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Pray for us

Pope Francis building bridges in the name of fraternity

By Alessandro Gisotti

Make room for peace in our lives by cultivating dialogue and fraternity among one another

In his address to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, Pope Francis reiterated the Church's impartial passion for humanity, especially wounded or humiliated humanity. The Pope's commitment to building bridges between different people, cultures, and religions is increasingly emerging as a distinctive feature of his pontificate.

Pontiff: 'Builder of bridges.' If there is one feature that has become increasingly clear in the course of nearly nine years of Pope Francis' pontificate, it is precisely the tireless commitment of the Successor of Peter to building bridges in order to unite where there is division, to cross those visible and sometimes invisible barriers of separation that prevent encounter.

Bridges between peoples and cultures, bridges between religious and political leaders that the Pope has worked to build with an intensity and a sense of urgency that has increased the more he has seen walls erected which, after the end of the Cold War and the division of the world into two blocs, were thought – perhaps a little too optimistically – to be relegated to the history books.

Today, this passionate and unbiased commitment is almost unanimously recognised by the international community, as demonstrated by requests for the mediation and intervention of the Pope and the Holy See in so many crises of our time.

Dialogue and cooperation

Even in Monday's speech to the Diplomatic Corps (a sort of Urbi et Orbi address on the state of health of the planet), Pope Francis reiterated that dialogue and cooperation between peoples are stages along a path we cannot avoid if we really want to prepare a future of hope for future generations.

"We should be unafraid," he said in a key passage of his speech, "to make room for

peace in our lives by cultivating dialogue and fraternity among one another."

A space that needs an integral and not fragmented vision – as dramatically demonstrated by the pandemic, another central theme in the audience with the ambassadors accredited to the Holy See. In the eyes of the Church – "expert in humanity," as Paul VI emphasises in *Populorum Progressio* – peace and development, the environment, and rights are interconnected. Everything fits together. The Church has humanity at heart and nothing else because, in the words of John Paul II, "man is the way of the Church."

Creativity of love

It is a love for humanity – especially for women and men who are wounded, discarded, humiliated – to which Pope Francis bears witness with words and gestures, following in the footsteps of his predecessors and developing their Magisterium with that "creativity of love" that is a task ideally entrusted to each and every one of us.

Even in 2021, despite the immense difficulties generated by the pandemic, Pope Francis has continued to erect arches and establish pillars, to lay stones to reinforce the road. He is not only initiating processes (to borrow a formula dear to him), but also building bridges. Certainly, not all of them can be completed; but this is no reason to give up.

As Pope Francis reassures us, "blessed are the builders of peace," even if the fruits of their work will be harvested by others, and in times that we cannot now foresee.

Journey toward fraternity

The "impossible" journey to Iraq is perhaps the most extraordinary example of this effort by the Pope, and not only of the past year. It was a trip that many had advised against, but which proved to be a powerful, prophetic message in favour of peace and fraternity.



The Pope of Fratelli tutti – who in Mosul was able to affirm that "Fraternity is more durable than fratricide" – reminds us that on that bridge, called humanity, we must all take steps in order to encounter one another.

And we must do so above all in order to meet those who are furthest away –because however distant they may be from us, they are still our brothers.

Bishop echoes Pope's call for nations to unite to treat leprosy and promote social inclusion

CBCEW

We have a duty to see that they are included and valued



Bishop Declan Lang, Chair of the Bishops' International Affairs department, has commended the work of the St Francis Leprosy Guild ahead of World Leprosy Day.

St Francis Leprosy Guild has cared for people with leprosy for over 125 years. It works with partners globally to reach out to poor and remote communities to detect and treat new cases of leprosy before the disease takes hold.

The day is celebrated on the last Sunday of January – 30 January 2022 – and is an opportunity to lift up the voices of people affected by leprosy throughout the world. The theme is 'United for Dignity' honouring the lived experiences of those who have experienced leprosy as well as advocating for their right to a dignified life free from disease-related stigma.

This year the Guild is encouraging the Catholic community to reflect on the vital work carried out by Catholic nuns and to unite in prayer for God's blessing for their vocation. Throughout the world, working in remote or impoverished locations, Catholic nuns are caring for people with leprosy, visiting those who are alone or isolated and restoring dignity.

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Please send articles for publication by email, supplying any photos separate to the text We welcome contributions

Here are answers to some basic questions about writing for The Catholic Post

How long should articles be?

Usually it seems to work out best if contributors simply say what they have to say and let us worry about finding a spot for it in the paper.

What is the submission procedure?

Please send as a Word file attached to an e-mail. To submit articles for publication, contact John Clawson by email at johnclwson@icloud.com Charts, graphs, and photos should be submitted as separate PDFs. Electronic photos should not be embedded or pasted into a Word document as this reduces their quality.

Photographs and Illustrations

Photographs and Illustrations should be supplied electronically as high resolution JPEG (*.JPG) files.

Photographs and illustrations should be sent in colour with a resolution of 300 dpi and a minimum size of 100 mm x 100 mm when printed (approx. 1200 pixels wide on-screen).

Computer print-outs are not acceptable. Screen captures are not ideal as they are usually not very high

Parental permission should be sought before submitting photographs of minors.

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Clericalism v Accountability

From the presbytery..... by Fr. Neil McNicholas

The priest can't have it both ways

Clericalism What is clericalism?

The dictionary says it's a policy of supporting the power or influence of the clergy in secular matters, or of maintaining or increasing the power of a religious hierarchy. Either definition should give cause for concern. Generally the word is used to refer to deference or privilege either being given to a priest, or being assumed by a priest, solely because he is a priest - as if the words "ordination" and "elevation" were somehow interchangeable! There is also a tendency for people to put priests on a pedestal whether they like it or not and whether they deserve it or not. (It's too easy to fall off a pedestal and it can be a long drop!)

Some examples:

It's bad enough when, at a parish function, people in line for food or a drink will insist that, as a priest, you go ahead of them, but it's worse still when you see priests automatically walk to the front of the line as if they have a right as a priest (whatever that means) to do so - a clerical right. On one level that's clericalism.

Another example would be people giving deference to the opinion of a priest because he's a priest when, in fact, he may have no knowledge or expertise whatsoever on the subject in question. It's even worse when the priest himself insists on his opinion, refusing all other advice, because he's the priest. That's clericalism too.

Of course it can also work the other way. It will be reported to the priest that, let's say, the toilet is running over or an outside drain is blocked, as if "Father" is the only one who can fix these things. He isn't. That can be convenient clericalism!

The priest can't have it both ways. There's a danger that a priest who effectively insulates himself in his "clerical tower" can become a law unto himself, feeling he is accountable to, and responsible only for, himself. As unfortunate as such a situation might be, if that is his choice then he only has himself to blame if the people leave everything for him to do.

Both the definitions above use the word "power" and the last thing the priesthood should be is a power trip. What it may involve is "authority" but that is a very different thing to power, though it too can be used wrongly.

The various definitions of power include words like "ability" and "capacity" - someone may have power but what is important is their ability, their capacity, to exercise well the authority that their position gives them. The word "authority" itself implies having a right to act or decide or judge, but doing so from a base of knowledge or experience or belief. And so any power or authority that a priest may have isn't to be wielded autocratically. It should be accorded to him by the people to whom he ministers on the basis that his ministry reflects knowledge, experience and conviction. Vocation to priesthood comes from God and ministry is founded on that call. When Pilate said to Jesus, 'Surely you know I have the power to release you and I have the power to crucify you?' his reply was, 'You would have no power over me if it had not been given you from above.' Food for priestly thought.

Having said all of that, we move on to accountability.

At his priestly ordination, the candidate is asked by his bishop:

Are you resolved, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to discharge without fail the office of priesthood in the presbyteral order as a conscientious fellow worker with your bishop in caring for the Lord's flock?

Are you resolved to celebrate the mysteries of Christ faithfully and religiously as the Church has handed them down to us, for the glory of God and the sanctification of Christ's people?

Are you resolved to exercise the ministry of the word worthily and wisely, preaching the Gospel and explaining the Catholic faith?

Are you resolved to consecrate your life to God for the salvation of his people, and to unite

yourself more closely every day to Christ the High Priest, who offered himself for us to the Father as a perfect sacrifice?

A priest is accountable first and foremost to God but he puts that into practice principally through his accountability to his bishop. That is the commitment contained in the first of those questions, a commitment renewed annually at the Chrism Mass. But he is also accountable to the people to whom he ministers, as those other questions make clear, a commitment also renewed annually.

How someone exercises his priesthood is perhaps a measure of how seriously he takes his responsibilities and accepts his accountability. Of course some aspects of this may not always sit too well with the people, especially those who may prefer a quiet life to being taught and challenged. What is it they say: "Every ship is safer in harbour, but that's not what ships are for"? And then there's that saying about Jesus, something to the effect that he comforted the challenged and challenged the comfortable. If we truly share Our Lord's own ministry then that's what we priests have to do also - even when it involves risk. Realistically we can't please all of the people all of the time, but we do have to please God all of the time. Again, though, priests can't do that from a position of power nor can they do it on their own.

In an ideal world the call to priesthood would come "from the people for the people" - from God, yes, but a person identified by the community and called into priestly service of that community. Sadly, however, things don't work that way and, heeding perhaps Our Lord's own caution that a prophet is never accepted in his own country, priests are usually appointed anywhere other than to their home parishes.

If we did have "home-grown" priests in that sense, they would be much more aware of and sensitive to the history of the community and of its church. As things are, in many ways a priest is a "passing guest" and yet that can't become an excuse for not investing himself or his energies in a parish simply because he won't be there forever, anymore than it can be an excuse for people detaching themselves from his spiritual leadership for the same reason.

Sister Lotte makes her solemn profession

Diocese of East Anglia

“My dear Sister, what do you ask of God and his holy Church?”

Sister Lotte fulfilled a long-held desire to make her solemn profession with the Carmelites on November 8. Sr Stephanie, Prioress of Quidenham Monastery, reports.

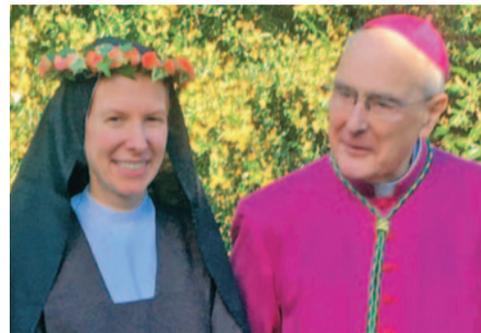
A solemn profession is, among many other things, an expression of gratitude on the universal as well as on the personal level. Sister Lotte’s reply to the celebrant’s question: “My dear Sister, what do you ask of God and his holy Church?” expressed very neatly, in her own words, the deeply personal dedication that full entry into the religious life demands. She said: “I ask to make the total gift of myself to Jesus, wholeheartedly and for ever, and to persevere in apostolic prayer and loving service among my Carmelite Sisters for my whole life.”

It should perhaps be emphasised more often that the Carmelite way of life is essentially a life given for the world. We are very specifically committed to pray for those who cannot pray, for those who do not, and for those who have no inkling of the power of prayer and of its necessity. A Carmelite vocation is apostolic in the fullest sense.

The celebration of Mass for a solemn profession is always numinous, and all those who attended were well aware of this. In a strange way time seemed to be suspended during the ceremony. When the moment came for Sister Lotte to prostrate herself, always a dramatic occasion, we sang a long litany which, paradoxically, just carried us along with its own momentum and seemed to take no time at all.

The Church is realistic, and in the Preface of Religious Profession there are words of great solace: “He [Jesus Christ] consecrated more closely to your service those who leave all things for your sake and promised that they would find a heavenly treasure.” This acknowledgement that the religious life is not an easy one carries with it an awesome assurance that all desires will ultimately be overwhelmingly fulfilled.

A solemn profession is the culmination of years of training and is the first day of what one hopes will be many days of witness: that of living the Christian way of life to the full and for the entirety of an individual’s existence. Its aim is ever-deepening and self-emptying love, with the grace of God – not an easy prospect for anyone.



It was a joy for the monastery to welcome the Bishop, who has always been such a reassuring presence among us whenever he has visited. And we were grateful too for Fr Anthony Maggs CRL and for his apt and inspiring homily. Sister Lotte’s friends came in force, some from as far away as Wales, and the atmosphere at the party after the celebration of Mass was another celebration, of a different kind, but very much part of the joyful and happy festivity that took place.

At the end of the day Sister Lotte thanked us all for providing her with the happiest day of her life, for which we were all so glad.



Diocese launches environmental group

Diocese of East Anglia

The remit of the group is to provide support, education and co-ordination across our parishes, schools and other diocesan structures

The Diocese of East Anglia’s response to the environmental crisis has stepped up a gear with the establishment of a group tasked with addressing this important issue.

The chair of the group, which has representatives from across Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambs, is Fr Paul Maddison. He said: “The remit of the group is to provide support, education and co-ordination across our parishes, schools and other diocesan structures as well as to facilitate national initiatives from the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales.”

The team comprises Barbara Burnett (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough) Judith Tooth (Norfolk) and Rhona Lewis (Suffolk). Along with Fr Paul, the group recently met via

Zoom with Bishop Alan to look at the challenges facing the diocese.

“Much has been done and more is planned not only to reduce our carbon footprint, but also to make real and lasting changes in response to the call of Pope Francis in Laudato Si to care for our common home,” said Fr Paul.

One of the first initiatives is a project to install electric car charging points at churches and schools across the diocese.

“Please get involved,” said Fr Paul. “Keep an eye on the diocesan website for regular updates on our work, do share with us your ideas and achievements and don’t hesitate to get in touch if you feel there is anything we can help you with.”

Granddad Altar Server receives special award on St Stephen's Day

The Catenians

Gold Medal in recognition of his fifty years as an altar server

St Stephen’s Day is traditionally a day when altar servers get special attention.

This year was no exception for the Johnson family of Colchester’s Church of St James the Less and St Helena when Mgr Christopher Brooks presented Andrew Johnson with a Gold Medal from the Archconfraternity of the Guild of St Stephen, in recognition of his fifty years as an altar server.

Catenian Andrew Johnson tells his story: “I was admitted to the Guild in 1967 after my First Holy Communion in the parish of St Albans Macclesfield. We later moved to Ashton under Lyne and the opportunity to serve was limited. Upon moving to the parish of St Pauls Hyde it was recognised that I had a good singing voice and with the priest’s

blessing the choirmistress recruited me to the choir. I served Our Lord in this role which the Guild handbook recognised as the next role to serving and I continued serving at Low Masses. This continued until I we moved to St Benedict’s in Handforth. Then came University and several career moves some parishes were receptive to people moving in but gaps occurred in serving even though I offered myself as available. When we moved to Halstead Fr Chris Maher SCA asked myself and my sons George and Alexander to serve. We accepted and eventually I took over as MC.

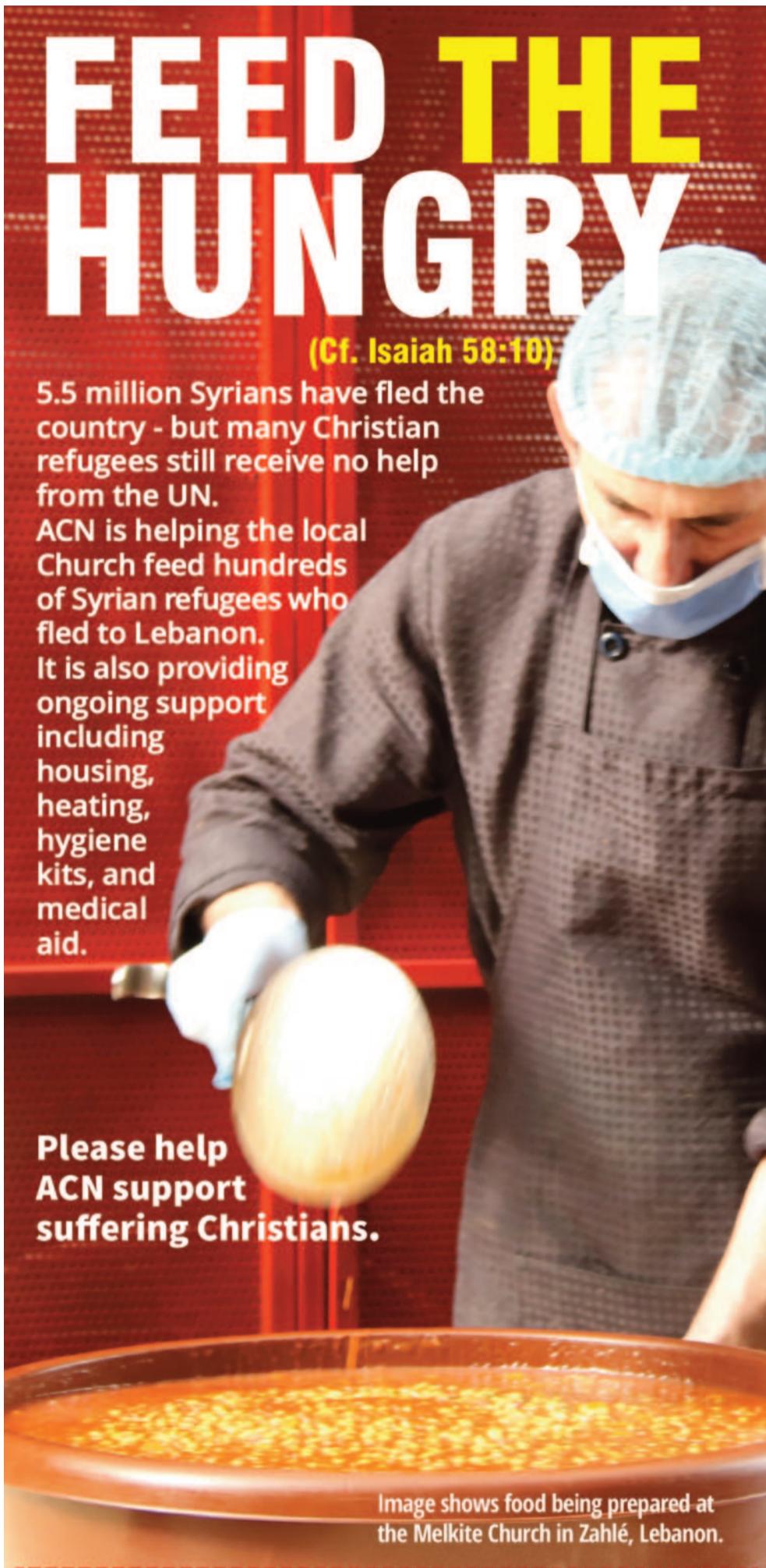
“As a family we then moved to Colchester and I eventually took over the serving team as parish MC in 2005/6. There George and Alex received their 10 year Silver Medals.



Left to right: Andrew, Marc and Alexander Johnson

“We have served as a family since 1997 and were joined by my grandson Marc in 2014 a year before his First Communion.

Alexander remains a regular server and is now a member of Colchester Catenian circle, George serves when asked and is currently Provincial Director of the Knights of St Columba for the East of England (Brentwood and East Anglia dioceses). I have been Circle President and currently Circle Secretary. I am also the Confirmation lead and a Steward of the Gospel.”



FEED THE HUNGRY

(Cf. Isaiah 58:10)

5.5 million Syrians have fled the country - but many Christian refugees still receive no help from the UN. ACN is helping the local Church feed hundreds of Syrian refugees who fled to Lebanon. It is also providing ongoing support including housing, heating, hygiene kits, and medical aid.

Please help ACN support suffering Christians.

Image shows food being prepared at the Melkite Church in Zahlé, Lebanon.



World Youth Day in Norwich including Joe Savage

World Youth Day East Anglia

Eldred Willey

Becoming a priest and then rediscovering what was the most fulfilling vocation in the world

The Diocesan Youth Service created an experience of Catholic faith for all the senses at its World Youth Day celebration in St John's Cathedral Narthex.

"When we hear about World Youth Day, we might think of hundreds of thousands of young people travelling abroad," explained Hamish MacQueen, Director of the Diocesan Youth Service. "Pope Francis has asked that as well as these International events 'World Youth Day' is to be celebrated locally by each diocese on the Feast of Christ the King."

The Diocesan Youth Service rose to the challenge by running an event in St John's Cathedral Narthex. Some 85 young people from across the Diocese enjoyed a packed programme which included Mass, worship sessions, prayer, comedy, a varied series of talks and an African-style gig. The Ignite Lite team provided catering and there were plenty of spaces for young people to relax and mix.

Hamish MacQueen, Director of Youth Service, kept the day moving to timetable and oversaw sound and lighting, while Ignite leader Ciaran Losasso played master of ceremonies and managed the transitions.

Tony Vino, a comedian from Preston, opened the events on a light note. He has been entertaining audiences across the country for 17 years after switching from a career as a solicitor.

After lunch, Matt Dean, an experienced worship leader, took the microphone and, alongside well-known songs, introduced some of his own. For young people who wanted to listen again there was a free album of his music to take away at the end.

Sr Rose Rolling OP then spoke on conversion and continuity which, after a break, led into adoration and then a Mass celebrated by

Bishop Alan Hopes. Afterwards the Bishop gave the group an opportunity for a question-and-answer session.

After more worship, Joe Savage, an CAFOD intern, gave a presentation about his experience of COP26, with much technical information about offshore energy, coal-fired power stations and climate compensation schemes.

This led into the concluding talk from Fr Luke Goymour, who shared something of his own story of conversion through nearly becoming a professional golfer, wondering if he'd made a mistake becoming a priest and then rediscovering what was for him the most fulfilling vocation in the world.

He closed on a quotation from St John

Paul II: "If we let Christ into our hearts, we lose nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great... Do not be afraid of Christ. He takes nothing away and He gives everything."



Fr Alvan Ibeh and his band and singing group

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In-work poverty 'blights the lives of children and young people'

James Robert Welton - SVP

A good opportunity to put in place measures aimed at tackling in-work poverty.

"I worry that when I grow up, I won't find a good job, and that if I find a job that doesn't give me much money, I will be poor and homeless" ... Boy, 10

The apprehension and fear of a generation has been laid bare in a new report compiled by the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) on the effects of in-work poverty on children and young people.

The report pulls together existing research on in-work poverty and captures the voices of some of the children and young people the volunteering organisation supports through its Mini-Vinnies groups, as well as those of the SVP volunteers, staff and St Vincent's community support centres who help people living in poverty every day.

Stealing futures - In-work poverty and its impact on children and young people shines a light on "one of the most daunting silent issues facing the UK today", with the impact on children and young people often going undetected and ignored.

The report quotes a recent Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) study on the rise of working poverty which suggests the trend has been growing under successive governments since 2004. The IPPR study found that rates of poverty in working households increased to a new high of 17% in the first quarter of 2021, equivalent to more than one in six households.

The SVP report also points to a shift in welfare policy over recent decades to one which focuses on work as the main route out of poverty. However, the SVP suggests this is only possible if "work in today's Britain is adequate, provides a fair wage and sufficient flexibility."

While acknowledging that unemployment levels were lower than expected when the pandemic first hit, and that wages are rising in some sectors, the SVP report highlights that "the reality is that rising housing costs, low wages, unaffordable childcare costs, compounded by growing inflation and the pandemic are leaving a rapidly growing number of working households in poverty."

At the end of 2020, the Trussell Trust reported a spike in the number of people using foodbanks for the first time. This has been corroborated by the SVP's frontline services across the country.

The SVP report also quotes figures from the Office for National Statistics which state that as of April 2019 there were over 4.2 million low-paid jobs in the UK; equivalent to 6% of all jobs. The SVP suggests that "with working-age adults making up approximately 60% of the UK population, addressing in-work poverty should be a priority for policymakers."

In Spring 2021, the SVP ran a listening exercise across the country to speak with children and young people, aged between seven and 17, and their teachers to understand their personal experiences of living in, or supporting, households affected by in-work poverty.

"Growing up in a household experiencing in-work poverty has a deep and lasting impact on children," comments SVP National President Helen O'Shea. "The experiences of the children and young people we heard from were striking. Many spoke about the extreme hardship of having to be almost entirely isolated due to Covid restrictions, and how that led to mental health issues, anxiety and a deterioration in their physical health. Many children were also aware of the pressure on families living on low incomes who are struggling to afford food and digital equipment for school."

Helen O'Shea continues: "Of major concern is the fact that many of the young people we spoke with expressed a real fear of not being able to find a 'good job' which would allow them to be financially stable and 'not homeless'."

The report found that children as young as seven were very aware of the importance of achieving good grades to get a 'good job'. The report notes that while this demonstrates ambition, it also reveals the very real anxiety increasingly expressed by younger children in terms of financial stability and employment. It also displays their real concern about ending up in low-paid employment and about their fear of homelessness as a result.

The SVP report points to the much-anticipated Employment Bill as "a good opportunity to put in place measures aimed at tackling in-work poverty." The SVP has set out three policy approaches to tackle the blight of in-work poverty for adults and children alike, including provisions which ensure employees have access to suitable working arrangements such



Stealing futures - In-work poverty and its impact on children and young people

as flexible working from day one, and secure work arrangements which prohibit zero-hour contracts.

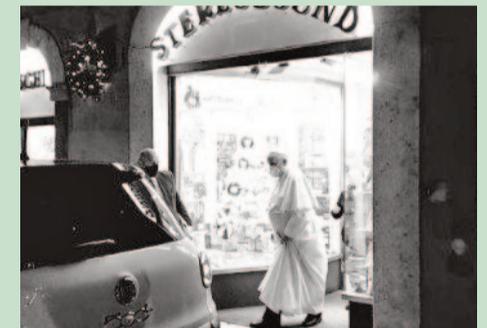
The SVP also suggests that high childcare costs are one of the compounding reasons for low-income households falling into poverty, and it calls for an extension to free childcare provision. The SVP is also calling for a stronger social security safety net, including the reinstatement of the £20-per-week increase in Universal Credit. The widespread adoption of a Real Living Wage would also address in-work poverty, suggests the SVP.

Helen O'Shea concludes: "We believe that charity is not the solution to in-work poverty. We need a strong commitment from the Government to tackle this hidden crisis, including policies to tackle insecure work, the high cost of childcare and low wages. These measures will go some way to improving the quality of life and the opportunities for children and young people, and ultimately the health and prosperity of the nation. In the meantime, the SVP will always be on hand to support people in poverty of any kind through kindness and dignity."

Pope pays surprise visit to Rome record shop

Vatican News Agency

Pope Francis visits the "Stereosound" shop in Rome's Pantheon area to bless the recently renovated premises



It was a huge surprise to those in the neighbourhood when on the afternoon of 4 September 2015, Pope Francis entered an optician's in the historic centre of Rome, to change the frames of his glasses.

Then, again on 21 December 2016, when he visited the Fisiotop orthopaedic shop in the Gregorio VII area, to buy new shoes.

On Tuesday afternoon, a similar scene took place with the sudden arrival of Pope Francis in the premises of "Stereosound", an old record shop in Via della Minerva, near the Pantheon.

Pope Francis knows the owners of the shop from his time as an Archbishop, when he stayed in the Casa del Clero in the nearby Via della Scrofa during his visits to Rome.

Arriving at around 7 pm in a white Fiat 500L, Pope Francis soon attracted the attention of passers-by.

According to Matteo Bruni, Director of the Holy See Press Office, Pope Francis blessed the premises, which have been recently renovated. He also took time to look around inside the shop for around ten minutes.

In the meantime, according to those present, a small crowd had gathered, ready to film the Pope's exit with their smartphones.

They were mainly youngsters joking about what kind of music the Pope might be interested in and peering through the windows, from where Pope Francis could be seen blessing Letizia, the elderly owner, her son-in-law and her daughter.

The shop-owner's daughter presented the Pope with a gift, wrapped in blue paper: a 33 rpm record of classical music.

Catholic Schools Caring for our Common Home



James Spencer
Communications and
Partnerships Manager for
the Catholic Bishops'
Conference of England
and Wales

James Spencer - NETCET

Leading to the way in campaigning for a better world

One of the most striking elements of the public's response to the climate crisis has been the role young people have played. Not only have we seen people take leadership roles within this new environmental movement, we have also seen children become the main evangelists for change.

This was particularly striking in the run up to COP26, with Catholic schools up and down the country leading to the way in campaigning for a better world as well as changing their own behaviours and practices to become better stewards of God's creation.

In this article I would like to draw on the examples of two particular Catholic schools.

St Mary's Catholic School, Swanage, Dorset

St Mary's Catholic School has put Laudato Si' at the heart of its curriculum, carrying out a wide variety of environmental activities that give children the chance to see how social action can make a difference throughout the whole community.

Between 2017-2019, St Mary's looked at how to reduce single-use plastic in the school and in the local community. The pupils delivered a local advocacy project over two years which included:

* Writing to businesses that supplied items to the school to ask them to reduce single-use plastic and asking parents to avoid purchasing items using single-use plastic.

* Writing to local businesses, the Bishop, the Queen, the town council and others to ask about their environmental policy and single use plastic. The school received many positive replies, including from Buckingham Palace.

* Visiting local shops and businesses to audit their single-use plastic, talking to shoppers and the general public about the environment, and offering certificates designed by the pupils to businesses they felt deserved recognition. They also asked members of the public what they thought and found that they agreed unanimously that it

should be reduced. Following this, the Green Team wrote to the supermarkets to ask if this is possible.

* Setting up a table outside the supermarkets and gathering a petition of over 500 signatures calling for an end to single-use plastic.

* Undertaking a climate march with posters designed by the pupils, reading out poems written by the children.

St Mary's was also a winner of the Plastic Free Schools award in June 2019. Members of the school Green Team have also joined a new Sustainable Swanage Youth Group run by the Town Council. In recognition of St Mary's status as a Plastic-Free School, some of the Green Team were invited in January 2020 to present awards to local businesses as part of Swanage's application to become a Plastic-Free Town (which it now is).

Since beginning this project and embedding social action and Laudato Si' into the school curriculum, Headteacher Maria Gadston has noticed increased confidence and improved public speaking skills in those students that have taken part. She has also noted changes in attitudes to recycling and other activities in the homes of the pupils and the wider community. This work 'has really excited and enthused the children', who have 'been enabled to see that they have a voice and can make a difference to the world around'.

St Peter's RC High School, Manchester

St Peter's Roman Catholic High School in Manchester has been very busy in response to Laudato Si'. Beginning with only seven students but now having 100 (approximately 10% of the entire school), St Peter's 'Eco Schools Committee' has been working hard to cut their school's carbon footprint and to engage with the wider community on ways to join the fight for the environment.

Started through the Chaplaincy Gift Team, the Eco Committee runs in partnership with

sustainability education consultant James Ridgway and the school's lay chaplain. They hold their meetings in the school chapel, and while they are sure to keep things grounded in Laudato Si' and care for creation, the students have not been content to simply sit down and discuss these issues. While students appreciated the opportunity to learn more, they have demanded action, determined 'to do something to help save the environment'.

The students' activities have included planting trees, building 'bug hotels', energy monitoring, switch-off fortnights, litter picks and more, and through these efforts they have managed to cut St Peter's carbon footprint in half! In 2018 the Eco Committee invited Manchester Environmental Education Network (MEEN) to work with them and the two have since collaborated to engage a wider audience on environmental issues. The St Peter's Eco Committee was later invited to talk about climate change with younger pupils from St Richard's Primary School. The team gave a presentation to convey the basic science, then ran a selection of games before working together on action planning for the their schools.

The Eco Committee has also made trips to the University of Manchester, delivering presentations to students and meeting with trainee teachers to discuss methods of teaching climate change. James Ridgway noted with pride the transformation he had seen in 'some of our shyest students', as in a matter of months with the Eco Committee, they gained the confidence necessary to give presentations in a university environment and to speak with complete strangers about the issues they cared about. One of James' proudest moments was when the student's efforts were honoured with the Spirit of Manchester Award.

This work has not been without its challenges and whilst the Pandemic may have slowed things down a little for the students at St Peter's they will be busy in the coming year!

Crown of Thorns Chaplaincy Support throughout the Pandemic

One of the primary aims of the charity Crown of Thorns is the promotion of the Holy Rosary. We print and distribute several publications and prayer materials to achieve this. During the long months of the Covid-19 pandemic we have been particularly privileged to assist in supporting many of our hospital chaplains in the U.K. with rosary cards, rosary packs and other items to support their work in the hospital wards. These items have been for the benefit of not only the Covid-19 patients but also for the support of the hospital staff, other patients, patient's family members and visitors.

The provision of these simple items of devotion continues to prove to be a great comfort, and hospital chaplains have returned to us time and time again for further supplies, having seen first-hand the effect that these rosary cards and rosaries can bring to those who receive them, especially for those in the very depths of exhaustion or despair. It is heartening for us to hear of all the different ways that the rosary cards have been used, and how they have benefited those who have been given one, or picked one up at the chaplaincy tables.

We have also continued to receive many requests from prison and seafarers chaplaincies throughout the pandemic, often working ecumenically to reach those in need. One thing is certain; small actions carried out with love can have a huge impact on those around us.
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Continued from page 1

"We are inspired by the work that St Francis Leprosy Guild and the sisters carry out in Sri Lanka, and in other countries across the world," said Bishop Declan Lang.

In the communities that the Guild supports, there must be great loneliness and hardship. I know that the visits and care provided have a transformative impact on people's lives."

The Church has a long tradition of supporting our brothers and sisters living with the effects

of leprosy. We have a duty to see that they are included and valued."

I am mindful of Pope Francis' call to world leaders last World Leprosy Day, to ensure that people are cured from leprosy and can thrive in their communities. I too hope that the leaders of nations will unite in their efforts to treat those with leprosy and promote their social inclusion."

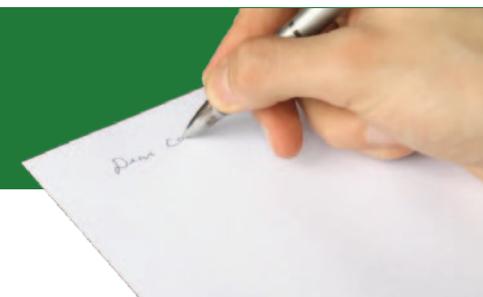
I share the Holy Father's encouragement to nuns, health workers, and volunteers committed to this work and hope that

Catholics in England and Wales will pray for and support their mission."

It is through such kindness and generosity that people with leprosy can receive medication, provisions and assistance in the most difficult circumstances."

Leprosy, or Hansen's disease, is a curable infectious disease caused by the bacillus M. leprae. For the first time in centuries, an end to leprosy is in sight and the St Francis Leprosy Guild is on the frontline playing its part.

Letters to the Editor



All correspondence to Letters to the Editor to be sent by e-mail to johnclwson@icloud.com and must give a contact name and place of residence. Anonymous correspondence will not be considered for publication.

Dear Editor

Re: 'Song of Bernadette' / Franz Werfel

I read your interesting article about St. Bernadette. My mother all her life had this book by her night table. All her life, she read one chapter after another. She maybe knew the book by heart.

Apart from this miracle, there was another miracle, how the author of the book lived in hiding in Lourdes, when under the occupation of France.

Franz Werfel was born in 1890 into a Jewish family in Prague. He was sent to a school run by Piarists, a Catholic education order. He married a socialite Alma Mahler, who was a widow of the composer Gustav Mahler.

The Werfels lived in Austria but fled after the Anschluss, staying and hiding in a Catholic sanctuary in Lourdes where Werfel heard of the story of Bernadette Soubirous.

Franz Werfel, distressed and at his wit's, also drank from the spring and vowed to 'sing the most beautiful song about the miracle, even though I am not a Catholic but a Jew' if only he could escape the Nazis.

A miracle happened again, because the Werfels managed to leave Lourdes for Marseilles and together with others crossed Pyrenees on foot to Spain. Alma, his wife, was a tower of strength for mentally and physically weak Werfel. Eventually they managed to come to Madrid, from there to Lisbon, where they boarded a ship to New York.

In USA, Werfel wrote 'The Song of Bernadette' in 1941. The book was made into a film in 1943 which promoted also (the) pilgrimage site and Berandette Soubirous.

There are not many Jewish writers who wrote about Christians but Werfel is an exemption. In 1932 he published the book '40 days of Musa Dagh', where he described the destruction of Armenian Christians by the Ottoman Empire. This was the first time the world learned of the genocide of Armenian Christians and the novel became a bestseller. It was banned in Germany and publicly burned in Turkey. It became an international success and was turned into a film in 1982.

Werfel died in Los Angeles in 1945 and was reburied in Vienna in 1975.

I have never been in Lourdes but I would like to visit one day. I don't know, how many Catholics are aware of this writer, who is so significant in promoting Lourdes.

Yours faithfully,
Dr. Elena Rowland
MSc.DLSHTM Dipl.Psych (Open)

Dear Editor

May I congratulate you on your courageous step in launching a National Catholic Newspaper after all the recently, sadly, failed titles. It was interesting to see that you are giving news space to Catholics who have previously been on the fringes of the membership of the church. I feel it would be useful to allow space to give news of the universal church as well. There are many people suffering around the world for their faith who need our prayers and our practical help.

Mary Farrell - Sent by email

Dear Editor

The climate crisis should be a concern for us all. COP26 largely failed to deliver the urgent action needed for many of the poorest communities CAFOD supports around the world. Instead, the conference pushed until 2022 commitments to limit temperature increases to 1.5C and deliver the climate finance so desperately needed. For some this will be too late.

"Later this year at COP27 in Egypt, countries must come back with greater ambition and demonstrate they will make real progress on reducing emissions by 2030.

"The UK is still the President of the COP until COP27 starts so CAFOD will continue to push them to deliver the promises they made at COP26 both domestically and internationally. The Catholic community has been a driving force in calling for climate justice. We will be redoubling our efforts to hold rich nations to account on ensuring that the world's poorest and most vulnerable get the support they need.

"We are emboldened by Pope Francis's message shared at the start of the COP26 summit: 'We need both hope and courage. Humanity possesses the wherewithal to effect this change...'"

Laura Ouseley
World News Officer, CAFOD

Dear Editor

The remarks by Pope Francis, printed on the back page of The Catholic Post December edition at first caused me to think that he is behind the curve - there have of course been Catholic newspapers around for generations and he knows this, then his latter remarks led me to conclude that he has issues with other publications because opinions are freely expressed and not always to his liking, and that he thinks a new publication will exclude any of what he regards as "amplifying a discussion which is strident ambiguous and insinuating" -

maybe it is your/the Bishops' intention to block opinions which you/they deem to be so. Obviously, if this is the intention, it would be likened to publishing in China under Chinese state censorship.

Alan Pontet
By email

Dear Editor

Thank you for highlighting plight of refugees to the UK if the Nationality and Borders Bill comes into effect. I notice it was sourced from the Jesuit Refugee Service UK who work to serve and advocate on behalf of refugees and forced migrants.

They have a special ministry to serve those who are detained under the immigration rules or who are left destitute. They also run a weekly day centre which is a place where destitute asylum seekers can get a hot meal, small travel allowance and other essential items, and gain emotional support and friendship from volunteers, staff and other refugees. In addition they run a detention outreach programme, visiting and letter writing to detainees, as well as a hosting scheme for destitute asylum seekers. Jesuit Refugee Service certainly deserve our support and prayers.

John Hickey - Sent by email

Dear Editor

I was surprised to read in the December edition of your newspaper (p15) a half-page article entitled "LGBT+ Mass reflection" written by a certain George White who is described as a "member of the LGBT+ Pastoral Ministry Team, Diocese of Nottingham".

A quick search on google reveals the following about George White:

George White Transgender Catholic & Teacher of Religious Education Leicester, England, United Kingdom St Paul's Catholic School
Can you please answer the following two questions:

1. Do George White's views reflect your own views and the policy of your newspaper?
2. Has the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales or any individual Diocese or Dioceses provided any financial support to your project?

Sent by email

Nb

1 Our policy is to devote our pages to be a place for truth and where there is a passion for justice and peace and the promotion of God's glory.

2 We do not receive any financial support from any source other than advertisers and subscribers.

Editor

Dear Editor

I would like to contribute to the conversation regarding the exodus of mass goers post the worst constraints of the pandemic. I think the church do seriously recognise that they need get a grip here but they seem to be failing in their recognition of what the problem actually is. They are rightly emphasising that the Eucharist is at the centre of our faith and should be seen as such by the laity but they appear to me to be directing their conversation at the wrong people. In my parish they seem to be asking people who have continued going to mass!

There are lots of people out there who have 'dropped out' for various reasons. But who is inviting them back. Who is sending emails out inviting them back, telling them we miss them, telling them we need them. Who is emailing them telling them of parish evenings, parish help that is still available, telling them that are special to us. Surely we could set up parish communication centres manned if necessary by lay people to send out these communications. Do any parishes do this? There will be lots who say no for many reasons- we don't have emails lists, we don't have the resources, what about data protection etc but every problem is only there to be overcome. If you look at commercial companies the ones that are successful are the ones that have good communications and a good product. We have the best product in the world but our communications leave quite a bit to be desired.

Edward Young, London
Sent by email



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Job Opportunity:
Warden at St Scholastica's Retreat, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire

Following the retirement of our Warden of the past 15 years, the Trustees of St Scholastica's Retreat are looking for an enthusiastic, energetic, caring and experienced person to deliver a range of services to the residents and Board of Management of St Scholastica's Retreat, an almshouse charity providing 36 self-contained residential units for Roman Catholics in financial need who are over the age of 60 years. We are located in the town of Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire. As Warden, you will play a key role in the day-to-day management of the charity as it plans to expand over the next few years. Day-to-day duties will include assisting the Trustees in fulfilling the charitable and spiritual aims of the Trust: in particular, 'to support elderly Catholics to live independently within the community of St Scholastica's Retreat'. To this end, to act as manager and administrator of St Scholastica's Retreat.

As Clerk to the Trustees, to assist the Trustees in strategic planning for the Trust and for St Scholastica's Retreat. Previous experience of working in the charity sector would be an advantage. The role offers a competitive salary, pension, holiday entitlement and accommodation on-site in a three bedroom house.

For further information about the role of Warden and details of how to apply see <https://www.stscholasticas.co.uk/warden-clerk-vacancy>
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Sisters open 'house of hospitality' for asylum seekers and refugees

Ruth Gledhill

"This house feels needed now more than ever, particularly given the failure of COP26"

The Sisters of St Joseph of Peace have opened their first UK house of hospitality for asylum seekers and refugees in Nottingham, just a few miles from where the congregation was founded in 1884.

St Joseph's House of Hospitality, built within a renovated church and presbytery dating from the late 19th century, will be home to three sisters, as well as short and long-term guests referred by the Nottingham charity Host. The house is also the congregation novitiate.

The house was opened formally yesterday, the anniversary of Dorothy Day, who founded the Catholic Worker network of Houses of Hospitality, at an event for sisters and associates in the UK region. The event began with a liturgy of welcome in the converted church hall, followed by a procession and blessing of the rooms and a liturgy of thanksgiving.

Sister Katrina Alton CSJP, who helped discern and steer the project and who is a member of the founding community, speaking after 27 people drowned trying to cross the English Channel, said: "This house feels needed now more than ever, particularly given the failure of COP26. Everyone has the right to migrate, but we're dealing at the moment with people who are forced to migrate – and they're forced to migrate because of British foreign policy and because of the climate emergency. "But it's not a migrant crisis, it's a crisis of hospitality. We have a sacred duty as Christians

to welcome the stranger. In the early Church every home had a 'Christ room', a space to welcome the stranger – if you were rich enough to have a room, it was a room; if you were poor, it was a mat to sleep on. For me, this house is about returning to that sacred duty of hospitality, and it's about cutting through the narrative that there's a migrant 'crisis'.

"I think it's important that we actually stop talking in some ways about refugees and asylum seekers: these are our brothers and sisters, and somebody's daughter, mother, father, brother and sister. The deaths in the channel are individual tragedies."

Speaking at the event one of St Joseph's community members, Sr Margaret Byrne CSJP, said: "When we began work on renovating the house we discovered that the foundation stone had been blessed by our Congregation's co-founder, Oratorian Bishop Edwin Bagshawe of Nottingham, just a year before he co-founded our Congregation. And we are just a short walk from our Congregation's first novitiate. So we are returning to our roots.

We are also returning to the roots of our charism of peace through justice. Bishop Bagshawe saw a kindred spirit in our founder, Margaret Anna Cusack. Like her he was greatly concerned about justice for the poor. The local coal mines and industrial development had brought a huge influx of people to this part of Nottingham; you can imagine the overcrowding, unjust wages, poor treatment



and living conditions for the miners in particular."

The congregation discerned the call to open houses of hospitality following a commitment at its 2014 Chapter to practise "radical hospitality". The Sisters have also opened a house of hospitality in New Jersey, USA. "We are called to a deeper and wider living of community for mission in company with poor and marginalised people," that chapter call read.

"Our contemplative discernment pushes us, individually and as a congregation, to action; deeper mutual support enables us to take risks for justice, peace and the integrity of creation."

The sisters expect to start taking guests in 2022.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, founded in 1884 in Nottingham, England by Mother Clare (Margaret Anna Cusack) and Mother Evangelista (Honorina Gaffney), are an international community built on a rich heritage of promoting social justice as a way to peace. Sisters and Associates minister in education, health care, religious education, parish ministry, social justice, spiritual direction and peace ministry in the US, UK, Haiti, and El Salvador. For more information, visit the Congregation website at www.csjp.org

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Catenian Charitable Giving - Province 10

The Catenians - Lancaster Diocese

Continuing to strengthen their family life through friendship and faith – the aims of the Association

As the various lockdowns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic grew to a close the members of the Catenian Association Provincial Council of Province 10 (which includes the southern half of the Diocese) debated the size of their funds. They came to the conclusion that the monies held were in excess of the likely requirements of the Province and therefore decided to make a donation to charity. Various charities were mentioned but two made it to the top of the list and each was to be given £1,000.

Preston and District Circle 144 were about to hold a Charity BBQ to raise money for Brother President, Shaun Horsefeld's, chosen charity, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN). The BBQ was held in a 'medieval' barn at Houghton Hall Farm. On the day and along with a number of

generous donations they raised about £1,700 for the charity in addition to the donation from Provincial Council.

Now the son of the long time Secretary of Westmorland Circle, Brother Paul Bates, came up with a challenge to celebrate Paul's 70th birthday - to run Coast to Coast along Hadrian's Wall over three days. A distance of 94 miles. Paul and son, Tom, set off from Bowness-on-Solway on the coast west of Carlisle and finished on the beach at North Shields near the entrance to the River Tyne east of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Paul says that day one was ok and they covered 36 miles, but he found days two and three hard despite the fact that he has been running the Cumbrian fells for many years. For the most part of these

days they did run but towards the end of the day it was more of a crawl. They were spurred on knowing that the Catenian Association had donated £1,000 for their efforts for their chosen charity Alzheimer's Society. Paul, a retired GP, considers this to be a very relevant charity as dementia has an impact on most families in some way. Father and son enjoyed spending three days running together through beautiful Northumberland, but Paul thinks he will only accept easier challenges in future.

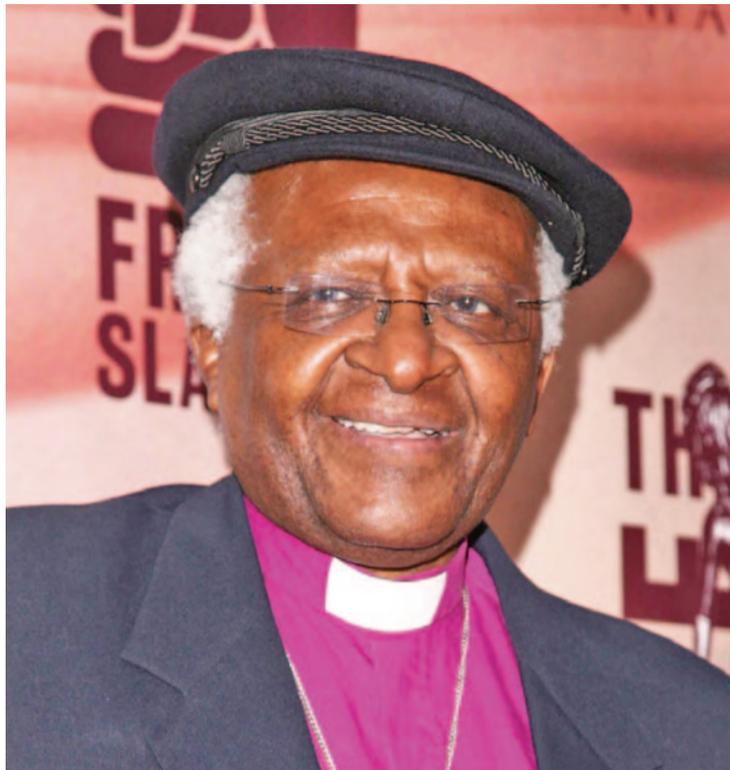
Members of the Association are now meeting face-to-face again and are very relieved that they can now continue to strengthen their family life through friendship and faith – the aims of the Association.



ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU

Heather Kiernan

We are not made for an exclusive self-sufficiency but for interdependence, and we break the law of our being at our peril



Memories

Heather Kiernan 2 January 2022: Yesterday, we said farewell to Desmond Tutu, South Africa's 'national conscience'. He was laid to rest without lavish expense or ostentation having requested 'the cheapest available coffin' with only 'a bouquet of carnations from his family.' As a tribute, I thought it fitting on the second Sunday of Christmas to reflect on the moral values he promoted and held dear throughout his life. It was his steadfast adherence to these values, his courage, activism, integrity and fight for peace that earned him the Nobel Peace Prize. Here is an excerpt from his Nobel Acceptance Speech given on December 11, 1984.

"I have spoken extensively about South Africa, first because it is the land I know best, but because it is also a microcosm of the world and an example of what is to be found in other lands in differing degree - when there is injustice, invariably peace becomes a casualty...

Because there is global insecurity, nations are engaged in a mad arms race, spending billions of dollars wastefully on instruments of destruction, when millions are starving. And yet, just a fraction of what is expended so obscenely on defence budgets would make the difference in enabling God's children to fill their stomachs, be educated, and given the chance to lead fulfilled and happy lives. We have the capacity to feed ourselves several times over, but we are daily haunted by the spectacle of the gaunt dregs of humanity shuffling along in endless queues, with bowls to collect what the charity of the world has provided, too little too late.

When will we learn, when will the people of the world get up and say, Enough is enough. God created us for fellowship. God created us so that we should form the human family, existing together because we were made for one another. We are not made for an exclusive self-sufficiency but for interdependence, and we break the law of our being at our peril. When will we learn that an escalated arms race merely escalates global insecurity? We are now

much closer to a nuclear holocaust than when our technology and our spending were less.

Unless we work assiduously so that all of God's children, our brothers and sisters, members of our one human family, all will enjoy basic human rights, the right to a fulfilled life, the right of movement, of work, the freedom to be fully human, with a humanity measured by nothing less than the humanity of Jesus Christ Himself, then we are on the road inexorably to self-destruction, we are not far from global suicide; and yet it could be so different.

When will we learn that human beings are of infinite value because they have been created in the image of God, and that it is a blasphemy to treat them as if they were less than this and to do so ultimately recoils on those who do this? In dehumanizing others, they are themselves dehumanized. Perhaps oppression dehumanizes the oppressor as much as, if not more than, the oppressed. They need each other to become truly free, to become human. We can be human only in fellowship, in community, in koinonia, in peace.

Let us work to be peacemakers, those given a wonderful share in Our Lord's ministry of reconciliation. If we want peace, so we have been told, let us work for justice. Let us beat our swords into ploughshares."

Desmond Tutu and Trevor Huddleston

In an article written for the Cape Times in 2013, Desmond Tutu wrote about "The Man Who Changed My Life."

"The epitaph on the granite base of the statue in the English town of Bedford simply states, "No white person has done more for South Africa than Trevor Huddleston," the words of Nelson Mandela. I don't know if Father Trevor, as we used to call him in Sophiatown, would be totally comfortable with the fact that a 12-word précis of his life should include the descriptor, "white". Why did Madiba not use a nationalist or professional reference instead, such as, "No English person" or, "No Christian person"?

No. Madiba was right. When we grew up, the colour of our skins was what defined who we were, where we lived and what we were allowed to be. It was fundamentally important that Trevor Huddleston was white. His kindness and compassion, his servant leadership, were evidence that not all white people had horns and tails. He taught us that the limitations imposed on us by apartheid were in fact false ceilings, that the sky was the limit.

One of the earliest and most painful memories of my childhood is accompanying my father, a school principal, to the shop - I think it was in Ventersdorp - and witnessing him being humiliated by a young white shop assistant... being addressed, "Ja, boy?" by one much younger than himself, and being forced to swallow his pride. But I believe the most defining moment of my life occurred when I was about nine years old, outside the Blind Institute in Roodepoort where my mother was a domestic worker. We were standing on the stoep when this tall white man in a black cassock, and a hat, swept by. I did not know that it was Trevor Huddleston. He doffed his hat in greeting my mother. It was something I could never have imagined. The impossible was possible. I subsequently discovered that this was quite consistent with Trevor Huddleston's theology: that every person is of significance, of infinite value, because they are created in the image of God.

A few years after that meeting in the street, I was admitted to Coronation Hospital, in Coronationville, where I was diagnosed with TB. I was to spend 20 months in hospital. Trevor Huddleston visited me regularly; he made me feel very special. It was not that I was extra-special in any way. He made so many people feel special, everyone he touched. He was one of us, a member of our family, God's family. When he wore a white cassock it quickly became grubby from all the little hands that tugged him and hugged him. Then he'd shoo us out of the office because he had to meet someone "important". The fact is, he made us all feel important - because we all are!"

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the BISHOP ANYOGU
Auctrice REGINA Pacis
A HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY

"...as my New Year's resolution, I want to serve God all my life. I want to be a priest." "Can a black man be a priest?" asked Jacob his father. "Why not?" asked Shanahan, the Roman Catholic Prefect of the Holy Ghost Fathers at Onitsha in 1910. "Has a black man not got a soul?"

...the obstacles, trials and challenges began for the twelve-year-old native-born in the late 19th century Victorian colony of Nigeria - the defining period when the Anyogu family legacy became embedded in the Archivum Secretum Apostolicum Vaticanum in Rome.

With century-old journals and newspapers put into perspective, this biography reveals a towering figure and one of, if not the most influential personality ever in Nigerian history.

And so, I present to you,
The BISHOP JOHN CROSS ANYOGU
www.amazon.co.uk/Bishop-Anyogu

Marie Otigba lives in London is a parishioner at Our Lady Of Muswell Roman Catholic Church, London

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**PLEASE SUPPORT
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Following the COP26 pledges and targets announced recently, Fr. Patrick Bassey, Assistant priest at St Hugh of Lincoln Church in the City of Lincoln, proposes ‘seven ecological works of mercy’ that would provide the religious background and incentive for the proper appreciation of the goals of the conference and Bishop Patrick’s eight – point diocesan framework policy on the environment. Below is the second of his three-part article. Part three will follow in our next edition.

Ecological Works of Mercy

Part two



By Fr Patrick Bassey

Why seven works? The number seven is significant in biblical and Christian numerology. It occurs many times in the bible and its meanings and connotations include perfection, completion, totality, wholeness, healing, restoration, freedom, mercy, fulfilment of oaths and promises.

As noble and timely as the visions from COP26 may be, they need to be pursued in an integrated manner that brings together the political, economic, cultural, technological, and religious imaginations and creativity of everybody.

The age-long emphasis on the *corporal and spiritual works of Mercy* by the Church provides both the practical and spiritual platforms for the expression of this virtue of mercy. The corporal works of mercy include: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. The *spiritual works of mercy* include: to counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offences, bear patiently with those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead. Pope Francis has also spoken of the *eighth work of mercy*, a work that is both corporal and spiritual; ‘the care for creation’.

Within the context of the widened covenant community of God, Man and Nature, this eighth work of mercy is ecological in nature, thus the phrase *Ecological Works of Mercy*. ‘Care for creation’ involves a variety of issues. Given their complex nature, these issues have been treated uniquely though not in isolation from one another nor from the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. They complement each other and make us Christlike and perfect.

Why seven works? The number seven is significant in biblical and Christian numerology. It occurs many times in the bible and its meanings and connotations include perfection, completion, totality, wholeness, healing, restoration, freedom, mercy, fulfilment of oaths and promises. We are familiar with the fact that God rested on the seventh day after he had finished his work of creation. The Jubilee year, a time of renewal, restoration, forgiveness, and restoration was celebrated after seven cycles of sabbatical years (Lev. 25:1-4, 8-10). The Church also speaks of seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, Seven words of Jesus on the Cross, Seven Sorrows of Mary, Seven deadly sins, seven corporal works and seven spiritual works of mercy. The seven ecological works of mercy covers the broad spectrum of our Christian responsibility towards all of God’s creatures.

Our 1st ecological work of Mercy is to acknowledge the beauty and integrity of creation. From the very beginning, God saw that all he had made was good (Gen. 1:31). In each creature there is a unique presence and expression of God’s infinite wisdom and goodness, and each creature possesses in its own right a latent goodness and perfection. Man must therefore respect the particular goodness and integrity of every creature. Man must also avoid any disordered use of things. Whatever hampers the dignity and integrity of nature should be considered as morally wrong and sinful. Recognising that all creatures are good and beautiful does not deny humans their unique worth, it rather makes it obvious, serious, and commendable. It also gives us a sense of responsibility towards other creatures (LS. 68, 118).

Our 2nd Ecological Work of Mercy is to acknowledge our relationship with other creatures. Pope Francis reminds us that “all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion” (LS.86) The spectacle of their countless diversities and inequalities tells us that no creature is self-sufficient. Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each

other” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church. Art.340*).

The 3rd Ecological Work of Mercy is to develop an inner ecological conscience. Conscience is that moral principle in the human heart. It is what Jesus refers to as the seat of all human actions, both good and bad. A well-formed conscience is the voice of God. It is also inherently and perennially ecological in disposition. It is thus the principle of goodness-justice, equality, charity, mercy, respect for life and care for others. On the contrary, a bad conscience is a heart prone to greed, materialism, exploitation, injustice, inequality

and ‘compulsive consumerism’. The formation of this type of conscience should be the ultimate aim of education. As a matter of fact, Pope Francis has rightly observed that ‘Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society, and our relationship with nature” (LS 215). Our diocesan policy on ecological advocacy would seek to integrate environmental catechesis and education into our traditional faith formation programs, homilies, marriage formation and sacramental preparations.

FRANK GOULDING

We can always look at the wisdom of many saints



Devotion to Saint Therese is still strong in 2022

It is not uncommon to be asked in late December if we had a “good Christmas”. The feast of the Epiphany and the wisdom associated with the Magi is really the true completion of what the feast of Christmas began. This year the need for wisdom seems to be more needed than ever.

As the early weeks of 2022 unfolded some commentators expressed their concerns for what they felt was a world in crisis. This feeling of strife is at least felt in most parts of the planet. Yes COVID-19 has made and still is a significant contribution but did we ever anticipate that the plight of a tennis player in Australia would dominate the headlines day after day? Another area where wisdom was much needed was the allegation of a party or parties in Downing Street when many families could not visit loved ones some of whom had a terminal illness.

At the time of writing this article there is great concern about the potential huge rise in domestic energy prices due to commence before Easter. Yes there are surging global prices but if you add the regular council tax increase and the proposed National Insurance surcharge this can only affect the poorest most including those who are in regular employment. Over the recent Christmas period the cause of our Charity

organisations seemed to be getting more difficult. Many readers will have received extra appeals for help for the plight of those in greatest need. We have perhaps had to choose and use our own personal wisdom of which one to support assuming of course that we have the funds in the first place.

When world and local affairs seem to be somewhat overwhelming we can always look at the wisdom of many saints.

In 2009 nearly half a million joined a local queue to visit the relics of Saint Therese of Lisieux in many areas of England and Wales. We have many secular journalists in our media, they remained totally baffled that such devotion was possible in the world of the 21st century. Devotion to Saint Therese is still strong in 2022.

This year in September and October St. Bernadette’s relics are scheduled to tour many areas in our country. We will have the opportunity I hope to show our devotion to another great French Saint. Many readers will have memories of a pilgrimage to Lourdes. On February 11th we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. The world sadly has developed many new problems since we welcomed the relics of Saint Therese, we need to follow the example of these two great saints as this difficult year unfolds.

PERSONAL

MAY THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS be adored, glorified, Loved and preserved throughout the world, now & forever. Sacred heart of Jesus, pray for us. Saint Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us. Saint Jude, help of the hopeless, pray for us.

Say this prayer nine times a day, by the ninth day your prayer will be answered. It had never been known to fail. Publication must be promised.

S.P.M

Mill Hill Missionaries
National Novena to St Joseph
 10 - 18 March 2022



NOVENA MASSES
 will be celebrated at
 St Joseph's Church
 Maidenhead* &
 Herbert House
 Freshfield
 Liverpool

*Masses from St. Joseph's Church will be available to view on Zoom, via the Mill Hill website: www.millhillmissionaries.com/novena.

Invitation to join us in Prayer
 If you would like to receive a Novena booklet please send a stamped self-addressed envelope to:

Novena Director
 6 Colby Gardens
 Maidenhead
 Berkshire
 SL6 7GZ

Or email:
novenamhm@gmail.com

For more information about the Mill Hill Missionaries, please visit our website:
www.millhillmissionaries.com

The image above is a detail from a stained glass window in our former Mill Hill House in Albany, New York, the property of St. James O'Connell, USA.

Registered Charity No. 22940 & No. 0220905



Solemn Profession of Sr Reina

Hyning Monastery

'Uphold me O Lord, according to your word and I shall live. Let not my hope be in vain'

On Sunday 10th October 2021, we had the joy of celebrating the Solemn Profession of Sr Reina Kartika. The main celebrant was the Right Reverend Bishop of Lancaster Paul Swarbrick, with other priests also concelebrating. The homily was preached by Fr Peter Craddy OCSO, our chaplain at our sister house at Brownhill, Gloucester, where Sr Reina lived for 2 years as part of her monastic formation. All the restrictions imposed by Covid regulations were unable to contain the joy of the day.

In the summer of 2013, Sr Reina, then Irene, came to Hyning to find out whether she was being called to live a monastic life here with our community. She had found us via the internet, visiting our website www.bernardine.org. Living with us for 3 months helped her and us, discern her vocation as a Bernardine.

In January 2014, she entered our community of Bernardines Cistercians of Esquermes as a Postulant, became a novice in December 2014 and made her First Vows in October 2016. She chose the name Sr Reina.

The day was glorious and very bright and about 60 people were able to gather in the Chapel to celebrate with Sr. Reina. She chose John 15 as her Gospel, the text "Remain in my love" was also the theme for the cake decoration! As a junior sister she would have worn a white veil and a cloak. When she made her Solemn profession, she was given a black

veil and a cowl as symbols of this final step. As Sr Audrey had made her simple Profession at Brownhill 8 days earlier, and she was one of the visitors from Brownhill, we had '4 white veils', 4 juniors in the house just for 2 days! Our Prioress General, Sr Mary Helen, came to celebrate with us and receive her vows. Traditionally we make the vows of Obedience, Stability and Conversion of life rather than the traditional evangelical vows. The 'Suscipe', the raising of hands and voices is very important in the ceremony. Chapter 58 of the Rule of Benedict recommends the use of a certain prayer during the ritual of profession. As is often the case, this prayer is named after its first word in Latin - here Suscipe - which means 'receive'. Based on the prayer in Psalm 119, the Sister asks to be upheld by God in prayer. "Uphold me O Lord, according to your word and I shall live. Let not my hope be in vain". Two things are being asked: that this freely given gift of self to God's service be acceptable, and that God may respond by fulfilling the sister's hopes. This is sung request three times, while raising outstretched arms to God - and the community responds in kind each time. All then bow as the Doxology follows. It is a very moving moment for the community and all present.

It was an occasion of great joy, and we ask your prayers as we continue to support Sr Reina on her monastic journey and for those sisters still in formation as Bernardines.



Cardinal visits Wormwood Scrubs

Pact

'I was in prison and you came to visit me'

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, President of Pact, recently ensured that the voices of prisoners are included in the synodal process. Pact, the Prison Advice and Care Trust, is the national Catholic prison charity.

In response to the Cardinal's request, Pact facilitated his visit to HMP Wormwood Scrubs where he explained to a group of prisoners that he particularly wanted 'to listen to those who can often be forgotten'.

Sitting together in the prison's beautiful, large chapel, the men spoke with the Cardinal about the miracles of Jesus and the value of being able to spend time together in prayer, bible study and at Mass. They shared their struggles with additional isolation during necessary Covid restrictions, and their concerns about the effect of this on their family relationships, especially for their children. Some expressed fear and anxiety about finding a welcome in parish communities on their release.

Watching the men approach the Cardinal one by one to receive a simple wooden rosary and a blessing at the end of their time together was a deeply moving example of the 'encounter' Pope Francis calls us to.

Fr Chima Ibekwe has been the Catholic Chaplain at the prison for six years. He described how the work of the multi-faith chaplaincy has adapted during the pandemic when at times the men have been confined to their cells for 23 hours a day to try to prevent the spread of Covid. The chaplains have actually spent more time on the prison wings, making themselves personally available to the men and providing much-needed individual pastoral support.

In fact, when the Pact team had discussed with Acting Governor Dom Ceglowski the

viability of the Cardinal's visit, in giving his full support the Governor referred to its pastoral importance at this time. During the visit, the Governor, senior staff and the whole chaplaincy team joined the Cardinal for refreshments and a further opportunity for encounter. Father Chima said his 'heart was touched' by the interest in meeting the Cardinal from so many staff including those who were not people of faith.

In the Family Visitors' Centre, which Pact designed and built and which can be found on the main road just outside the prison, Pact staff and volunteers explained their family support work to the Cardinal. The Cardinal also heard about Pact's new FamilySpace initiative, which is open to families and children across London affected by the imprisonment of a close family member. Over Christmas, 40 children with a father in prison made use of the service, having fun with baking and other activities, whilst their mums accessed advice and support from Pact workers.

On behalf of HMP Wormwood Scrubs, Father Chima presented the Cardinal with a picture that included the words from Matthew's Gospel: 'I was in prison and you came to visit me' - words which resonated so powerfully with those of the prisoners who had already said to Cardinal Nichols, 'Thank you for coming here.'

Pact's CEO, Andy Keen-Downs, said, 'This was an important and moving occasion that went to the heart of Pact's role as an agency of the church - supporting prisoners and their families to make a fresh start.'

Pact's Faith in Action team is working to inform and encourage Catholic communities to better walk alongside prisoners, people with convictions and their families.

Donate your old smartphone and make a difference

Jesuits

It could be a lifeline for a refugee here

Do you have an old phone or tablet lying in a drawer that you don't use? It could be a lifeline for a refugee here, helping them keep in touch with family, friends, legal, medical and social services. Jesuit Refugee Services UK are collecting smartphones and tablets to give to people experiencing the asylum and immigration system.

Phones and tablets should be in good working condition (able to make and receive calls and texts, a working screen and keyboard etc.) with no significant marks or scratches.

Phones and tablets must be wiped of all data and restored to factory settings or be

accessible for a member of the team to erase all data. A working and compatible charger should be provided.

Send your devices to: Jesuit Refugee Service UK, The Hurtado Jesuit Centre, 2 Chandler Street, London, E1W 2QT.

You could also top-up a refugee's mobile phone. The Jesuit Refugees Service gives on average 321 refugees a top-up of £10 every month. Over the course of a year this amounts to £38,520.00. Could you help them by donating something?

Go to: www.jrsuk.net/



Parish Matters



Peter Boylan KSG

On Sunday Obligation

With an Episcopal emphasis on 'restoring the Sunday Obligation' it is perhaps as well to consider exactly what that means and in particular the use of obligation, in that context.

Some years ago, during discussion in the education world, concerning the introduction of 'citizenship' to the curriculum, the phrase 'voluntary, social contribution' caused some difficulty. It was intended to describe the nature of active participation.

In trying to form such active participation within any community the role of voluntary contributions are essential to make things work. We see such activities formally recognised and honoured in the New Year's or the Queen's Birthday Honours. Many stories arise of individuals who have devoted their own time, effort, to a great variety of local activities, and long may it be so. The difference between voluntary and obligation becomes clear. It is the stress on voluntary contributions that is special.

Obligation offers a sense of legal or moral pressure brought on the individual to behave in a certain way. It implies a coercion or compulsion to act and in the legal sense even a sanction if the requirement is not met. Acting 'because we have to' or 'because we are paid to' contradicts that voluntary nature of the activity. However acting 'because we want to' implies a conscious choice freely made. This may cover, a choice of career as well as playing an active part in a local community. But the key phrase here must be 'conscious choice' formed from our own thinking or in other words 'conscience.'

When Christ was asked 'which is the greatest commandment?' he replied, 'love the Lord your God, with all your heart, soul and mind,' adding 'the second is similar: love your neighbour as

yourself.' Everything in the law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments.' (Matt. 22 37-40) As Christians therefore this forms the basis of our life and conscience but when we make that decision to lead a Christian life, advice and guidance are essential.

While we are familiar with the Ten Commandments and can recite them even when we find it difficult to put them into practice, we may be less familiar with the precepts of the Church to which we belong. The first of these requires that we 'should attend Mass on Sundays,... so that we participate in the Eucharistic celebration when the Christian community gathers together on the day commemorating the Resurrection of the Lord.' If that first commandment from Christ is to love God then the Church advises us that to show that love, we should join in that worship.

Of course there are many difficulties in this as Covid has shown among other factors. But, as with being a member of any other community or society, if we never join with others we lose our connection and identity as a member. To maintain that regular contact takes effort and commitment if by choice, we want to continue.

The final word belongs to an elderly widowed member of our then parish. The parish itself was based in a small post industrial township with parishioners who lived close by and a church building that was unpretentious. At the close of a daily mass I would offer this lady a lift home across the township to save her struggling with the walk. On this occasion as we arrived at the end of her street of small terraced cottages she turned to me and said "You know I love the Mass." That's why we should want to go.

Continued from page 2

Certainly in the case of long-established parishes, many families will have lived there for years, perhaps their whole lives. In every sense of the word it is their parish - they have grown up in it, they have supported it, they have celebrated their sacraments in it and it's where they worship week in, week out. Every once in a while they will lose their priest and a new one will arrive and before long he may start changing this and moving that and doing things differently. I can sympathise with people who find it unsettling and perhaps resent what they see as interference by a newcomer. However, from the moment a priest arrives it becomes his parish also and if he doesn't feel at home or consider the parish to be his home, questions ought to be asked - of the people and of him.

Liturgical changes often require structural changes and that's why altars were brought forward and pulpits disappeared, fonts were relocated and altar rails were removed - it wasn't just the whim of the priest. Change and adaptation continue to be necessary from time to time but because change is never very popular, the priest who has to carry it out risks upsetting people even though that isn't his intention. It would certainly help the situation if he explained things to the people and why he would like to make the changes in question, perhaps in particular discussing things with the Parish Council. It's all part of that same aspect of accountability and responsibility that we just talked about. A priest must lead, must do what he feels to be right and good for the majority, and must do and teach what the Church says must be done and taught, otherwise he is useless to the people.

Things can't stay the way they've always been - we are members of a pilgrim church, a church on the move, and while we may not always be happy with change we do have to trust in the direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit and respond generously to the spiritual growth and development that the Spirit brings about. It's in our Creed - "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver

of life". And it's the priest's responsibility to challenge the people spiritually and to invite them forward in their pilgrimage of faith. If he fails to do that, settling instead for a quiet life, then he will be just like the man in the gospel parable who took his one talent and buried it for safe keeping - and we all know what happened to him when his master called him to account. Jesus himself told that story, so we can't ignore its implications just because we aren't comfortable with them. But it's amazing how often people do exactly that, choosing to ignore the teaching of the priest and holding instead to their own (often outdated) ideas and practices. (As a prime example of this, whenever I have brought up the subject of receiving communion in the hand and receiving from the chalice, it's noticeable that, by and large, nothing ever changes and the same people continue to receive on the tongue and walk straight past the chalice as if nothing on the subject had ever been said and no teaching offered) "He's only the priest, what does he know?" What's wrong with that picture?

This is perhaps the positive face of clericalism - a priest's legitimate efforts on behalf of the people because he is the priest, their priest. It's what the bishop sent him to do, that's what God calls him to do, and so that's what he does. But it's not about power, it's about invitation; and it's not about autocracy, it's about co-operation. In that sense there should be accountability in the other direction: that the people of a parish be accountable to their priest for the degree to which they trust and follow his pastoral and spiritual leadership and by their involvement in all aspects of their shared parish life.

Jesus said: 'I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep and runs away as soon as he sees a wolf coming because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep.

(Jn 10 v 11-13)

Our Global Community



Holy See calls for seafarers' rights to be upheld

Appostleship of the sea

Seafarers are also vulnerable to violence and abuse at sea, including pirate attacks and modern slavery

The Holy See is calling for seafarers' dignity and welfare to be protected and upheld, as concerns continue over unjust treatment and violence at sea.

Addressing the International Maritime Organization's 32nd Session of the General Assembly in London on Archbishop Paul R. Gallagher, the Holy See's Secretary for Relations with States, said that many seafarers are still being denied shore leave and access to welfare services.

He pointed out that seafarers are also vulnerable to violence and abuse at sea, including pirate attacks and modern slavery.

"There are thousands of seafarers who are currently stranded on ships well beyond the

term of their original contracts and who are unable to be repatriated due to COVID-related travel restrictions. Furthermore, there are seafarers who, because of lockdowns or other similar constraints, are unable to join their sea crews and secure their salary," Archbishop Gallagher said.

"This is deplorable and severely affects their families as well," he said, adding that the pandemic has only served to bring such despicable violations into greater focus.

Archbishop Gallagher expressed the Holy See's support for the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and its Member States in upholding the fundamental human rights and integral development of all seafarers, as well as a fairer future for them.



"We join this Organization in considering as a priority the protection of seafarers and their fundamental human rights, as well as the importance of avoiding the pollution of the environment as parts of an integral ecology.

"Moreover, the IMO has an essential role to play in urging the international community to take into consideration more safe and regular migration pathways, for the large numbers of people migrating by sea in overcrowded and unseaworthy vessels."

The Catholic Church's support to seafarers and fishers worldwide is conducted through global maritime charity Stella Maris - which is the largest ship-visiting network in the world.

The charity improves the lives of seafarers and fishers through its local chaplains and seafarer centres, expert information, advocacy, and spiritual support. It operates out of more than 300 ports in more than 50 countries.

Nine Christians released from prison pending review of sentences

Mervyn Thomas - CSW

Still facing unfounded and excessive charges simply for exercising their right to freedom of religion or belief

An Iranian church leader was among nine Christians released from prison within the last week, pending a review of their sentences.

Pastor Matthias (Abdulreza Ali) Haghnejad from the Church of Iran denomination was initially sentenced to five years in prison for "endangering state security" and "promoting Zionist Christianity" following a brief trial on 23 September 2019. Eight other members of the Church of Iran who were convicted alongside him also received five-year sentences.

The pastor's sentence was upheld on 25 February 2020 without a hearing, after Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamanei, reportedly permitted the judge to bypass court procedures. In November 2021, the Supreme Court in Tehran announced that it would be reviewing the sentences delivered to Pastor Haghnejad and those convicted with him.



Pastor Matthias Haghnejad

CSW's sources report that Pastor Haghnejad, who was released from prison on 30 December 2021, is expecting a new trial. According to Middle East Concern, the eight other Christians were released on 1 January, pending a review of their sentences.

CSW's Founder President Mervyn Thomas said: "CSW welcomes the news that Pastor Matthias Haghnejad and the Christians sentenced alongside him have been able to return home after spending nearly three years in prison. However, they are still facing unfounded and excessive charges simply for exercising their right to freedom of religion or belief. They have committed no crimes, and we continue to call for their exoneration, and to urge the Iranian authorities to end use of national security-related charges against members of the Christian community who are peaceably exercising practicing their faith."

Patriarch calls for hope in the Holy Land

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem/Vatican News

We must go beyond the preoccupation for numbers and the desire to see immediate results from our actions and initiatives

At the opening of the new year, The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem invited Catholics in the Holy Land to maintain a positive outlook on their future despite ongoing difficulties and to participate actively in the life of the Church and society.

In his homily for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, on 1 January, Patriarch Pierbattista Pizzaballa said local Christians should not expect to be protected and "sheltered in a glass dome" from the many difficulties and hostilities they face. Rather, he said, they must be "an integral part" of the civil and religious life of the society they live in.

He noted that the pandemic in the past year has left behind a sense of fatigue, while "no real and structural solutions" to existing political problems in the Holy Land appear on



Mgr Pierbattista Pizzaballa

the horizon. However, he said the local Christian community should not "always complain", but rather confide in the Lord who "opens us up to life and joy.... We must go beyond the preoccupation for numbers and the desire to see immediate results from our actions and initiatives. We must acquire the trust and patience of the sower," he added.

He expressed hope that 2022 would be a year of recovery for the Church in the Holy Land and that it will be able to resume activities "without fear."

He noted that the synodal process offers a great opportunity in this respect. "I hope that this small synod will at least teach us to listen to one another, to listen to the Scriptures, to listen to the Spirit we have received and who never ceases to speak to us," he said.

Our Global Community



Detained journalist said to be gravely ill in prison

CSW/Lord Alton

"Is not endangered in anyway by any reactionary elements whilst he is being illegally detained without bail [...] over a mere civil related cause of action which ordinarily shouldn't be subjected to official manipulation."

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) is concerned by reports that Luka Binniyat, a journalist and spokesperson for the Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU) who has been detained arbitrarily for over two months in Kaduna state, central Nigeria, is now gravely ill.

According to The Middle Belt Times, when Mr Binniyat's wife, Gladys, visited the Kaduna Maximum Custodial Centre where her husband is currently being held on 5 January, she was informed he was too unwell to see her, and that he had been taken to the "poorly equipped" prison clinic in a wheelchair on 4 January.

The Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) has called on the Kaduna State House of Assembly to ensure Mr Binniyat "is not endangered in anyway by any reactionary elements whilst he is being illegally detained without bail [...] over a mere civil related cause of action which ordinarily shouldn't be subjected to official manipulation." Weeks earlier, former presidential candidate Omoyele Sowore called on the international community to sanction Kaduna State governor, Nasir el-Rufai, over Mr Binniyat's continued detention.

Mr Binniyat was arrested on 4 November 2021 at the SOKAPU office by members of the Kaduna State Investigation Bureau, who were acting on the orders of Samuel Aruwan, the Kaduna state Commissioner for Internal Security. He was detained in connection with an article he had written in October 2021 for the *Epoque Times*, an online newspaper based in the United States. In the article, he had criticised the government's lacklustre response to attacks on communities in three Local Government Areas (LGAs) of southern Kaduna which occurred in September, and in which at least 49 people died and 27 were abducted. Mr Binniyat was initially held in Gabasawa Police Station. On 8 November 2021 he was taken to the Barnawa Magistrate Court in handcuffs, where police filed charges against him under Section 24 (b) of the Cybercrimes Act. During a hearing on 9 November 2021, an application for bail was made, and the magistrate adjourned to the court until 10 November 2021 for a ruling.

Also on 9 November 2021, Mr Aruwan issued a statement in which he claimed to have been defamed in an article, in a quote attributed to the Senator Danjuma La'ah, who represents Kaduna South in the National Assembly, and who subsequently denied having made the comment. When Mr Binniyat returned to court on 10 November 2021, his request for bail was denied, and he was transferred to the maximum security prison.

On 22 November 2021, Mr Binniyat was brought to court, but the judge did not attend and he was obliged to spend the night in Kakuri Police Station. During a hearing which took place the next day, Mr Binniyat's lawyers argued he was being detained illegally, since magistrate courts do not have jurisdiction over cyberstalking cases. The judge then scheduled a bail hearing for 6 December 2021, which he did not attend, claiming his annual leave had begun on 1 December.

A new date was set for 29 December 2021; however, the judge failed to attend once again, and Mr Binniyat was not even brought to court. As his lawyers concluded plans to apply for a hearing in a higher court, the prosecution filed the case in a high court, and reportedly served the papers to Mr Binniyat in prison.

This is the second time Mr Binniyat has been detained arbitrarily. In 2017 he was arrested and charged in connection with an article based on information which was later found to be false, which he had made strenuous attempts to retract prior to publication, and for which he had publicly apologised. After many adjournments and lengthy gaps between hearings, he was released on bail after spending 96 days in detention.

CSW Founder President, Mervyn Thomas said: "CSW is concerned by reports that Luka Binniyat is gravely ill in prison, and calls for his immediate release. The unwarranted delays in his court hearings seem to be punitive actions designed to deprive him of his liberty for as long as possible, and in a manner incompatible with judicial impartiality and due process. We



Luka Binniyat

counsel the Kaduna state authorities to ensure Mr Binniyat receives comprehensive care, as they will be held accountable should anything untoward occur, and urge them to focus on arresting genuine instigators and perpetrators of violence, and protecting citizens regardless of their creed or ethnicity. We also urge the international community to maintain close scrutiny on the situation in Kaduna, and across central Nigeria, raising this ongoing human rights crisis with the Nigerian government at every opportunity, and assisting in addressing the violence in every possible manner."

Why did Facebook ban this advert?

John Newton - ACN

Refusing to explain how they justify the ban, we are hard pressed to see this as anything more than arbitrary censorship

Facebook has suddenly lifted severe restrictions imposed on a leading Catholic charity - but offered no explanation for its actions which for nearly two months have severely hampered the organisation's outreach.

The UK office of Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) had adverts promoting a petition calling on the UK government and UN to help Christian and other minority faith women suffering sexual violence pulled on 11th November - which was followed by almost eight weeks of severe restrictions on the charity's usage of the site.

Staff were informed yesterday that all constraints had been lifted - but no reason was given by Facebook or its parent Meta why the ban had been enforced in the first place.

While ACN (UK)'s national director, Neville Kyrke-Smith, expressed joy that the ban had been removed, he criticised Facebook for failing to give any reason for its actions.

He said: "We are delighted that after almost two months of trying to get Facebook to explain their actions and reverse their block - and a media push which attracted a lot of public outrage - they have finally lifted these excessive and crippling limitations on ACN's use of their platform and facilities.

"But by refusing to explain how they justify the ban, we are hard pressed to see this as anything more than arbitrary censorship - which was used to silence some of the world's most vulnerable women. Regrettably, this whole episode shows that Facebook thinks it has the right to censor without explanation and without any chance of redress - it is muzzling debates that are literally matters of life and death."

Following a total ban of the charity's advert, promoting its petition calling for more action to stop the forced conversion and marriage of women from minority faiths suffering sexual violence, Facebook put in place a number of drastic strictures.

The social media giant refused to permit more than 90 percent of the charity's advertising and imposed other curbs including a ban on its WhatsApp messenger system.

Despite repeated requests by the charity, Facebook refused to explain how ACN (UK) had violated its guidelines or why the ban had been imposed.

The petition at the heart of the Facebook row was received by Fiona Bruce MP, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of

Religion or Belief, on behalf of the government on 15th December at the Houses of Parliament.

A copy was also sent to Reem Alsalem, the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

While the petition received 3,210 signatures, the level of support fell after Facebook first banned, and then restricted the advert.

Before the ban around 3,000 Facebook users a day saw the adverts garnering an average of 400 signatures every day - but with restraints in place only around 280 users saw the ad each day, and the average daily number of new signatures fell to just 38



Gospel Quiz for Students and Teachers, People and Priests

Fr John Daly

The fascination of searching for answers is not in itself prayerful or spiritual but the new knowledge and understanding gained may become other sources of prayer

Everyone who loves the Gospel might enjoy answering these questions. Some of them are straightforward, some require a little thinking and one is almost impossible to answer. The fascination of searching for answers is not in itself prayerful or spiritual – but the new knowledge and understanding gained may become other sources of prayer. Everyone can enjoy the quiz.

A good A Level student should certainly be able to answer most of the questions – but a class working for GCSE could make a good attempt, too. The questions require a fresh look at familiar Gospel texts – but this is the joy of the Gospel and of all Scripture: the discovering of new understanding in familiar texts: “Old things and new from the treasure house,” as Jesus says.

- Jesus' body was wrapped in a shroud on the Friday but when the disciples came to the tomb on the Sunday there were linen cloths and a headband. Who took the shroud and when?
- Nathanael is one of the apostles and is mentioned twice in the Gospel. What was he doing on those two occasions?
- Jesus was arrested after the Last Supper. He was crucified about 9.00 am (the third hour) on the Friday morning. Between his arrest and crucifixion he had a long trial before the Sanhedrin (“many witnesses were called”), was brought twice before Pontius Pilate and once before Herod. What night was he arrested?
- We have three accounts of the calling of a disciple at the Customs house. He has two names – what are they? What was his father's name?
- Another of the disciples has the same father as the disciple in question 4. What was the father's relationship to Jesus?
- At the wedding feast of Cana water became wine, stone became flesh, six became seven. Please explain.
- John says that Jesus had a meal at Bethany with Martha and Mary and their brother six days before the
- Passover. Mark says two days before the Passover. Is one of them mistaken? If both are right – how?
- Are the centurion's servant and the nobleman's son two versions of the same story or two different events? Did the centurion and Jesus actually meet each other?
- The Law ordained (a) trials should take place during the hours of daylight; (b) if a verdict of death were passed a day should elapse before the sentence be carried out. Write a convincing timetable of Jesus' arrest, trial, condemnation and execution – allowing that the process of law was followed. Pontius Pilate and fair-minded members of the Sanhedrin would not have allowed the law to be by-passed.
- Name the twelve apostles. Which of them were Jesus' cousins?
- “Standing near the cross were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary of Clopas and Mary of Magdala.” Are there three women or four? If there are four, what is the name of the sister?
- Did Judas receive the Eucharist before he left the Last Supper?
- How many women came to the tomb on the day of Resurrection? Name them.
- Two of the Gospel accounts say that the thieves crucified with Jesus joined in mocking him and one Gospel account speaks of the good thief who defended him. Which are the Gospels and who is correct?
- Name the brother of Martha and Mary. Lazarus is his nickname.
- There are six Gospel accounts of the feeding of a large crowd. How many people were fed and how many loaves and fishes are there in the different accounts?
- Twice we read of a miraculous catch of fish by the apostles. Is it the same story or two separate events? One of the stories says the apostles caught 153 fish – what does that number signify?
- Jesus' genealogy (family line) is given by Matthew and Luke. Some of the details differ strangely. The greatest difference is that Matthew mentions four women. Who are they?
- There is no stable in the Gospel stories of Jesus' birth. What places are mentioned by Matthew and Luke? Who are the people with Mary and Joseph who are astounded by what the shepherds tell them?
- How many accounts of the Ascension are there? From where did the Ascension take place?

How well did you do? Judge yourself by exam classification.

A* (17+), A (15+), B (13+), C (11+), D (9+), E (7+), F (5+), U (4 -)

When I was teaching I would enjoy asking a class to read the four accounts of the Resurrection morning and then to write a summary. The protests came quickly “It can't be done!” “They contradict each other!” and I had brought them to the question: how were the four different accounts of the Gospel written? The Word of God is living and active . . .

The answers to the quiz will be printed in the next edition of The Catholic Post

Cardinal Nichols: The virtues of faith, hope and charity in 2022

CBCFW



Cardinal Vincent Nichols offers a reflection for 2022 looking at the virtues of faith, hope and charity.

The unknown prospects of what is to come do not cause us too much anxiety because we are well equipped to face them – individually and as a society.

As a new year dawns, we look for hope. Surely this next year can't be as bad as the one to which we've said 'goodbye'?

There are two versions of hope worth pondering.

One is that hope comes when we can look forward to an uncertain future from the basis of a secure present. The unknown prospects of what is to come do not cause us too much anxiety because we are well equipped to face them – individually and as a society. This is the pragmatic version of the virtue of hope

The second version is a reverse image of the first. Hope is the capacity to face an uncertain present on the basis of an utterly secure future. No matter what happens today or tomorrow, the long-term future is secure because it is promised by something beyond the ebbs and flows of outrageous fortune. This is the

Christian virtue of hope, founded on the promises of God made visible in Jesus, the Christ, whose coming we are celebrating.

These two versions stand on either edge of the stage of life, summoning us to decide where to put our trust. They clarify the fundamental options. The choice we make establishes the direction in which we look, the foundation on which we shape our lives.

But there is a great deal of 'middle ground', in which our daily activity takes place.

Prudence demands that we make provision now for future eventualities: insurance and saving schemes, health provision, all we do in preparation for 'the rainy day'.

Charity demands that we act without counting the cost, putting the present needs of others way ahead of our own current security, acting

in a self-sacrificing manner, even going as far as making a gift of our very life itself. This is the story of every true love, told and illustrated again and again, constantly transforming the drama of human living.

Such charity points to its deepest roots, in the promise of a secure and totally fulfilling future in the presence of God for ever. This is the hope given by the Christian faith and enacted in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. This hope puts a radically new perspective on today and the days to come, no matter what they bring. This future is secured. Now I can act, in any set of circumstance, with a freedom and generosity which flows forcefully from that promise. This is what saints do.

But we must remember that we constantly see the astonishing goodness, devotion, perseverance and practical wisdom of so many

people, made even more evident during the hardships of this last year.

As we start a new year, we may well ponder why it is that so many people act in such generous ways. I firmly believe that it the promptings of the Holy Spirit, that flow of love pouring out of God, that lies as the deepest source of this service. It goes beyond self-interest. It is seeking a future beyond the securities of the present, for they have been shaken. It is the privilege of faith to identify and highlight the well-spring of this goodness: the radical hope given in the promises of God.

It is also the source of our joy and the best reason for wishing each other a happy New Year.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols
President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of
England and Wales



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

CRYPTIC Across

- 1 Carbon, ie a chemical which does not need oxygen (9)
- 6 Nuke half of Mexican revolutionary forces away (3)
- 8 Polished, quiet type (5)
- 9 Knight is honourable, meeting bridge opponents beforehand (7)
- 10 Girls out east make good tumblers (7)
- 11 Skim over ice, finding fish (5)
- 12 Curious to-ing and fro-ing around North Dakota with a large number seeing giants (3,3,5)
- 17 Acquire a service (5)
- 19 Chemical required to address speed of head infestation (7)
- 21 One thousand and one, plus the gallery's copy (7)
- 22 Sound the hooter around one (5)
- 23 12 book to leave German port for Riviera beauty spot (3)
- 24 A Beatle composition's absorbing or marked by complexity (9)

CRYPTIC Down

- 1 Nominate Grant? (6)
- 2 Officer commanding these days is into flipped eggs and fruit (7)
- 3 Swims with river fish (5)
- 4 Agedness label tortured this penitent (7,6)
- 5 Rummy type of American a starring part's made for (7)
- 6 Crossing borders of zone needing some support (5)
- 7 Unknown number doing a flit from here default (6)
- 13 Moderate as you get older, so to speak, being a fool earlier (7)
- 14 Award, which Sondheim initially ignored, in a musical

piece (7)

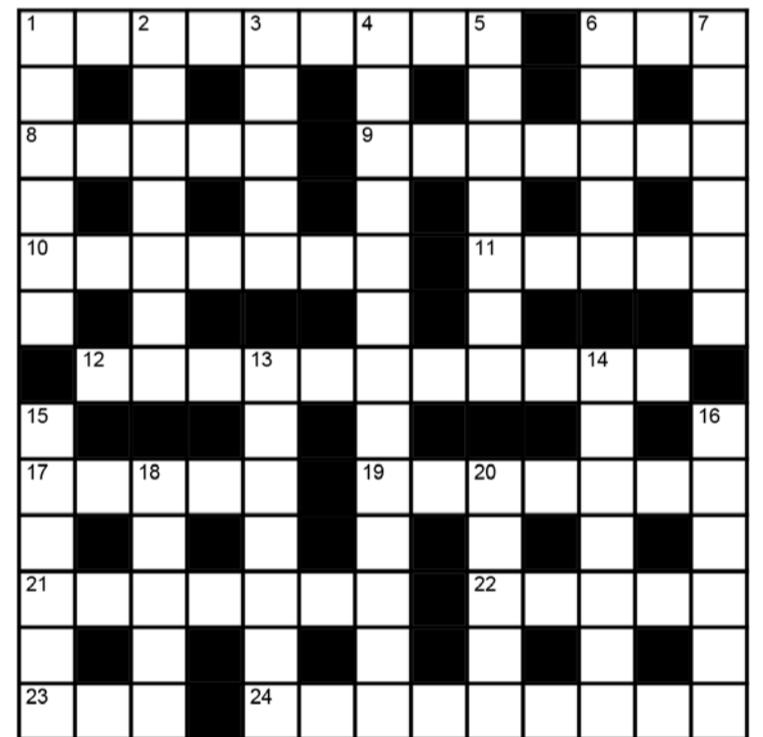
- 15 Want notoriety without being fashionable (6)
- 16 Retire always around the end of the year to do return (6)
- 18 Correspondent to go with article headline (5)
- 20 Dance beat has energy (5)

QUICK Across

- 1 Living or active in the absence of free oxygen (9)
- 6 Cook or heat in a microwave oven; shoot (3)
- 8 Emitted light; stood out (5) 9 Configure honour upon (7)
- 10 Tumblers; spectacles (7)
- 11 Travel on ice; flat fish (5)
- 12 Nations under the dominion of Satan [Rev] (3,3,5)
- 17 Compile; collect (5)
- 19 Natural potassium or sodium fertilizer (7)
- 21 Ape; mimic (7)
- 22 Din; interference (5)
- 23 Riviera cliff-top resort near Monaco (3)
- 24 Explain further; complex (9)

QUICK Down

- 1 Attribute; transfer (6)
- 2 Shade of green tinged with yellow; tropical fruit (7)
- 3 Winders for film or thread; energetic dances (5)
- 4 Penitent (1248-1309) of Foligno, near Assisi (7,6)
- 5 Card game (7) 6 Black-and-white striped African equine (5)



- 7 Predetermined; default (6)
- 13 Cause to be more favourably inclined; gain the good will of (7)
- 14 Egg-shaped terracotta wind instrument (7)
- 15 Acute insufficiency; dearth (6)
- 16 Move away; retire (6)
- 18 Similar; equally (5)
- 20 Ballroom dance of Latin-American origin (5)

SOLUTION

Across: 1 Anaerobic, 6 Zap, 8 Shone, 9 Ennoble, 10 Glasses, 11 Skate, 12 Gog and Magog, 17 Amass, 19 Nitrate, 21 Imitate, 22 Noise, 23 Eze, 24 Elaborate.
Down: 1 Assign, 2 Avocado, 3 Reels, 4 Blessed Angela, 5 Canasta, 6 Zebra, 7 Preset, 13 Assuage, 14 Ocarina, 15 Famine, 16 Recede, 18 Allike, 20 Tango.