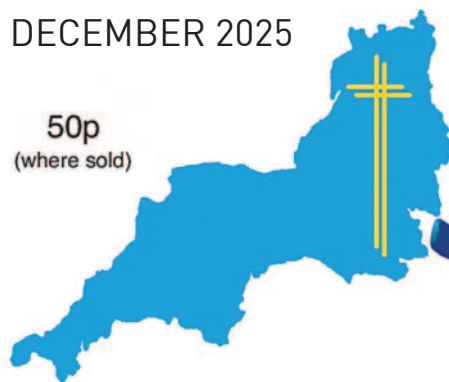


DECEMBER 2025

50p
(where sold)



Catholic South West

Serving the Church in the South West



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Image @mikedavies



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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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.

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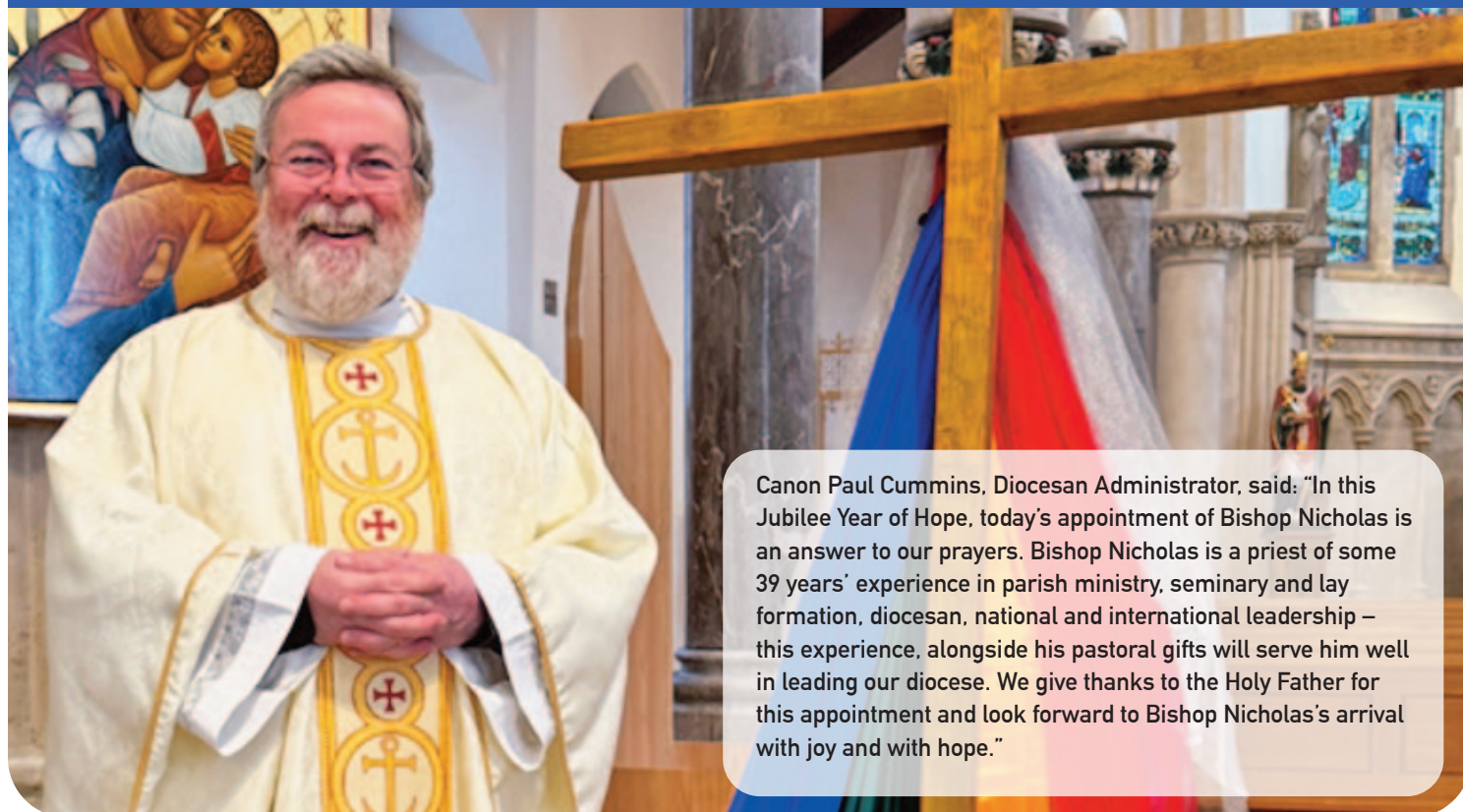
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Welcome to the Diocese of Plymouth



Canon Paul Cummins, Diocesan Administrator, said: "In this Jubilee Year of Hope, today's appointment of Bishop Nicholas is an answer to our prayers. Bishop Nicholas is a priest of some 39 years' experience in parish ministry, seminary and lay formation, diocesan, national and international leadership - this experience, alongside his pastoral gifts will serve him well in leading our diocese. We give thanks to the Holy Father for this appointment and look forward to Bishop Nicholas's arrival with joy and with hope."

Biography of Bishop-elect Nicholas Hudson

Bishop Nicholas Hudson was born on 14 February 1959 in Hammersmith, London. He had an English father, Richard Hudson, who taught English at Kings College School, Wimbledon, for some 37 years; and a French mother, Marie-Charlotte, née Valdelièvre, of Paris. He is the fourth of five boys. His father was from an army family, but considered himself a West Country boy having lived in Parkstone, Poole, then Crownhill, Plymouth, and Yelverton; and having been schooled at Clifton College before entering Exeter College, Oxford. Bishop Nicholas enjoyed 11 years' education from the Jesuits at Wimbledon College between 1966 and 1977. He was awarded an exhibition to Jesus College, Cambridge, where he studied history for three years. He entered the Venerable English College, Rome, in 1981 to embark upon six years' study in philosophy and theology at the Gregorian University. He was ordained as a deacon for the

Archdiocese of Southwark at Palazzola, Rome by the 7th Bishop of Plymouth, the Right Reverend Cyril Restieaux, in 1985. Bishop Nicholas was ordained priest at the Sacred Heart, Wimbledon, by Archbishop Michael Bowen of Southwark in 1986. His first appointment was to the parish of St Thomas of Canterbury in Canterbury from 1987 to 1991. This was followed by a year's study of catechetics in Louvain by way of preparation to be Director of the Southwark Diocesan Christian Education Centre for some eight years while also being engaged in pastoral ministry at English Martyrs, Streatham.

The year 2000 saw his appointment as Vice-Rector and then, in 2004, as Rector, of the Venerable English College in Rome until 2013. He was for a short time Parish Priest of Sacred Heart, Wimbledon, before being appointed as Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster in 2014 and Titular Bishop of St Germans in Cornwall. As Auxiliary

Bishop he has particular pastoral responsibility for the Central and Eastern areas of the Diocese, for Evangelisation and Catechesis, Marriage and Family Life, Enclosed Religious, Youth Ministry, and Justice and Peace. He is a trustee of the Cardinal Hume Centre, Providence Row, and the Romero Trust.

Within the Bishops' Conference, he is Chair of the Department for International Affairs, with particular responsibility for European affairs, and a regular attendee of COMECE. He is also Moderator of the Holy Land Coordination Group. In 2023, he was appointed a Papal Nominee to the Synod on Synodality. In 2024 he was elected by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales as their Episcopal Secretary.

His great uncle Noel Baring Hudson was Anglican Bishop of Newcastle and then Bishop of Ely.

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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Pope Leo XIV appoints Bishop Nicholas Hudson as new Bishop of Plymouth



Image CBCEW

His Holiness Pope Leo XIV has appointed the Right Reverend Nicholas Hudson as the new Bishop of Plymouth.

Ordained as a priest for the Archdiocese of Southwark in 1986, Bishop Hudson has been an Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster and Titular Bishop of St Germans in Cornwall since 2014.

On hearing of his appointment, Bishop Hudson, Bishop-elect of Plymouth said: "I am deeply grateful to Pope Leo XIV for appointing me; and I do not take lightly the trust he has placed in me. I am aware how long the clergy, religious and laity of Plymouth Diocese have waited for a bishop. I come with a desire to listen and to learn. I hope we can apply all the strengths of synodality to discern together ways to deepen the diocese's outreach, mission and presence to the people of Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. I look forward greatly to meeting all who belong to the diocese.

"I ask their prayers for me as I prepare to be their bishop – as I most surely pray for them."

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster and President of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, said: "For the Diocese of Plymouth, the appointment of Bishop Nicholas Hudson to be their bishop is most welcome news. Bishop Hudson will serve the Diocese of Plymouth with great generosity and sensitivity, bringing to that leadership his wide experience of the Church both at home and abroad.

"I congratulate Bishop Nicholas on this appointment. He is eager to get started! Here in Westminster, we will miss him very much indeed. I thank him for the true service he has given to the people, the parishes, the priests and to his fellow bishops during his years with us. I assure him of our prayers, support and profound

good wishes for his new and important ministry in Plymouth."

Canon Paul Cummins, Diocesan Administrator, said: "In this Jubilee Year of Hope, today's appointment of Bishop Nicholas is an answer to our prayers. Bishop Nicholas is a priest of some 39 years' experience in parish ministry, seminary and lay formation, diocesan, national and international leadership – this experience, alongside his pastoral gifts will serve him well in leading our diocese. We give thanks to the Holy Father for this appointment and look forward to Bishop Nicholas's arrival with joy and with hope."

Archbishop John Wilson, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Southwark, shared his delight about the appointment: "I am delighted to hear the joyful news that our Holy Father Pope Leo has appointed Bishop Nicholas Hudson as the next

Bishop of Plymouth. Bishop Nicholas brings great experience as a former priest of the Archdiocese of Southwark, Rector of the Venerable English College in Rome, and Auxiliary Bishop in Westminster. His personal gifts and passion for sharing the Gospel of Christ will bring encouragement to the clergy, consecrated religious, and lay faithful of the Church in Plymouth. As Metropolitan, it is a special pleasure to welcome Bishop Nicholas to the Province. I thank Canon Paul Cummins for his outstanding service as Administrator and join with everyone in the Diocese in praying for Bishop Nicholas as he prepares to take up the honour of being their shepherd."

The date for Bishop Hudson's installation as Diocesan Bishop will be on the 29 November 2025 at the Cathedral Church of Saint Mary and Saint Boniface, Plymouth.

An interview with Bishop Nicholas Hudson Bishop-elect of the Diocese of Plymouth

**Bishop Nicholas Hudson:
A Bishop Keen to Listen**
Bishop Nicholas Hudson has recorded a short interview in which he talks about how he feels about becoming Bishop of Plymouth. He reflects on his desire to be a ‘listening Bishop’ and how he is looking forward to engaging with people across the diocese.

Ahead of his installation on Saturday 29 November, Bishop Nicholas Hudson speaks to us about his new appointment as Bishop of Plymouth.

The Diocese of Plymouth has been waiting a long time for a bishop. With the 29th of November, the installation date as Bishop of Plymouth, now fast approaching, Bishop Nicholas Hudson is very excited and can’t wait to begin.

His father’s West Country roots
His father came from an army family, and when he was very young, the family left India and settled in the West Country. They lived first in Parkstone, Poole, and then in Crownhill, Plymouth. His father was at school in Yelverton, then Clifton.

Reflecting on his appointment, Bishop Hudson said: “I’m very excited. I’m aware that the diocese has been waiting a long time for a bishop and I can’t wait to begin.”

A listening bishop for all generations
In any diocese you have a spectrum of the generations, all sorts of people from all

sorts of backgrounds and places. Asked how he is hoping to relate to the old, the young, and everything in between, Bishop Hudson emphasised his commitment to listening.
“I want to be a listening bishop, and I want to make a real priority of listening from the outset. I want to listen in a special way to the clergy, of course. But I also want to be able to listen to people from across the generations.”

In his former diocese of Westminster, he spent a lot of time with young people, going with them to different parts of the world for World Youth Day, and different pilgrimages. He found it very important just to spend time with them. In Plymouth, he wants to give time to the young people and really to get to know how they see themselves contributing to the life of the Church.

A pastoral approach built on listening
People have always said that he’s a good listener. During the 12 years that he was an auxiliary bishop in Westminster, he had 55 parishes, which took him a while to get to know. His style there was to meet with the key people in each of the parishes, not just the clergy, but also lay people who had particularly significant roles, and to listen to their hopes for the parish and their hopes also for the deanery and the ways that they felt the parish could deepen and develop its mission. This will be very much his style in Plymouth. He explained: “In terms of

how one structures it, I think going to deaneries is first. That already gives one different areas of the diocese to begin to get impressions of, and then I’ll need to develop a strategy to see how I can systematically listen to the diocese across the board.”

Building one diocesan family across three counties
Asked about the key challenges and opportunities for the Catholic community in this region, Bishop Hudson identified building one diocesan family as a priority: “I think that the key challenge will be to develop our sense of being one family, one diocesan family across the three counties. But I’m also aware that I am the new one coming into this community and that I’ll need to ask people what it is like to live this reality. What’s it like if you come from Penzance and how do you feel in relation to Poole and what it means to belong to such a huge community? But I do hope that the years that I’m in Plymouth, I’ll be able to build that sense of community along with other people.

Hope in the Jubilee Year
As the Church celebrates the Jubilee Year of Hope, and with the installation just weeks away, what does hope mean to Bishop Hudson as he takes up this new role?
“Hope means a lot to me, and I’ve always felt that hope is something that I have deep in my heart. I think all the years I’ve

been a priest and a bishop, I’ve always wanted to communicate a sense of hope, and that’s a hope in the Lord himself. “There’s this wonderful line that St. Paul uses in his letter to Timothy when he says, ‘I know who it is whom I have put my trust in.’ It always strikes me that the words from the Psalm, which I’ve taken for my own motto, which is ‘In Te Domine Speramus’, which is of course ‘In you, Lord, we hope’, is often translated as ‘In you, Lord, we trust’. “Trust and hope are very close, and as I prepare myself to begin to be the Bishop of Plymouth, I’m looking forward to communicating that dual sense of trust and hope.”

Devotion to the Saints
Bishop Hudson is very excited that he is being installed on the feast day of one of the two patron saints of the diocese. The diocese has two patron saints: St Boniface and St Cuthbert Mayne. Bishop Hudson also spoke warmly about St Carlo Acutis, who was canonised earlier this year: “I think the time that I’m in Plymouth, people will often hear me talking about St. Carlo Acutis. I think he’s a saint for all of us and in a special way for children and young people.

“I will be asking his intercession, newly canonised as he is, his intercession along with our patron saints for the Diocese of Plymouth.”

A reflection on the art works of Deacon Anthony Carey

People are most often known for the role they play in public life, whether this be in consecrated, religious life, public service or finance sectors, law, engineering, manufacturing etc.
Many however, combine their daily work with work in the music or sporting world or in the visual or performing arts.
Our deacon, Anthony Carey is one of these multi talented, inspiring individuals.
He was a lead guitarist and singer in a rock group until recently (and also works as a specialist repairer of vintage watches).
If this were not enough, he is an artist and I have recently seen a number of

his works which I can only describe as just beautiful!
His representational paintings (mainly landscapes) are like the most detailed photographs which have been creatively enhanced to offer messages of delight, peace and harmony . One could easily get happily lost in his enchantent bluebell woods!
Anthony’s real passion however is in a completely different style of painting.He paints still life objects and rooms in a more modern, expressive style, using bold, luminous, primary colours to create a particular mood . The effect is incredibly vibrant and original.
“My goal is to experiment”, he said “to see all and yet blind myself to detail...to paint less, to feel more”.

In all his works it seems that this artist deacon is saying, Look ! Can you see what I see?
I find his works strongly imbued with spirituality as if he is tearing away that grey veil which is our lack of attention to our surroundings and our loss of wonder as we ignore the beauty all around us. This artist is urging us to look at all things with new eyes.
I can clearly see how his art work goes hand in hand with his main role in life , his service to the Church . All of this work is holistic and makes manifest the glory of God. Here is blessing!
“Beauty will save the world”, says a character in one of Dostoevsky’s novels for beauty inspires connection and leads to goodness which is why the arts are so important.



Joséphine Attar
All Saints Parish Teignmouth Devon
Ad Majorem Deiam Gloriam

The Fool's Pilgrimage: Adventures of a Roaming Catholic

A return to Cyprus - where faith, fitness, and flow meet on land and sea



I love Cyprus. We've been here several times, and every visit feels like both a homecoming and a new discovery.

We've never ventured to the North - hire car companies don't allow their vehicles across the border, and after once learning the hard way about overseas insurance claims, we've stayed firmly (and wisely) in the South.

And the South is glorious. Lush, varied, and full of surprises. Our hometown of Plymouth here in the sweet spot of heaven, I mean Devon, has a rich Greek Cypriot community and some of my longest Personal Trainer clients and good friends are from that background and they're great. Seeing where they are from deepens my appreciation of them and that part of the world.

Having a car on a trip away gives you freedom - to wander, to get lost, and to find yourself again among the olive groves, hidden ancient chapels and churches, and the waves of a beautiful sea front that whisper stories older than history itself.

We landed in Larnaca, met friends in Protaras, and then journeyed west to Paphos - a city that feels drenched in spirit and time, full of culture and history. In Paphos, the small stone church of Agia Kyriaki Chrysopolitissa stands amid the mosaic-strewn remains of a vast early

Christian basilica. Just outside is St Paul's Pillar, where local tradition places the Apostle before his encounter with Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:4-12).

Tradition holds that St Paul was scourged at this pillar before converting the Roman proconsul. Today, the site is shared by Catholics and Anglicans, and standing there, you can almost feel the centuries humming beneath your feet - the prayers, the silence, the longing of souls who came seeking peace.

It's more than a monument, it's more than a place of worship; it's a vibration. A reminder that faith leaves footprints, and the stones remember. A 'feeling' in the air that this place has held many souls and spirits in prayerful mindful meditation, seeking and celebrating. Supplicating and gratifying.

From there, we travelled to Limassol, where the Parish of St Catherine of Alexandria rises with baroque beauty - more modern, yet no less special and invoking. Each icon, each flicker of candlelight seems to speak its own theological truth: faith alive, evolving, and radiant.

In recent years, another element has shaped our adventures - one that happens not on dry land, but on water.

Our shared love of SUP (Stand Up Paddleboarding) has become more than a pastime; it's become intrinsic to what we do.

We've paddleboarded all over the place: Australia, Thailand, Croatia, the Canary Islands, the UK, and Cyprus. My first time on a paddleboard was back in 1999, in the Queen Charlotte Islands off Canada's west coast, among ancient Indigenous community of the Haida Gwaii - on nothing more than a plank of wood and a simple oar - they'd long known the power of balance, rhythm, and flow.

Decades later, during the third lockdown, Lisa and I bought our first board - a humble Waikiki from The Range. That small decision turned into a daily ritual of calm and connection.

Lisa, famously protective of her hair, wasn't immediately sold! But paddleboarding became our socially distant salvation - a way to breathe, laugh, and glide through uncertainty together.

Later after completing the SUP Instructor Course, everything clicked. It gave us the confidence and professionalism to share this joy with others through SobeyFitness, our fitness and health business, blending safety, adventure, and mindfulness. The water became our classroom and our sacred space.

For me, paddleboarding is life in miniature.

You stand on something unstable, navigating shifting tides. Sometimes the wind carries you effortlessly; sometimes it pushes hard against you. It's balance, adaptability, humility - and faith.

And yes, there are moments when you're up the creek without a paddle. That's when resilience, grace, and a little humour keep you afloat.

We chase joy and meaning across the map, but often the sacred is right beneath our feet - or our board. Whether in a centuries-old chapel or on a mirror-still sea, both moments invite the same thing: stillness, gratitude, and connection.

To roam as a Catholic pilgrim is to see every landscape as both playground and prayer ground - to let motion become meditation, and activity become devotion.

Because when one aspect of life strengthens - whether faith, fitness, friendship, or fun - it elevates the others too. That's the totality of wellness: body, mind, and spirit moving in harmony, like calm water beneath an open sky.

Namaste - have a great day, and happy paddling.

Dan Sobey



Community : Building Bonds and Cultivating Faith at St Boniface Parish Church

Pope Leo once delivered in his earlier homilies the importance of unity in the community: “We see how the disciples always gather in His name, in the name of Christ—that is, in community. It is important to live an experience of community in the Church. No one is saved alone”

The theme of community, being one of the important themes in the Jubilee Year celebration, remains to be at the forefront of St Boniface Church’s mission as seen in its most recent and future parish events and activities.

Hello , Goodbye and Our Marian Garden

With a heavy heart, St Boniface has bid good bye to one of our beloved Assistant Priests, Rev. Fr. Godwin Kambai, as he has moved to Middlesbrough where he shall continue his ministry. The whole parish came together and prepared him a send-off party, where everyone thanked him for his years of dedicated service. The party was led by our Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Tom Kleinschmidt and Asst Priest Rev Fr Jufel Baldado . It was fully supported by the Parish Pastoral Council , headed by Mike Wood and Core Leadership Team headed by Angela Braga. Fr. Godwin also had the opportunity to thank the parishioners. It was indeed an emotional moment for him and the parishioners.



On a happy note, we said hello to our new Assistant Priest, Rev. Fr. Paul Ubebe, who has come from Nigeria. Fr Paul is known for his Daily Divine Encounter Series (D.Des) where he shares practical challenges as we practice our faith. He was all smiles as we warmly welcomed him to the parish and treated him with cakes and sweets , as organized by our Social Team led by Ms Helen Bignel. The welcome party took place at the same time when we had the blessing of our Marian Garden. Rev Fr. Jufel Baldado officiated the blessing ceremony and was attended by the children and Ms Angela Wood, our Head Catechist. It was beautiful sight to see the children shower the image of the Blessed Virgin with petals of flowers while singing Salve Regina.



The installation of the image of our Blessed Lady in the Parish garden came about from the generous donations of our First Holy Communion candidates and their parents. We thank Mike Keogh for coordinating the installation.

World Rosary Day



Our parish joined the worldwide celebration of World Rosary Day last October, being the Month of Holy Rosary. The celebration included praying of the Holy Rosary and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament led by Rev Fr Jufel Baldado

and offering of flowers and lighting of candles on the Pilgrim Image of our Lady of Fatima by the parishioners. This was organized by Diana Agacy, being the Parish Lead for Devotions.

Special FILIPINO Mass: Call for Reparation and Repentance



In light of the recent calamities that struck the Philippines, the parish expressed its support by celebrating a special Filipino Mass officiated by Rev Fr Jufel Baldado. It was a first Filipino mass in the parish and was well attended, where everyone wore white as a call for reparation and repentance. We wish to thank our parish priest Rev Fr. Tom

Kleinschmidt for expressing the support to the Filipino community. We wish to thank St Joseph’s and St Edmund’s Catholic Parishes for letting us have the mantel relic and portrait of Our Lady of La Naval de Manila at the entirety of the celebration. These were present alongside the Pilgrim Image of our Lady of Fatima and Sto.Nino de Cebu during the mass.

Health and Wellbeing Sessions for Parish Volunteers

In view of promoting One Parish and camaraderie among parish volunteers, Health and Well Being Sessions for parish volunteers have been initiated so they can look after each other's wellbeing through social interaction and by promoting health activities. The sessions should include activities such as soft exercise, dance, music and later on will include Free BP checks and short teachings about common health conditions, including mental health support. Currently,

the first activity to have kicked off is called as the Humba Zumba, which is a low-impact dancing session tailored after the popular latin inspired dance exercise known as Zumba. The ladies-volunteers meet every Saturday for at least an hour of fun and laughter. Contact persons for the Humba Zumba are Monette Lopez and Lina Kozakiewicz. Mae Felongco oversees this initiative, being the proponent of the project.

Rorate Mass



A traditional Advent votive mass in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrated before dawn in a dimly lit church illuminated primarily by candlelight. Fr.

Tom looks forward to start this tradition in the parish this year on all Saturdays of Advent beginning December 6th.

Simbang Gabi

A devotional, nine-day series of Masses for the Blessed Virgin in anticipation of Christmas. This is popular among Filipino Catholics but has now become popular and widely accepted in St Boniface Parish Church. The novena masses are from Dec. 15-23 with the last day followed by a

fellowship night, which is a bring and share event. This is yearly organized by the Filipino Catholic Community in Southampton (FilCath) with this year's leads as follows: Maria Nora Zuniga, Minnie Sayson, Guada Dagongdong and Leah Taras.



What Lies Ahead World Youth Day - A celebration during the Solemnity of Christ the King



The Parish will celebrate its youth members through Youth Explore, where it will officially seal its commitment to promote and support the youth in their future parish leadership roles. The highlight of the World Youth Day mass will be the procession of the Blessed Sacrament by Rev Fr. Jufel Baldado , the altar servers followed by the parishioners.

Preparations for this important celebration will take place during the regular Youth Explore meeting, which shall also include altar server trainings assisted by Andrea Hurry, Micheline Brady and Joseph Paul Almazan. Youth Explore leads include Augustine Odikuya and Fatima Amedo.

By Mae Felongco



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Scripture Focus

By Fr Jeremy Corley

The Fruitful Tree

This summer many fruit trees produced an abundant crop of fruit, especially apples. It is beautiful to see a tree full of ripe fruit, while a dried-up and fruitless tree has little value.

The gospel for the Second Sunday of Advent (8th December) gives us the preaching of John the Baptist, preparing the way for Christ. His preaching challenges us as we enter the Advent season: “Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.” Hearing this call, we take another look at our lives. When we recognise our failings, we seek to walk a better path.

John the Baptist warns his hearers: “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” He is telling us that unfruitfulness leads to ruin, but fruitfulness leads to life. When he speaks of the axe being laid to the root of the trees, he is borrowing this imagery from Isaiah. The prophet describes God using an axe to cut down oppressive leaders. Immediately afterwards, Isaiah speaks of a shoot from the stump of Jesse (the line of David), a branch springing from his roots.

In Advent we understand Isaiah’s words as fulfilled in the coming of Jesus, who was a descendant of King David. The Spirit of the Lord rested on him, and righteousness was the belt around his waist.

John the Baptist’s role was to prepare the people through their repentance. He announced the coming of someone much greater, Christ our Saviour—the one who would baptise us with the fire of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who will enable us to bear good fruits, as St Paul tells the Galatians.

The call to be fruitful runs through the Scriptures. Chapter 15 of John’s Gospel uses the image of the vine and the branches. Christ is the vine and we are the branches. We are unable to bear fruit unless we remain united with him.

The first psalm in the Psalter contrasts two kinds of individual. The person who delights in God’s law is like a fruitful tree planted beside streams of water, drawing life from God’s Holy Spirit. By way of contrast, the wicked are driven away like chaff, because they do not bear good fruit.

Echoing the psalm, John the Baptist uses the image of chaff in his preaching.



Whereas the coming Saviour will gather the wheat into his granary, he will put aside the chaff to be burnt.

Overall, his preaching offers us a stark and uncompromising message for our Advent journey. If we seek to prepare our hearts for Christ’s coming by repentance, we will be able to bear the fruits of faith and hope and love. Otherwise, all we do will be consigned to be lost.

In the days leading up to Christmas, often full of frenetic activity, we can be so caught up with various preparations that we lose time for prayer and reflection. May God help us this Advent to prepare our hearts suitably, so that we may indeed be able to welcome Christ with joy when he comes among us.

Image: Ron Lach

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View from the Pew

By Dr Jay Kettle-Williams



Gaudete!

There were two Latin masters at the school I went to. They used to amuse themselves during breaks and at the school's 'dinner time' by talking in Latin to each other. They had different accents – one had graduated from Oxford, the other from Cambridge – but neither accent, I suggest, would have been anything like that spoken in the Forum of Ancient Rome.

One of the things that they would regularly drum into us at school was that 'Rome [apart from not being built in a day] was born in Greece, and Greece was born in Crete.' But like so many things drummed into us at school, I never appreciated their worth until much later in life. So I was particularly alerted to a recent comment by Giorgia Meloni who said: 'I believe in Western civilization, which is built on Greek philosophy, Roman law and Christian values.' That comment by the Italian Prime Minister immediately brought to my mind the inscription bearing the charge in Latin and Greek – complemented by the transcription in Hebrew – pinned above our Crucified Christ (John 19:21 and Matthew 27:37 ref. The Jerusalem Bible). But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Mary's now giving birth. Jesus – 'That poor wee lamb!' as my wife would say – is being put before us in the most humble of presentational devices: a simple manger.

Well, poor wee lamb for sure. He's not got easy times ahead. And we all know what's coming down the line.

But this is the time we celebrate His birth. It's a time for joy, for gratitude and for basic questioning, not that I felt I could answer one person's question put to me some time ago: 'Where and when would baby Jesus have been christened?' Oh, dear! I'll leave that there.

Yes, this is certainly the time of the year for us to celebrate.

Celebration for us mortals always surrounds a special enjoyable event that we organize to honour something deemed pleasant which has happened.

Celebrations are something we all like to be involved with, to be involved in. They might come following marriage, a birth, a christening, a birthday, success in our work, in our studies, in our business or whatever event that brings happiness.

The event that brings us happiness at this time of the year is the birth of Jesus. However, when it comes to the twelve days of Christmas (starting on 25 December), I hold no truck with what I consider excessive commercialisation excessively extended, teased out over months, normally with little or no regard for the *raison d'être*. Not that I'm a kill-joy.

Then, in similar vein, there's Fathers' Day (third Sunday of June). Forgive me but I see that again as commercial overreach, further to the celebration of Mothers' Day (fourth Sunday of Lent), the day traditionally for honouring one's mother church and subsequently one's own biological mother.

No, I'm not a kill-joy. Not at all. I see no problem with anyone's freedom to celebrate whatever and whenever they like, providing it doesn't impinge on the freedoms of others.

Take, by way of a further example, the celebrations of 5th November which mark the failure of Catholic conspirators in 1605 to blow up Parliament and assassinate King James I. Ok. But that's a far cry from the celebrations honouring bloodshed, voicing approval and giving encouragement for innocent folk to be wilfully slaughtered, such as we might witness on our streets from time to time. A thin line, you might say. No, I don't think so. That line is broad and as broad as it's long.

I grant you, freedom is an awkward concept to wrestle with. It can be emboldening at first touch. However, we need the wherewithal within us to understand that freedom is not the entitlement nor is it the free will to do whatever we like, to perform and to act in whatever way might take our fancy. We mustn't forget that, when he's older,



Jesus will be teaching us the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12, Luke 6:31 ref. JB): 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you'.

Nor is freedom the self-indulgence to ever take or feign offence, never to take umbrage, to indulge our own sensitivity. When he's older, Jesus will be telling us to turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:39 and Luke 6:29 ref. JB).

At this point it just remains for me wish you all a Merry Christmas.

Or in the words of Steeleye Span: 'Christos est natus ... Gaudete!'

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

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Evangelisation Events Dorset Deanery – Stones, Prayers, Quays, Croissants and Remember November!

Living Stones



My first encounter with these stones was by the side of the path up to the Catholic church at Chideock and what an impact! On my second visit, I and fellow pilgrims snapped up the verses on the verge! As I was mentioning evangelisation that evening at Mass, it was an obvious project to explore. Thanks to the parish priest, Fr Colin Groombridge, who had noted my enthusiasm, invited the artist, Judith Gait, to get in touch with me. She sent an article (published in the West Dorset Magazine) detailing Luke's Gospel where the Pharisees wanted the people

(shouting in praise of Jesus) to quieten down. Jesus' response? "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." (Lk 19:40). This is very much part of Judith's artist statement.

Since our meeting, more stones have been painted and distributed. We are also looking at starting workshops around the diocese so that many more people may engage in this worthwhile project. The project is scalable and the diocesan evangelisation team are enthusiastic! Judith's idea is to get these painted stones into public spaces eg hospitals, schools, homes, parks. There are already stories of public engagement with stones with Scriptural verses: i) a woman was prompted to return to the Church and ii) one of Judith's stones has been turned into a memorial with other stones added in the space showing dates of lost family members!



Judith runs painting workshops every Thursday afternoon 2 pm – 4 pm at the Catholic church hall in Bridport: 36 Victoria Grove, DT6 3AD. Workshops of this nature are healing, a blessing and therapeutic, they can be a meditative retreat and Judith assures me that all the stones have been blessed. I was privileged enough to be able to attend one such workshop with a parishioner from Dorchester. The stones are primed with gesso, before the application of acrylic paint and a layer of yacht varnish for weatherproofing. The stones are multiplying and ready for distribution! So, far, they can be found on Snowdon, at L'Arche in Bognor, at our churches in Bridport, Wareham, Wimborne and Dorchester. We have a number destined for all sorts of places where they can 'cry out' as designed.

If you would be interested in a workshop, or distributing stones, please get in touch with Judith: gaitlaan@gmail.com

Prayer Line



Wimborne Parish Evangelisation Team are going live with an initiative: praying for those in the community who would expressly like prayer. Posters and laminated pocket cards have been created to advertise a dedicated, confidential 'Prayer Line' giving people an opportunity to seek prayer support. The initiative has been passed by Safeguarding in Plymouth and the project will be monitored with a view to scaling up this initiative which came in prayer to one of the Parish Evangelisation Team members. A phone has been donated, a sim bought and a policy is to be put in place to ensure that all numbers are deleted weekly (there are no call backs as we are only pray-ers and not counsellors). The team will take turns in collating the prayer requests that will come in the form of either a WhatsApp, text or Voice message. Prayers will be said in front of the Blessed Sacrament and covered by the Rosary Group (confidentiality is key). It is a simple plan for serving our neighbours in a spiritual way.

Questions on the Quay



In August, the Wareham Parish Evangelisation Team (who are in the middle of doing their 'Maxim' meetings having completed a Mission Made Possible course) wanted to bring to life their vision of inviting passers-by in Wareham to talk about the Christian faith. They felt inspired to imitate the Catholic students of Kent University who have a weekly stall on campus with a banner that reads 'Got a Question? Ask a Catholic! In similar vein, we left someone with Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament at the church and marched down to the Quay (on market day) to set up a, b and c: articles, books and cakes. We also had our jar of scriptural verses to hand out to those who wished to engage. Locals and holiday makers alike. Well, we were there for 1.5 hours (and felt we could have done longer) and the upshot is that we would do it all again – perhaps with a theme and perhaps with questions to ask the passers-by. The weather was beautiful! The first 'foray' is the hardest as you never know what to expect but quite quickly, you settle in to seeing who is giving responsive signals and people can open up with what is on their hearts. We had a few meaningful conversations which made it all worthwhile and we returned with a healthy sense of purpose and joy at being able to bring others cakes and comfort on Wareham Quay!



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Coffee, Croissants and Conversation

Wow! What an awesome morning – we have experienced a most blessed, informative and enriching morning with Simon Lennon and Lisa Phillips' presentation on The Eucharist!



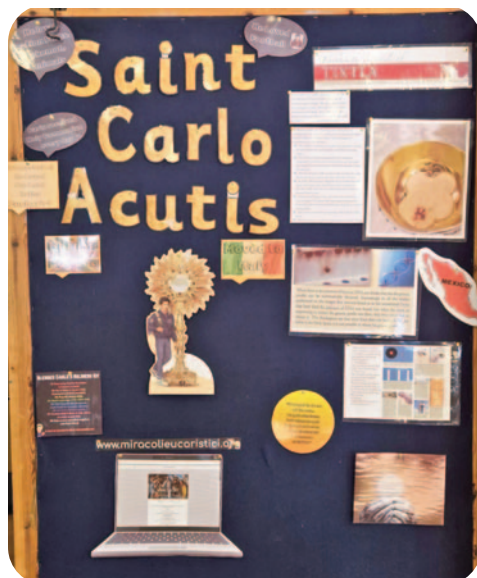
Re the Gospel, Simon pointed out that as people grumbled about the hard saying that they were to eat Jesus' flesh which is real food, Jesus did not call say 'don't worry, this is only symbolic language'. On the contrary, as disciples found it too hard a saying, they walked away and Jesus let them go having ramped up his language about chewing and consuming his flesh ('chew' from the original Greek). This is the body, blood, soul and divinity of the Risen Christ, we receive His Glorious Body every time we receive Holy Communion. Interestingly, according to a couple of polls, only 31% of Catholics believe this! What do you believe? If you had been at this CCC, you would probably have come to Adoration at the end of the session with a renewed love and awe for our Glorious Saviour. Additionally, we were reminded that we do not automatically receive the graces intended with this Sacrament unless we receive in a worthy manner, ie come to the Table of the Lord with the right disposition, with humility. How do you prepare for so great a guest?



Lisa, chaplain at Corpus Christi Primary School in Boscombe, used her nursing background to explain the science behind three modern Eucharistic miracles (miracles are granted to help us in our faith – thanks be to God). She showed miracles from Argentina, Mexico and Poland: 1996, 2006 and 2008 respectively. All are miracles that St Carlo Acutis had researched (which are among many that he compiled into a website before he died at the age of 15). Visit here to see more information and more Eucharistic miracles, the science and the inexplicable: <https://www.miracolieucaristici.org/en/Liste/list.html>



The rare blood type found was AB – prevalent in the Middle East - it is also blood that is known as a 'universal recipient' ie it can accommodate all blood types, so AB accepts all – how fitting and amazing is that?)



The changed hosts (showing blood) were examined and found to be heart muscle – heart muscle! Oh Sacred Heart of Jesus...!

Amazingly, as we remember from our GCSEs, every child born, takes a chromosome from his/her mother ie an 'X'; or a 'Y' or an 'X' from their fathers (it is the father who determines the sex of a child). The blood in the Eucharistic miracles was found to just have the one chromosome 'X' from the mother... there was no other chromosome found! Well, Jesus didn't have an earthly father, Mother Mary was the spouse of the Holy Spirit, so we won't be surprised (except we were astounded seeing what that looks like under a microscope)!



Every Catholic should see/hear this presentation. The Parish Evangelisation Team in Wimborne has recorded it and is now looking at spreading this new 'apostolate' if I may call it that! We don't want you to miss it!

St Carlo Acutis, pray for us; St Faustina, pray for us; Mother Mary pray for us; Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!

Remembering Our Deceased Loved Ones



It has long been a fixture for parishes with Parish Evangelisation Teams in Dorset to commemorate either All Souls or Remembrance Day – it is an easy way of inviting others into our churches as the loss of loved ones is something that we all have in common and there is something beautiful about offering a candle in prayer. It is a simple way of acknowledging our fraternity and opening a quiet space for reflection on eternity for ourselves and our neighbours.

Some parishes invite people in from the community as they pass by, others write invitations to families that have had funerals at the church during the year, others will alert their immediate neighbours via an invitation through the letter box or speaking in person. Some parishes will hold a special service and others will simply have an open church sometimes with the Blessed Sacrament exposed. Often refreshments are served too which enables those wishing to stay and chat to do so and for us to listen to our fellow travellers.



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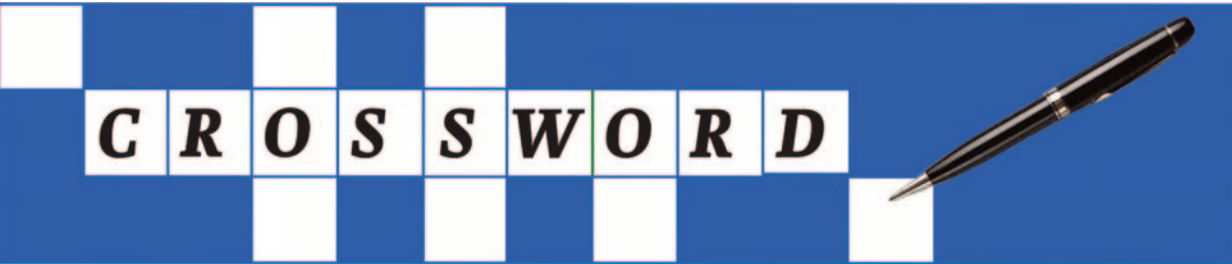
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You can use both sets of clues to solve the puzzle: the solutions are the same.

CRYPTIC Across

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

CRYPTIC Down

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

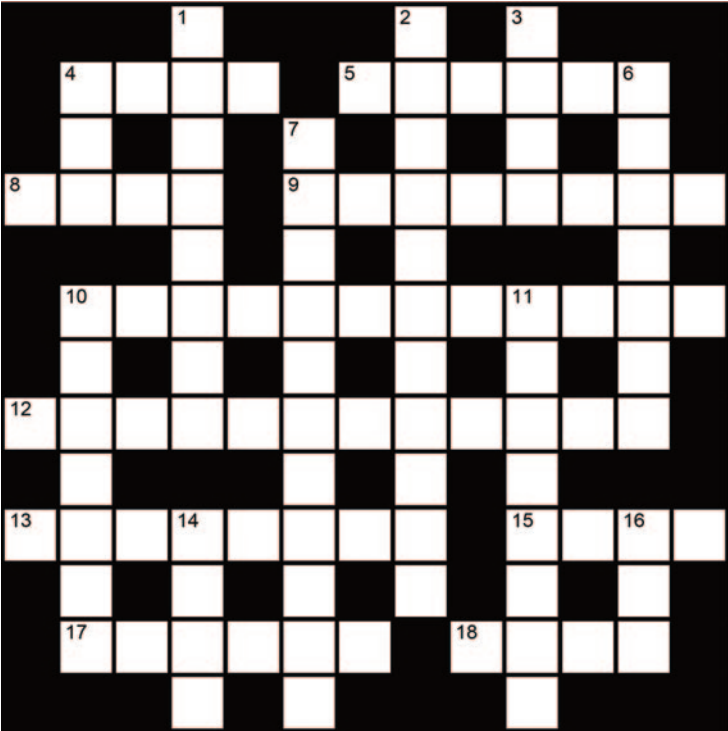
- 16 One of twelve in Israel to get higher than black belt (3)

QUICK Across

- 4 Isaac's firstborn (4)
- 5 Rim;frontier(6)
- 8 Roman emperor between 37 and 68 AD (4)
- 9 Female domestic servant (8)
- 10 Common seabird of Europe; ancestor of many domestic breeds (7,5)
- 12 Variety of football played at a particular public school (4,4,4)
- 13 Headgear associated with Mexico and SW USA (8)
- 15 FatherofMenaham(4)
- 17 British political party members: Irish RC 17th century outlaws (6)
- 18 Poetic name for Ireland (4)

QUICK Down

- 1 Pertaining to two dynasties in 17th century Britain, and one in the 21st century (8)
- 2 Site of King Saul's last stand (5,6)
- 3 Robert ----, Scottish architect and furniture designer (4)
- 4 Verge;threshold(3)
- 6 Releaseoncemore(7)



- 7 Assyrian king, the fifth of his name, who captured Samaria and took the Israelites into exile (11)
- 10 Go away and stay away (3,4)
- 11 Building, greenhouse, associated with fruit (8)
- 14 Italian Adriatic port (4)
- 16 Son of Jacob and tribal ancestor (3)

SOLUTION

Across: 4 Esau, 5 Border, 8 Nero, 9 Handmaid, 10 Greylag Goose, 12 Eton Wall Game, 13 Sombrero, 15 Gad!, 17 Tortes, 18 Erin, Down: 1 Carolean, 2 Mount Gilboa, 3 Adam, 4 Eve, 6 Reissue, 7 Shalmaneser, 10 Get lost, 11 Orangery, 14 Bari, 16 Dan.