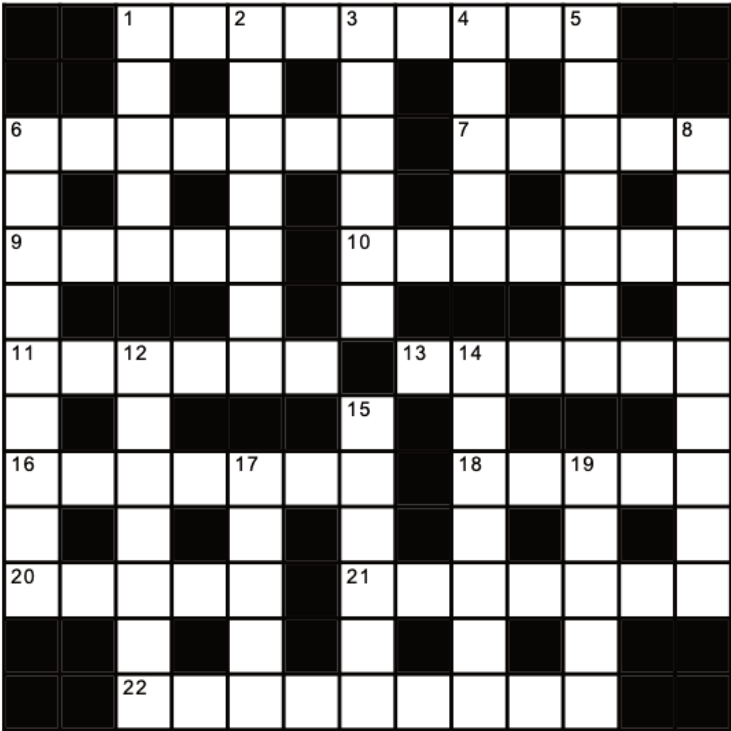
- 15 Frenchman's to the fore in Brexit – real European traditionalist on nationality (6)
- 17 'Beat retreat' code-word (5)
- 19 Gunners in the ascendant during support for Hebridean island (5)

### QUICK Across

- 1 One of a tribe from whom Moses took a wife (9)
- 6 High Priest who opposed the Maccabees (7)
- 7 Soak;suffuse(5)
- 9 Eurofractions?(5)
- 10 Close fielding position in cricket (3,4)
- 11 Arch area of the foot (6)
- 13 The -----'s War: alternative, now dated, name for World War I (6) 16 Book of hymns or poems associated with the Old Testament (7)
- 18 Archimandrite;prelate(5)
- 20 Demanding;forbidding(5)
- 21 Large vats for steeping and serving beverages (3-4)
- 22 Ancient Levant maritime country with ports at Tyre and Sidon (9)

### QUICK Down

- 1 Town noted for its Chardonnay and Pinot Noir/Gamay Burgundies (5)
- 2 Manorhouse;estate(7)
- 3 Abbot of Bec who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093 (6)
- 4 Cupcake topper (5)
- 5 Roman Christian who sent greetings to Timothy via Paul... (7)



- 6 ...and Christian at Colossae cited by Paul (9)
- 8 Western river boundary of Mesopotamia (9)
- 12 Organize a new restructure(5-2)
- 14 Language probably spoken by Christ (7)
- 15 French, previously Armorican (6)
- 17 Staccato, energetic, South American dance (5)
- 19 Outer Hebridean island home of Dad's Army's Private Frazer (5)

### SOLUTION

Across: 1 Midianite, 6 Alcinus, 7 Imbue, 9 Cents, 10 Leg slip, 11 Instep, 16 Kaiser, 16 Psalter, 18 Abbot, 20 Stern, 21 Tea-urns, 22 Phoenicia. Down: 1 Maccon, 2 Demesne, 3 Anselm, 4 Icing, 5 Eubulus, 6 Archippos, 8 Euphrates, 12 Shake-up, 14 Aramaic, 15 Breton, 17 Tango, 19 Barra.