

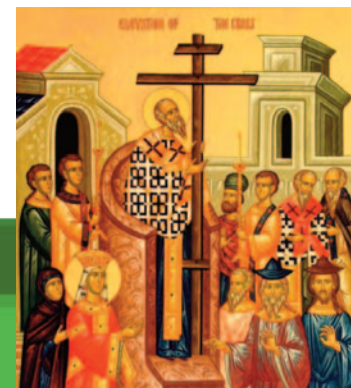
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# The CatholicPost

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The Exaltation of the  
Holy Cross  
14th September

The UK's first Carbon Neutral Catholic Newspaper



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Crawley RH11 7PZ

Headteacher  
Tobias Melia

Telephone 01293 526057

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#### CONTACT US:

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#### EDITOR:

Nick Layton

email: editor@catholicpost.co.uk

#### ADVERTISING:

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charlotter@cathcom.org

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#### ARTICLES TO:

The Catholic Post

email: editor@catholicpost.co.uk or

davidl@cathcom.org

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, send to editor@catholicpost.co.uk. 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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# The Sound of Silence

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

Every Sunday considerable numbers of people go to church but, by and large, it seems to be an isolated activity

No, this isn't about not talking in church – it's about a generation, maybe even two, who have little or no idea about "church" and for whom the concept of going to church (whatever the denomination) is foreign to them.

You may have heard the old conundrum: if a tree falls in a forest and there is no one anywhere around to hear it fall, does it make a noise? Every Sunday considerable numbers of people go to church but, by and large, it seems to be an isolated activity – it doesn't generate "sound waves" for others to hear, or the sounds we do produce fall on deaf ears. They pass by without giving God or church a second thought.

A case in point: I was standing outside of church in one of my parishes one Saturday evening saying goodnight to people as they came out of Mass, when two teenage girls walked past and then a few moments later came back to talk to me. One of them asked whether someone could go into church if they hadn't been at the service. I said yes, of course they could. I think she said it was her mother's birthday the next day and she wanted to spend some quiet time in church on the day if it was going to be open. Happy with the assurance that she was welcome, she and her friend continued on their way.

I was quite impressed that she had had the courage to stop and ask the question she did, but it was rather strange that she seemed to think that you had to have permission to go into a church. Is that the impression we give as "church", and how many young (and even not so young) people may have the same mistaken idea and therefore never set foot in church?

I have been a practising Catholic ever since I was a little kid. I have always gone to church, even during my teen years when many young people typically stop going. Ever since I can remember I have, therefore, been familiar with what church, and going to church, is all about. And so it always seems strange to experience those who quite obviously have no familiarity

with church or even how to behave in church – especially in a Catholic church and in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. When church is as familiar as it is for us, it's easy to forget that we are the odd ones out and that most people never darken the door of a church unless they have to – for baptisms, weddings and funerals for example.

People used to respect what it meant to be in a church and knew what was appropriate and what wasn't. This is quite clearly no longer the case. Let's take funerals for instance. People are there by choice and are generally subdued and respectful, although that doesn't seem to stop the early arrivals from creating a lot of noise talking amongst themselves, clearly having no idea whatsoever of the significance of the tabernacle in a Catholic church, or the concept of prayer, or of a church being a place of peace and quiet.

When it comes to weddings, most of the people who are there will have been invited regardless of any lack of religious affiliation or practice, and are there simply for the ceremony. It could just as easily be in the registrar's office, at a hotel, or in a barn for all it matters to them (they'd probably be happier if it was) and therefore their behaviour is often totally inappropriate and so is the way they dress. They have absolutely no idea of what being in a church requires of them, because ordinarily they have no connection with church; it's a foreign place to them and a foreign culture.

It is, however, suggested that young people today, even those with no immediate connection with any particular denomination, are (whether they fully recognise it or not) searching for the sacred. There is, as we might say, a space within themselves and their lives that is God-shaped. Somehow they have to be encouraged to experience what that is and what it means, and until we begin to do that as believers, the sort of question those two girls asked should come as no surprise. And to the extent to which such questions go unasked

and therefore unanswered, we are leaving yet another generation in its unknowing-ness when it comes to their knowledge of God, of church and of religious practice – another generation that has no idea.

Churches, any churches, are probably a little daunting to non-church-goers. Some of this may have to do with unfamiliar structures, space and symbolism, but there may well also be a degree of guilt and of fear of a God they only know by reputation. To the "uninitiated" churches may also seem a little like private clubs from which those who are not members are excluded, so let us be careful not to make anyone feel excluded in the first place. Then, given that even within our own Christian family we don't always understand one another's rites and rituals, how are the un-churched supposed to understand? Churched or un-churched we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, but as long as there is a chance of someone asking "Who?" when we say that, then there is work to be done.

In St Matthew's gospel (13 v14-15) Jesus refers to the prophecy of Isaiah which seems to address the erroneous idea that "where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise":

**You will listen and listen again, but not understand,  
see and see again, but not perceive.  
For the heart of this nation has grown coarse,  
their ears are dull of hearing, and they have shut their eyes,  
for fear they should see with their eyes,  
hear with their ears,  
understand with their heart,  
and be converted and healed by me.**

People close their ears to the gospel message because it demands too much of them. Their "not hearing" then becomes not only habitual but also hereditary. Subsequent generations may not, therefore, know what they are missing, but we have to somehow encourage and invite them (and especially our young people) to find out – their salvation may depend on it.

If a tree in a forest falls, the airwaves it creates don't translate into sound unless there is someone nearby to hear it. Unless the practice of our faith reaches beyond the walls of our churches and out into the world where the Word is to be proclaimed, then no one is going to hear the sound generated by our Christian witness. There will just be the sound of silence – and it can be deafening.

# Ukraine's Bishop Gregory visits Liverpool to thank those involved in #Liverpool4Ukraine appeal

acnuk.org

"I came here to thank the people of Liverpool who have helped so much"



Bishop Hryhoriy (Gregory) Komar, the auxiliary bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy (diocese) of Sambir-Drohobych, Ukraine, visited the Archdiocese of Liverpool to express his heartfelt gratitude to all those who participated in the #Liverpool4Ukraine appeal.

The #Liverpool4Ukraine appeal was initiated by the Archdiocese of Liverpool in February 2022 with the aim of providing support to the people of Ukraine who are enduring challenging circumstances due to the ongoing conflict. Partnering with Bishop Gregory's diocese, the archdiocese has since made five trips to the Ukraine border, carrying essential aid to those in need.

The aid delivered included crucial supplies like medical items, thermal clothing for the harsh winter months, toiletries, sleeping bags, and building materials.

Bishop Gregory's visit to the archdiocesan office was a touching gesture to personally extend his thanks to all those who contributed to the #Liverpool4Ukraine appeal. The

occasion was marked by a short liturgy led by Canon Aidan Prescott, Vicar General, where prayers were offered for peace in Ukraine.

"I came here to thank the people of Liverpool who have helped so much", Bishop Gregory said during his visit. "Life in Ukraine has changed - many people have lost relatives, lost jobs, lost homes, and many have had to leave Ukraine. If we didn't get the help we've received we don't know where we'd be - it would certainly be much worse."

The collaboration between the Archdiocese of Liverpool and Bishop Gregory's diocese has been a resounding success. Since the appeal's launch in March, over 1,000 boxes of donated goods have been delivered to Bishop Gregory to be distributed amongst his community, making a tangible difference in the lives of those struggling in Ukraine.

The support from the people of Liverpool has been remarkable, with donations to the appeal reaching an impressive £136,000.

The visit was not just a charitable endeavour but also held a profound spiritual significance. The Liturgy of the Word for Peace with Justice in Ukraine, presided by Very Rev Canon Aidan Prescott, was a testament to the shared prayers and concerns for the wellbeing of the Ukrainian people.

Bishop Gregory commented on the impact of the Catholic Church in Ukraine: "The Church has always been important in Ukrainian society, but her role has now increased, as people are now coming to the Church not only for spiritual help but also material help."

Bishop Gregory's pastoral visit to Liverpool served as a moment of thanksgiving and acknowledgment for the unwavering support and kindness extended to his diocese and the people of Ukraine through the #Liverpool4Ukraine appeal. It was a heartening reminder of the positive impact that communities can have when they unite for a common cause, transcending borders and offering hope and solace to those facing adversity.

Donations to the appeal, are still welcome, details on how to contribute can be found here: <https://archdioceseofliverpool.churchsuite.com/donate/fund/ly8hvxhp>

CROWN OF THORNS????

EDITORIAL



## Benedictine monks launch podcast

Ampleforth Abbey

The Benedictine monks of Ampleforth Abbey, North Yorkshire, have recently ventured into the world of audio media as they celebrate the release of their new podcast channel Ampleforth Abbey Podcast.

Each week a different member of the monastic community will upload a new episode of 'Home Retreat' in which they will offer a challenging reflection for 10 - 15 minutes. Home Retreats are offered as an opportunity to pause and reflect wherever you are. Podcasts have risen in popularity over the years and the monks of the Abbey

saw the perfect opportunity to spread God's word and insights from their journey of faith to listeners across the globe.

Reflecting on this new endeavour, Abbot Robert Igo of Ampleforth Abbey says, "it's great to connect with new and evolving audiences and we believe the podcast provides us with an important opportunity to reach many people with the good news of the Gospel".

Ampleforth Abbey Podcast is available to listen to on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music and Google Podcasts.

CROWN OF THORNS????

# Priest embarks on new challenge with Greater Manchester Police

[dioceseofsalford.org.uk](http://dioceseofsalford.org.uk)

**“It’s all about building trust, continuity, and regularity, so people know that if they want to see a chaplain, they can see Fr Barry on a regular day.”**

A diocesan priest is set to take on an exciting new challenge as his ministry takes him from parish life to the thin blue line.

Fr Barry Lomax will be leaving his parish of The Sacred Heart in Westhoughton this summer as he takes up the full-time position of Force Lead Chaplain with Greater Manchester Police (GMP).

For 23 years, Fr Barry has been serving as a volunteer chaplain for GMP, as well as carrying out his work as a parish priest.

However, GMP recently announced it would be recruiting a full-time chaplain for the first time, and Fr Barry felt called to apply.

He said: “Once I was told the job was coming up it was my choice to ask Bishop John if he’d allow me to put my hat in the ring. He agreed it would be a good move for me, especially in light of the 23 years already served with GMP as a volunteer chaplain and my other duties as the National Chaplain to the Catholic Police Guild of England and Wales.

“So, in October 2022 I applied for the newly created full-time post of Force Lead Chaplain and was interviewed March 2023, the day after my 65th birthday, along with several other candidates from all over the country, and I was successfully chosen. The last time I had an interview for a job was 1976 so that was a long-forgotten experience, as usually in our world the bishop just calls you in and tells you where your next appointment will be.”

## A New Challenge

Despite his years of experience, this job will present new and exciting challenges for Fr Barry as it calls for a more administrative and strategic approach to build up, recruit for, and oversee the day-to-day running of a chaplaincy department fit for the second largest Police Force in England and Wales – whilst still delivering the all-important pastoral care to all GMP personnel regardless of faith or no faith.

Fr Barry explains this provision is becoming increasingly embedded into Police Culture, with new recruits being introduced to chaplaincy within their very first days.

He said: “I’ll be based at Sedgley Park, our Force Police Training School, where I’m already well known as “Fr. B” who visits and supports the training staff and our latest police student officers as they begin their policing journey.

“On the second day of their induction week, I have the opportunity to talk to our student officers about chaplaincy in general and my role and involvement within the police family.

“It’s all about building trust, continuity, and regularity, so people know that if they want to see a chaplain, they can see Fr Barry on a regular day.”

As policing evolves in an ever-changing world, officers and specials are facing increasing challenges in the line of duty.

Fr Barry said: “We’ve got a lot of officers who are doing a job they have always wanted to do, for them it is a dream fulfilled but sadly when they go out onto the streets, they may find they are not always the person most appreciated.

“They can be abused, spat at, sworn at. It’s a difficult life and they go into it with the best will in the world. They’re doing it from a good place and they’re just trying to do their duty to their best of their ability, without fear or favour.

“There used to be a time if a police officer was talking to you, you’d stand still and do what you were told. Now, they get an iPhone thrust in their face and someone telling them how they know their rights and the law – and the officer just have to stand there and take it.”

## A Listening Ear

In addition to the changing times, the general nature of police work and discipline of the institution also places emotional and mental burdens on police personnel, but Fr Barry explains the role of the chaplain can provide some much-needed support.

He said: “The role is no different to that of hospital, prison, and armed forces chaplains: you’re going along and you’re simply listening. It’s about chatting to someone and seeing how they’re getting on.

“Because we’re slightly apart from the organisation but also part of it too, we’re able to see things from a different perspective.

“We also act as a conduit because we take the rank of the person we’re speaking to, so we are able to ask those questions their rank may prohibit them from asking. I can go to their trainers or superiors and ask these questions and then go back to the officer concerned and give the answer.

“But we’re also a confidential and listening ear for officers who don’t have a lot of people they can confide their difficulties and concerns to. “If they go to something like a sudden death, it’s a very traumatic situation to be in. But officers don’t always show their emotions readily or share their feelings easily, so they just bottle it up.

“Where do you take something like that? You can’t speak to your loved ones because they’re frightened every time you put that uniform on. “You may be uncomfortable speaking to your colleagues because – although they’re probably witnessed something similar and may be feeling the same – they don’t necessarily show it. The chaplain is there to be the wall to kick the ball against”.

## The Call of Duty

As Fr Barry begins his work building up the multi-faith chaplaincy for GMP, he urges parishioners and clergy across the diocese to keep Greater Manchester Police in our prayers. He said: “People often think that police officers have got it all covered and it’s all fine and dandy but the reality is quite different.

“They are people going into often stressful situations. Hopefully, and especially with our younger officers, should such difficulties arise, we can detect any first signs of stress and possible PTSD before it becomes a major problem for them.”



Fr Barry Lomax

If you would like to find out more about the work of the chaplaincy or how you can get involved, please contact Fr Barry at [barry.lomax@dioceseofsalford.org.uk](mailto:barry.lomax@dioceseofsalford.org.uk)

Fr Barry said: “It’s about giving something back to those who sacrifice much for us and recognising we’re fortunate to have them. They’re there for us and we should be there for them.”

# Pope Francis listened and responded to young people in new podcast

vaticannews.va

The questions and his answers were featured in an Italian-language podcast produced by Vatican Radio - Vatican News

Ahead of World Youth Day in Lisbon, Pope Francis listened to the concerns of young people who shared their personal stories, hopes, and challenges, and he offered them consolation and encouragement in the second edition of the "Popecast" produced by Vatican Radio - Vatican News.

In the latest "Popecast" by Vatican News' Salvatore Cernuzio, Pope Francis listened to recorded questions from a group of young people who shared their personal stories. To each he responded with words of encouragement. The questions and his answers were featured in an Italian-language podcast produced by Vatican Radio - Vatican News. The Pope's first podcast took place back in March for the tenth anniversary of his pontificate.

The young people featured in this second podcast represented a variety of backgrounds and age-groups, sharing their difficulties, but also their dynamism and hopes.

### God loves you

Pope Francis listened to the story of Giona, who spoke about the challenges of being a believer, while accepting the reality of having physical challenges and being transgender.

The Pope offered words of encouragement, saying "God loves us just as we are," and that "the Lord always accompanies us, always. Even if we are sinners, He draws near to help us." The Pope added, "do not give up, keep striving ahead."



Pope Francis hugs a young lady from Argentina Pope Francis hugs a young lady from Argentina (VATICAN MEDIA Divisione Foto)

### Always striving ahead

Listening to the stories of Edward and Valerij, both serving time in a juvenile correctional community, the Pope heard about their difficult family situations and abandonment that led to their committing crimes they regret.

In response, the Pope asked them to consider that our mistakes must not be allowed to block our lives and that the "human story goes on with its successes and its failures."

Even one mistake can cause our lives to be permanently marked by society, the Pope lamented, but he asked them to always remember the Lord is with them on their journey, ready "to take you by the hand, to help lift you up". Our task, he said, is to acknowledge our mistakes so that God can help us reflect on our lives and move forward positively.

### Horizon of hope

Arianna recounted her own struggle with bipolar disorder, which has caused her moments of great joy, but also moments when she has contemplated suicide. At the same time, she said she feels that she is "saved by God."

The Pope listened to her closely and responded by encouraging her to "always look ahead, not to lose sight of the horizon...and the horizon is God."

He invited her to follow the care recommendations of health professionals, and noted that we are all wounded in life in various ways and due to different causes, including sin, which require us to always look to the horizon of God's love and mercy.

Pope Francis then addressed several Argentinian youth about their hopes for their country and improving life there, and he called on them to rise to the occasion and help make society better there, a country that is rich in resources.

### Enriched by diversity

He then listened to Valeria, a religion teacher, who relayed feedback she receives from her young students who wish for a Church that is more transparent, youthful and close to people in their lives.

The Pope responded recalling the importance of a Church walking together with the people. He warned that when the Church becomes too closed in on itself, it risks becoming sectarian and divided. He added that the greatness of the Church lies in our diversity and unity.

The Pope then heard from Giuseppe who spoke about his leaving university studies, but spending a large part of his time at home playing videogames with online contacts.

The Pope observed that his life lived primarily online can become "aseptic" and isolated, as he misses the horizon, since human contact with others is so important.

### Go to World Youth Day

In conclusion, after asking who would be going to World Youth Day, Pope Francis urged his young interlocutors in the "Popecast" to make the effort to take part in all the WYD events, calling it a worthwhile experience they will find very fulfilling, marked by community, celebration, hope and joy.

Salvatore Cernuzio

Michael – Derby, Notts David – Plymouth Diocese with Notts Amy – With Notts but from Birmingham Daniel – same Emily – candidate with Franciscans Minoress in notts Lisa – Kenya was in Derby

Group of 25. Didn't really know each other before. Have made friendships that will last beyond WYD

Highlights:

Lisa - Learned so much about our Catholic faith – see the relics, visit the cathedrals, hear the talks David - All the catholics!

Daniel - Amazing and fruitful. Seeing the Pope for the first time – what he said touched my heart Emily - Incredible experience to see all the other religious here To see all the priests and young people for people to realise that the church is so much more than what we see at home. Loved the talk about Christ being at the centre of our lives Michael - To be so close to the Pope has been amazing. The talks on catechesis – the encouragement being given to different types of prayer within the church now.

Amy - All the one to one conversations with fellow pilgrims Relics of St T of L were in Lisbon – amazing to see them

Has it lived up to your expectations?

Emily - So much more than I expected. Would encourage any young person to come to WYD. As Pope Francis said there is room for everyone in the church David - The experience of a lifetime – to see so many Catholics living their faith Daniel - It has gone beyond what I expected. Everyone should come at least once. Amazing to come with a group. The talks have been amazing – especially Bishop Barron's. Smaller talks also good - about the preciousness of life and about freedom Lisa - 1 st WYD – didn't know what to expect but to meet people from all over the world –

extraordinary

# NEED IMAGES TO ACCOMPANY THIS

# Church promoting peace to prevent another genocide

acnuk.org

Internal tensions and external circumstances risk affecting all human rights

With peace remaining “fragile” in Burundi and memories of past genocides still vivid, more needs to be done to guarantee human rights, according to a leading Catholic charity.

There have been three genocides and other violent conflicts between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups in the east-central African country since it became independent in 1962.

Maxime François-Marsal, Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need’s (ACN) head of projects for francophone countries in Central Africa, discussed the attempts at lasting peace after his trip to the country.

Mr François-Marsal said that Burundian President Évariste Ndayishimiye acknowledged the “major role” the Vatican had played “in the peace process and reconciliation of the Burundian people, and these efforts have borne the fruits of a fragile peace”.

He highlighted that there remains “a growing threat of violence for political reasons within the country”.

He stated: “Internal tensions and external circumstances risk affecting all human rights.

“Particular attention must therefore be paid to the education and formation process of those who will be the actors of the life of the Church and of development in the country.”

He added: “There is a climate of distrust everywhere, even among friends and families.



With picture of 1,160 First Holy Communions at the parish of Makamba in Burundi (© ACN)

“I was told that people never invite their friends to their homes, because they fear that they could then know their house and hunt them down whenever the next civil war starts.

“For this reason, ACN supports projects to promote and safeguard Catholic families.”

Mr François-Marsal stressed that ACN’s work in Burundi is “directed at spreading the Good News within people’s hearts, so that they can resist the temptation of violence”.

He added that, having been evangelised only 125 years ago, Burundian society “has not yet deeply embraced the Christian faith and still relies on customs and traditions derived from indigenous religions”.

Over the past 10 years, ACN has contributed to more than 200 projects in the country, with a focus on the formation of priests and religious sisters, as well as supporting catechesis and various pastoral activities.

Mr François-Marsal said that ACN remains committed to supporting the Church and helping to maintain peace in Burundi.

Amy Balog

# ACN

50mm x 2 to fill



# Never mind the quality, feel the width

Dr Jay Kettle-Williams

‘Negativity breeds discrimination’

Never Mind the Quality Feel the Width is now a rarely seen 1973 British comedy film directed by Ronnie Baxter and starring John Bluthal, Joe Lynch and Bernard Stone. It was a spin-off from the ITV television series of the same name, the series originating from a British television sitcom first broadcast in 1967 as a single play in the Armchair Theatre anthology series about two mismatched tailors, one Catholic and the other Jewish, in the East End of London.

In the course of the film, Manny and Patrick employ a sexy new assistant Rita, seriously fall out after a gambling incident, experience woman trouble, find themselves burgled and eventually end up on holiday in Rome after posing as priests.

Were that production to be launched in the current day and age of Cancel Culture, Diversity and Inclusion, you might well be excused for seriously wondering, even fearing, how it might be received. Perhaps many amongst us would not be as amused as earlier generations. There’s no accounting for taste, we’re told. But ‘The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there,’ as L.P. Hartley wrote in his 1953 novel *The Go-Between*. How we understand the past, what lessons we draw from events we can no longer affect, has been the challenge for humankind throughout time. Whatever we do today cannot be brought to bear on the actions of yesterday from which we inherit. Actions by our forefathers might well have been in full concert with the mores of the time. But that’s water under the bridge, you can’t send it back upstream. Or do we think that you can? Cue Cancel Culture.

Cancel Culture, by its very nature, epitomises the in-depth negativity of our time. Dystopia! Negativity, by its very nature, breeds discrimination. We might like to couch that discrimination in a more positive cloak, but it still remains what it is. In its essence, Cancel Culture rejects any attempt at dialogue. Its



chief enforcers are often faceless, self-appointed, angry people online. Diversity and Inclusion, on the other hand, can be seen to have a more positive pedigree, but they can still slide down that same slippery slope. They can be seen as a contradiction in terms with the two expressions potentially at odds with each other: mavericks v. teamsters, square pegs v. round holes. To ensure, then, the ‘social fit’ required by the woke proponents, Diversity and Inclusion are thrown like dice, rolling across the table in some grotesque game of snakes and ladders. But social engineering, as proven by its exponents elsewhere in time and space, is never an effective nor ultimately respected exercise. So we come to see tunnel-vision putting society in danger, risking the legal basis on which sit democracy and the worth of the individual.

We can probably all refer to proven instances - if not unlawful then certainly disrespectful, undemocratic, immoral or despotic - which can be laid at the feet of governments, public and civic bodies or others, whether funded by the taxpayer or not, within our immediate neighbourhoods or on a wider stage.

There are those constantly tossing double-headed coins and calling for heads in the ‘me-me’ game as society is steered toward anarchy with all manner of personal or narrow concerns being flagged up. Reparation is then demanded by an often seemingly offensive or even vindictive minority in the name of social justice. Faced with ever-increasing claims for

victimhood, society moves away from collective concern, away from mutual respect and away from the broad conscience necessary for a mature, level-headed, caring and all-embracing culture. The very phrase ‘Diversity and Inclusion’ is now being progressively identified as toxic. At the expense of equality and meritocracy, efforts have been zealously adopted across so many spheres of society to prioritise breadth over quality, sacrificing quality for breadth.

Thank the Lord, ours remains a broad, open-reach, openly reachable Church. Our global Catholic congregation promotes and defends human rights worldwide. Our membership is hailed as varied, diverse, inclusive, in communion, mutually respectful. Having signalled these virtues, I need only add that you don’t get them by just tickin’ a box.

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

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# Letters to the Editor



All correspondence to Letters to the Editor to be sent by post to Bellcourt Ltd, N2 Blois Meadow Business Centre, Steeple Bumpstead, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 7BN or via e-mail to [editor@catholicpost.co.uk](mailto:editor@catholicpost.co.uk) and must give a contact name and place of residence. Anonymous correspondence will not be considered for publication.

**Dear Editor**

Whilst never a regular reader of the Universe newspaper I was, nevertheless, saddened when it was decided to cease publication so was delighted to discover the existence of The Catholic Post

Being on a limited income I cannot afford to be a regular subscriber and the Churches which I attend never seemed to place a bulk order after the initial issue however I do buy a copy when I can and really enjoy it.

There are a good mix of articles and tone which, I hope, will mean that your readership will grow from strength to strength. So thank you and your predecessor for the work you do.

In the August issue I was particularly interested in the article written by a Fr Neil McNicholas entitled 'Sixpence in the slot' and should be most grateful if you could pass on my thanks to him for writing it.

E.A.M. Freeman

TO FILL

70MM X 2

# Frank Goulding



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# Being the Change: student leadership conference breaks new ground

[dioceseofbrentwood.net](http://dioceseofbrentwood.net)

Their questions afterwards proved to be very insightful

The inaugural Diocese of Brentwood student leadership conference took place at De La Salle School on 12 July 2023 – and was described by the students attending as ‘inspirational’.



Bishop Alan Williams opened the conference by addressing a group of 60 student leaders from 16 diocesan schools on the subject of leadership. The students were thoroughly engaged throughout, with some avidly making notes. Siân Thomas-Cullinan, Director of Caritas Brentwood, who was involved in the organisation and running of the day, said: “Their questions afterwards proved to be very insightful as they ranged from enquiries about Bishop Alan’s role as a bishop, across a broad spectrum of leadership issues and thinking.”



Subsequently, Bishop Alan commissioned the young people as leaders in their schools.



Siân then led a series of sessions based on the Papal document *Laudato Sí*, with the support of members from the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service. The students focused on the practical responsibility of care for our common home, including what could be done in terms of leaving a legacy to future students, by using the ‘Let Us Dream’ task from *Journey to 2030*.

She said: “Their ideas and feedback demonstrated thought, creativity and vision proving that they have insight into the problems and a range of solutions that were both practical and feasible. It was marvellous to see the engagement of all the young people and their support for each other while presenting.”



De La Salle School, Basildon provided an exceptional level of hospitality and welcome, with their student leaders greeting and accompanying the visitors. Breaks and lunch provided an opportunity for the students to talk to one another, encouraged by Fr Dominic Howarth, who set a series of challenges to network and engage with other schools.



The students then had the opportunity to hear about opportunities from BCYS and the latest CAFOD campaigns and opportunities to write to their local MPs – giving them practical ways of making a difference locally, nationally and globally.

Siân was delighted with the outcomes. She concluded: “The day could be summed up as necessary, joyful, hopeful and motivating.”

## 150th Anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Annecy in Newport

[rcadc.org](http://rcadc.org)

“When you meet the authentic charism of a religious community, you meet a golden thread in the life of the Church.”

Archbishop Mark recently celebrated the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Annecy in Newport. The Mass was held at St Mary’s Church, Newport, and in addition to the sisters (who were well-represented) and clergy, it was lovely to see a strong turnout from local primary and secondary schools, parishioners, civic leaders, other faith leaders, and local people.

In his homily, Archbishop Mark began by telling the congregation of something a good friend once told him: “When you meet the authentic charism of a religious community, you meet a golden thread in the life of the Church.” He said that the arrival of the Sisters of Annecy had provided that golden thread in the life of the diocese, touching on education, health, and parish work, very often “in solidarity with those who are often on the margins of society.”

Though the move from their home in Llantarnam Abbey may give them “particular heartache,” Archbishop Mark said that “this new chapter opens up the possibilities of your contribution in different ways.” He finished his homily by quoting the founder of the congregation, Father Jean Pierre Medaille: “Live out



your life with one desire only: to be always what God wants you to be, in nature, grace, and glory, for time and eternity.”

After the service the sisters, congregation and Archbishop Mark were able to meet up in the Insitute next door to catch up over a cup of tea.

# Learning through action: Reflection on a visit to Calais

ICN

Many of those seeking refuge will go through a painstaking process to be recognised as an asylum seeker

Kirsty, a sixth form student from a Catholic school in Hallam, travelled to Calais last weekend with other young people and teachers. The four-day visit was part of a programme exploring the 'crisis of welcome' for refugees at our borders. It was led by the Columbans and the Diocese of Hallam. She writes:

Before volunteering in Calais, I had an idea of what it would be like: what I would hear, see and learn. These preconceived ideas were mostly incorrect. Because of this, I firstly urge everyone to look into working with refugees – particularly those intending to cross the channel.

"Why would we fight when we've all come here to flee war and conflict?" A common belief is that the camps are full of violence and separation between groups. This is in fact a complete juxtaposition of the truth. I was

overwhelmed by the camaraderie and community spirit all around me. The refugees shared in each other's hopes and aspirations, despite their different beliefs, faiths and nationalities. Before listening to their stories, I didn't understand quite how difficult and long a venture it was. I heard numerous stories of journeys of up to 10 years just to get to Calais, making it abundantly clear that the decision to leave their homes was not made lightly and was out of necessity.

As volunteers with Care4Calais we helped to fix bikes, mend clothes and shoes, exchange friendship bracelets, teach English, make hot drinks, play games, litter pick, give out leaflets and distribute donated items. Notably, many of those we saw still have great pride for their nations (which they represented with bracelets in the colours of their respective flags). Many of them wish to be educated in order to earn money that they can then invest back into their communities. These are innovators, activists, problem solvers and leaders who were brave enough to stand against injustice. They would benefit England's workforce, if treated as our equals.

Our time spent volunteering was always followed by time for reflection. Before the day started, we would meet for morning prayer, where we would discuss and record our hopes

and fears for the day. This would be followed by two later reflections. One was a debrief with the wider Care4Calais group, to share stories that touched us and follow up with questions. Then later – as a smaller group – we gathered to share what we learned and reflect in prayer. Similarly, we spent time with facts and statistics which gave details of the Channel crossings.

Too often legislation is set without being critiqued empathetically. Many of those seeking refuge will go through a painstaking process to be recognised as an asylum seeker. Many will never reach this status and are dismissed back to danger because of minute technicalities that shouldn't matter when a human being is in need. People are turned away for being presumed a different age to what they claim, though this can't be proved. Additionally, it's easy to mix up details of your life after hours of interviews; however, human flaws are not often accepted in the process of seeking sanctuary.

The Western world is good at shining a light on humanitarian issues for very brief spurts of time. We then have a social media hashtag and collect donations to be sent in aid. Despite this being beneficial in raising awareness and helping refugees in the short term, the public outcry ends in the blink of an eye. It becomes too easy for the government to once again



ignore those in need. The shoes, clothes, tents etc. that we send are slashed, broken and burned consistently in police raids.

The only way we can cause long term change is by advocating for it. This is more crucial than ever with the new Illegal Migration Bill being pushed forward. This Bill states that any refugee entering the UK illegally will be detained and removed back to their homeland or a third-party country. We need our communities to rally like the migrants do and refuse to be ignored in the face of a gross human rights violation. It's crucial that we hold politicians accountable as it is policies and laws that we need to change. Refugees are not criminals to be locked away on barges. Refugees are not deserving of being isolated and displaced. Refugees are not suspects to be interrogated endlessly. They are people searching for peace. Why can't we grant them this?

**Striving for magis- even when no one is watching.**



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# Rare chapel hosts annual Mass of St Benedict

[birminghamdiocese.org.uk](http://birminghamdiocese.org.uk)

The Chapel is most famous for its superb medieval wall-paintings, especially a vivid scene of the Last Judgement

The annual Mass of Saint Benedict took place at the Guild Chapel in Stratford upon Avon at 7pm on Wednesday 19th July 2023.

Mass was concelebrated by Parish Priest Fr Alex Austin, OSB and Fr Anthony Barrat who was visiting Stratford-upon-Avon. The hymns were well sung and could be heard outside in town centre attracting those passing to call in to see what was happening.

The Chapel is on the corner of Church Street and Chapel Lane and is one of Stratford-upon-Avon's most iconic and important historic buildings. The Guild Chapel in Stratford-upon-Avon dates back to the 13th century, with the nave and tower you see today being rebuilt in the 1490s.



The Chapel is most famous for its superb medieval wall-paintings, especially a vivid scene of the Last Judgement. The wall paintings were whitewashed in the 1560s because they didn't suit the new Protestant form of worship.

John Shakespeare, William's father, oversaw the whitewashing because he was the town's Chamberlain at the time. But the covering of



whitewash unintentionally preserved the paintings underneath, and they were revealed when the Chapel was restored in 1804.

In 1996, on the occasion of the 800th Anniversary of the charter granted to the town, permission was given by the Committee of the Trustees of Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council and the co-chaplains of the Chapel for a Catholic Mass to be held there, the first since the Reformation.

As a consequence, the Parish has been able to organise a Mass in the Chapel every year since

1996, apart from when the Chapel and the organ were being refurbished and during the lockdowns resulting from the Covid Pandemic.

Fr Alex and the parishioners of St Gregory the Great are most grateful to the Committee of the Trustees of Stratford upon Avon Town Trust and the Co-Chaplains for permission to hold their celebrations in the Guild Chapel. Fr Alex also wishes to thank those who helped organise the Mass and all those who attended.

Con McHugh

## Social enterprise superheroes

[abdiocese.org.uk](http://abdiocese.org.uk)

They are painting a bright and positive picture of what life can be like in the future

The Big Issue/Social Enterprise Academy have been showcasing some of the incredible social enterprises run by school pupils across the UK within their Social Enterprise Schools Programme. These inspiring enterprises – united by their desire to make a positive change in the world – are solving a broad and diverse range of social and environmental problems. They are painting a bright and positive picture of what life can be like in the future. By tackling a wide variety of topics, they are answering important questions for the world.

One of the schools that have been highlighted in the programme is St Wilfrid's Catholic School in Crawley. They have a total of five social enterprises led by their Year 10 Business Studies students.

### Dojin

The social enterprise DOJIN is named after the Japanese god of earth. The initiative is around trading eco-friendly glass bottles at school to promote sustainable behaviours. The team initially attempted designing water bottles using their 3D printers but wanted to avoid using plastic, so then decided to trade the more eco-friendly version of glass bottles instead. Having designed a great logo, they are ready to find a supplier and start selling. Any

profits will be used to continue promoting eco-friendly behaviours at school.

### MHA

MHA are a mental health awareness social enterprise who want to design wristbands that raise awareness of mental health and remind students at the school that they are great just the way they are. The wristbands will include a glow-in-the-dark version, with the slogan "You are enough".

### Reclothe

This social enterprise takes clothing people no longer want and upcycles it! They are accepting donations of uniforms from across the school and will then be upcycling them to support families on lower incomes.

### Go for Green

This social enterprise is tackling two problems at once; the cost-of-living crisis and healthy eating. They've identified that organic and healthy lifestyles are not accessible to many people and affording fresh foods can be difficult on a lower income. So the group is encouraging healthy lifestyles by growing their own food at school. Their crops include lettuce and chillies, and they aim to create salad packs that will be sold for affordable prices as well as being donated to local food banks.

### Bice

Bice is the French word for a shade of blue, but has additional meanings of rebirth and helping. The aim of this social enterprise is to support people sleeping rough by creating care packages for them. These packages will include warm clothing, foods and some personal hygiene items.

## World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

[plymouth-diocese.org.uk](http://plymouth-diocese.org.uk)

Trafficked people lose their rights and have their identity documents taken away from them



The 30th July is the annual World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. The aim of the day is to raise awareness of trafficking and to call upon governments, law enforcement, public services and society to improve their efforts to prevent trafficking by identifying and supporting victims.

Trafficking in persons is a serious crime and a grave violation of human rights. Thousands of men, women and children end up in the hands of traffickers every year, often through being misled to believe that they are being taken to work that will make their family better off, or by force or kidnap. Trafficked people lose their rights and have their identity documents taken away from them. They are forced to work, often doing hard labour or prostitution, for no reward. Many people are taken to unfamiliar countries where they don't know the language and have no way of getting help.

The theme of this year's World Day Against Trafficking in Persons is to, 'Reach every victim of trafficking, leave no one behind'. In the context of trafficking in persons, leaving people behind means:

failing to end the exploitation of trafficking victims, failing to support victim-survivors once they are free from their traffickers, and leaving identifiable groups vulnerable to traffickers. For more information about trafficking and modern day slavery, and how to notice the signs that this may be taking place please visit: <https://www.unseenuk.org/about-modern-slavery/spot-the-signs/>

If you would like support, or you are concerned about someone else, please contact:

The Safeguarding Office – Please call us on 01364 645430 between Monday to Friday, from 9am to 4:30pm.

Unseen – A UK charity that provides safe houses and support in the community for survivors of trafficking and modern slavery. 24/7 Modern Slavery and Exploitation Helpline: 08000 121 700 <https://www.unseenuk.org/working-with-survivors/>

# Our Global Community



## US archbishops lead 'Pilgrimage of Peace' to Japan

*Pax Christi USA*

God calls us to build a global community where the whole human family can flourish

Two archbishops from the United States are visiting Japan on a 'Pilgrimage of Peace', hoping to promote global nuclear disarmament by visiting the sites of the only use of atomic bombs in warfare. Each year, the horrific events of 6 and 9 August 1945 are remembered, when the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the only time nuclear weapons have been used against human targets.

Archbishop John C. Wester of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Archbishop Paul D. Etienne of Seattle, Washington, are travelling from 31 July - 12 August to the Japanese cities of Tokyo, Akita, Kyoto, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Joining the archbishops are representatives from archdiocesan offices and various organisations focusing on nuclear disarmament and social justice.

The pilgrimage features a Novena for Nuclear Disarmament, prayers for which are available in English on the trip's website. According to the website, the pilgrimage's mission is to "establish an ecclesial and personal relationship with the bishops of Japan to work

toward the abolition of nuclear weapons, expressing our heartfelt sorrow for the devastating experiences endured by their nation."

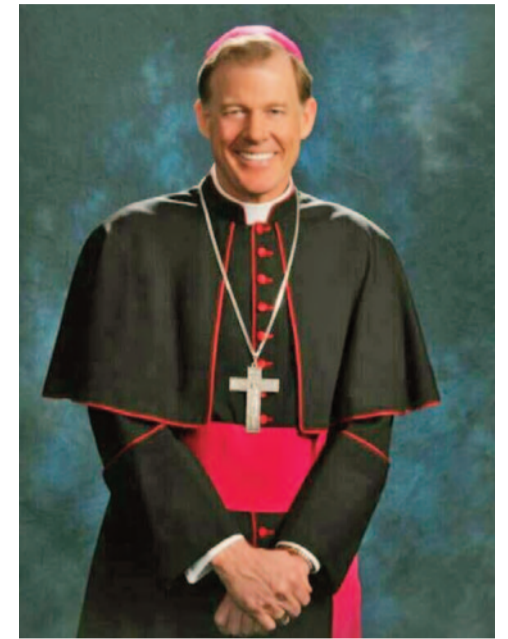
An estimated 140,000 people were killed in Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, followed by a second atomic bomb three days later in Nagasaki, which left 74,000 people dead. Survivors, known as 'hibakusha', have faced numerous physical and psychological ailments in the bombings' aftermath, which led to Japan's unconditional surrender to the United States and its allies.

Archbishop Wester said that he hoped during the pilgrimage to "encourage conversation about universal, verifiable nuclear disarmament and to walk together toward a new future of peace, a new promised land of peace, a new culture of peace and nonviolence where we all might learn to live in peace as sisters and brothers on this beautiful planet, our common home." Archbishop Etienne said, "God calls us to build a global community where the whole human family can flourish; let us keep educating ourselves, praying for peace, and appealing for verifiable nuclear disarmament, which reflects our Catholic teachings and is the path for the common good."

In May, both bishops joined Archbishop Peter Michiaki Nakamura of Nagasaki and Bishop



Alexis Mitsuru Shirahama of Hiroshima in issuing a letter to leaders of the Group of Seven nations, as the G7 met in Hiroshima, calling on them to take "concrete steps" toward ending the use of nuclear weapons. "As the Roman Catholic spiritual leaders of the diocese with the most spending on nuclear weapons in the United States (Santa Fe, New Mexico), the diocese with the most deployed strategic nuclear weapons in the United States (Seattle, Washington State), and the only two dioceses in the world to have suffered atomic attacks (Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan), we are compelled to speak out," the bishops said in the letter. They called on leaders to "enter into serious multilateral negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament."



Pope Francis said in his June 2022 message to the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons: "Nuclear weapons are a costly and dangerous liability. They represent a 'risk multiplier' that provides only an illusion of a 'peace of sorts.' Here, I wish to reaffirm that the use of nuclear weapons, as well as their mere possession, is immoral. Trying to defend and ensure stability and peace through a false sense of security and a 'balance of terror,' sustained by a mentality of fear and mistrust inevitably ends up poisoning relationships between peoples and obstructing any possible form of real dialogue. Possession leads easily to threats of their use, becoming a sort of 'blackmail' that should be repugnant to the consciences of humanity."

# Book Reviews



## **Towards a Full Presence – A Pastoral Reflection on Engagement with Social Media Dicastery for Communication**

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“Towards a Full Presence” is a thought-provoking guide that explores the impact of social media on our relationships with others, offering practical strategies for cultivating



neighbourliness on social media and building community in a fragmented world.

“Towards a Full Presence” is a thought-provoking guide that explores the impact of social media on our relationships with others. The Vatican’s Dicastery for Communication offers practical strategies for cultivating neighbourliness on social media and building community in a fragmented world.

With an emphasis on self-reflection and pastoral care, Catholics are encouraged to examine their social media habits and consider the effects on those they encounter. From fostering meaningful connections to pausing to tend to the wounds of others like the Good Samaritan, this document provides valuable insights and actionable steps for finding harmony in the digital age.

For priests, for those working in ministry, and for all who use social media, this reflection offers a refreshing and much-needed perspective on social media engagement.

“The following pages are the result of a reflection involving experts, teachers, young professionals and leaders, lay persons, clergy, and religious. The aim is to address some of the main questions involving how Christians should engage social media. They are not meant to be precise “guidelines” for pastoral ministry in this area. The hope, instead, is to promote a common reflection about our digital experiences... How much of our digital relationships is the fruit of deep and truthful communication, and how much is merely shaped by unquestioned opinions and passionate reactions? How much of our faith finds living and refreshing digital expressions? And who is my “neighbour” on social media?” (TFP 5)

## **Behold Your Mother**

**Peter Kahn**

**£6.95**

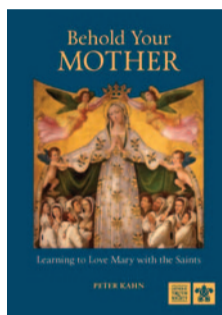
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Behold Your Mother tells stories about ways the saints encountered Our Lady, not necessarily through the miraculous, but rather as their spiritual mother in everyday life, showing that any growth in our awareness of Mary’s presence and care for us deepens our relationship to Christ.



“When God provides our necessities through Mary’s hands, then we become more affectionate towards our spiritual mother, and our trust in God grows.”

What is it like to have a close relationship with Mary, the Mother of God? Our Lady is the spiritual mother of all Christians, but it is the saints who know her best.

This book tells stories about ways the saints encountered Our Lady, not necessarily through the miraculous, but rather as their spiritual mother in everyday life.

The saints’ experience shows us that any growth in our awareness of Mary’s presence and care for us deepens our relationship to Christ. It is their testimony that an ever-deepening relationship with the Mother of God is a path to sanctity.

Reflecting on the wisdom of the saints who so loved Our Lady shows that this path through Marian devotion to holiness is one open to all Christians. She is our mother and she seeks always to lead us to her beloved son, Jesus.

# Religious Brothers

*Deacon Michael O'Donnell*

Today, there are only one hundred and thirty Little Brothers of Jesus in the world and, sadly, they are no longer in Britain

"You're not a priest. What do you do?" I remember asking a Religious Brother many years ago. When young I had served Mass regularly and could appreciate what priests did but 'brothers' were new to me!

Later I undertook some research into 'Religious brothers' as their vocation continued to intrigue me. In this, I knew they were able, academically well-qualified and pastorally experienced men who answered the call to service in a way which was personal to them.

The vocation of a brother is 'to brother'. They do this through encouraging, listening, sharing and accompanying one's brothers and sisters in Christ as they journey through life. A brother can be a member of different communities such as his religious community, family, friends, workplace, and within the locality he lives in.

A brother's calling to service can be in areas such as education, social work, nursing, manual work, community work, justice and peace, parish work as well as being a member of their community. But first and foremost, he is a brother.

A number of years ago, I spent some time speaking with Br Guy who was a Little Brother of Jesus. They had been founded in 1933 by a small group of men as they felt called to follow the witness of the now St. Charles de Foucauld (1858-1916) who lived alone in the Sahara Desert in Algeria among the Touareg people. This founding shows "Unless a grain of wheat

falls to the ground and dies, it remains a grain of wheat, but if it dies it yields a rich harvest" (Jn 12:24).

The first Little brother to come to Britain was Br Roger who in 1952 began to establish the brothers' presence in Leeds. Br Guy came from Lyons in 1961 and lived in Leeds in the same house as his neighbours. There were no external signs that the house was occupied by a group of brothers. This was deliberate as the brothers identify with their neighbours. They don't go out to the people from a big house in an affluent area; they live among them.

He shared that the brothers live in places which are deemed to be areas where poverty in its many forms is present. They live the Gospel through sharing in the everyday lives of their neighbours, in their joys and sorrows also in working as others do. Here, they have the vocation of being a presence. Br Ian who lived in Leeds then moved to London told me "The brothers' charism is to be contemplatives in the world."

Little brothers would not undertake any form of church ministry. Br Guy worked in a factory alongside people from the area. He was the union shop-steward so in many ways he was the 'the voice of the voiceless'.

Brother Ian said "the brothers find in ordinary life a meeting place with God as Jesus did". As Charles de Foucauld wrote 'It is only necessary to live among people, sharing the human



St. Charles de Foucauld

condition and being present to them in love'. Little brothers see their vocation as 'living the life of Nazareth ... the hidden life of Jesus of Nazareth'.

Br Xavier lived for over thirty years in Leeds with Br Guy. He too experienced the life of locals through both working and experiencing redundancy. This happened to many as industry was changing.

Br Thierry came to Leeds in 1971 where he worked on a building site. In 1973 both he and Br Yvan founded a community in London and soon Br Thierry became involved with the L'Arche community where people with disabilities and assistants lived together.

Occasionally a brother may be ordained priest enabling the brothers to celebrate the Eucharist as a community. One of the brothers, Br Ian, had been living in London for many years when he was asked to be ordained. On the morning of his ordination, he was at the local college cleaning offices as he did most days! Although ordained, Br Ian was first and foremost a brother.

In Leeds Br Guy got involved in the local community through volunteering at the

Development Education Centre as well as being involved with Justice and Peace. He was a man who shared compassion towards others particularly refugees and asylum seekers. He remained in Leeds until his death in 2013.

Today, there are only one hundred and thirty Little Brothers of Jesus in the world and, sadly, they are no longer in Britain.

On Vocations Sunday we often hear the bishops and priests asking us to pray that more men answer the call of God to the priesthood and be shepherds of the flock. Yet rarely do I hear 'Let us pray for more men to answer the call of God to be Brothers'.

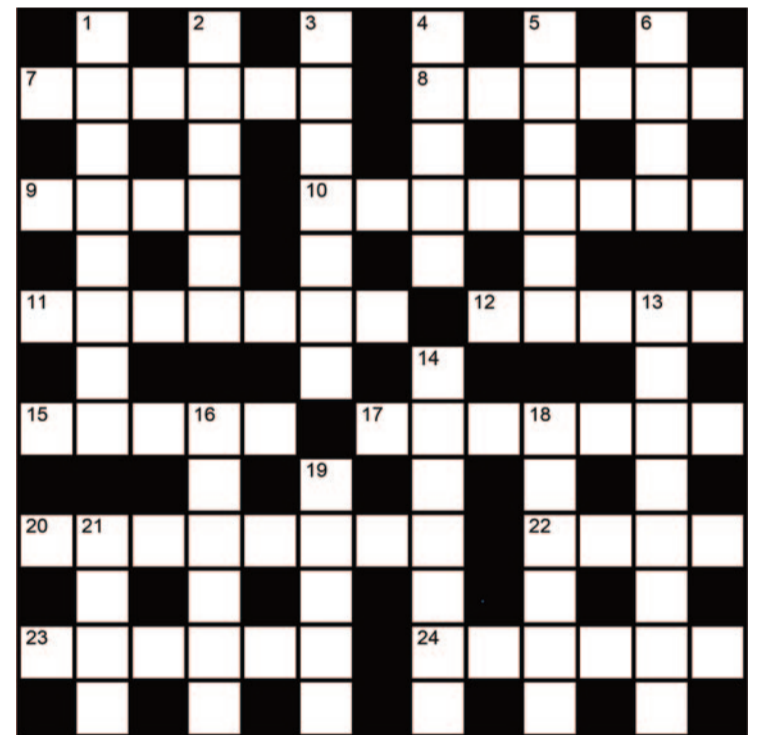
Pope Francis chose the theme for this year's Vocations Sunday as 'Vocation: Grace and Mission'. He states that 'our common vocation is to give ourselves in love'. People live their baptism in various ways, that is as laity, religious, or ordained as all have a role within, what is called, the 'vocational symphony'. Here, each of us have a contribution to make in living the gospel.

In relation to this, let us hope more men may, like Br Guy, Br Yvan, Br Ian, Br Thierry, and Br Michel did so, discern the call 'to brother' and give themselves in love.

# Sport



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



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SOLUTION