



## Together alone we seek spiritual communion as coronavirus spreads

by Alison Rebello

**FROM the day our priests were forced to close their church doors and celebrate Mass without people present, the clergy and the faithful have rushed to ensure those less fortunate were cared for.**

As the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic our diocese is united in prayer for those affected by the virus worldwide, for NHS workers and for all who are isolated and vulnerable.

Stories detailing acts of kindness travelled between partnerships by phone, email and social media.

Mass was concelebrated by Bishop Robert, Fr Michael McCoy and Fr Peter Stoddart and live streamed on St Mary's YouTube channel, with adoration of the

blessed sacrament and devotions live streamed at 5pm each afternoon.

Other churches live streaming Masses, daily prayer and reflection and adoration of the blessed sacrament include St Charles', Gosforth; St Teresa's, Heaton; St Mary's, Hexham; St Paul's, Cramlington; St Mary's, Forest Hall; St Edward's Church, Whitley Bay; St Mary's, Sunderland; Stockton Family Parish; St Mary's, Newton Aycliffe; St Thomas of Canterbury, Billingham; St Cuthbert's, Chester-le-Street; St Bede, Sacriston, and St Augustine's, Darlington.

Some parishioners are using Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp and church Facebook groups to maintain contact and to pray together.

On Friday, March 27, 11 million people tuned in to be joined in universal

communion with Pope Francis as he performed the extraordinary Urbi et orbi papal blessing, granting a plenary indulgence to the faithful whilst reminding us that Christ is our hope and our anchor.

Two days later, thousands joined to make an act of rededication as part of the Rededication of England as Our Lady's Dowry.

Priests and deacons, along with the SVP, have urged people to keep in contact with the vulnerable and all who may need assistance so that no-one in our diocese is left without help.

Mother General of the Little Sisters of the Poor has also appealed to families to say the Rosary together for all affected by coronavirus.

Although we will not stand together in

our churches for the Easter Triduum, staff at the Ushaw visitor centre in Durham have called on us to sit in our homes or stand on our doorsteps, balconies or in our gardens at 10am on Easter Sunday and sing the joyful hymns Jesus Christ is Risen Today and Thine be the Glory as an acclamation of Christ's resurrection.

We are asked to telephone our friends and loved ones and ask them to join us.

In Durham, The Parish of the Durham Martyrs has asked people to join them in spirit, to light a candle on Palm Sunday and say this prayer, kindly adapted by staff and students at St Leonard's School:

For all who have contracted coronavirus, we pray for care and healing.

For those who are particularly vulner-

able, we pray for safety and protection.

For those who have died from coronavirus we pray they rest peacefully with You.

For those who have lost loved ones, we pray for comfort in their grief.

For all who experience fear or anxiety, we pray for peace of mind and spirit.

For affected families who are facing difficult decisions between food on the table or public safety, we pray for policies that recognise their plight.

For our brothers and sisters around the world, we pray for shared solidarity.

For public officials and decision-makers, we pray for wisdom and guidance.

Father, during this time may your Church be a sign of hope and love to all.

Grant peace. Grant comfort. Grant healing. Be with us, Lord. Amen.

**THE annual Celebration of Marriage Mass was due to be celebrated by Bishop Robert at St Mary's Cathedral at 11am on Saturday, May 16, to give thanks for the sacrament of marriage, writes Deacon Rob**

**Wareing, the diocesan co-ordinator for marriage and family life.**

Bishop Robert had invited each parish community to be represented by married couples of all ages – and engaged cou-

ples taking part in diocesan marriage preparation – but sadly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely that this Mass will not go ahead.

Please turn to page 10 for more information.

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**MBE is Linda's just reward**

❑ Much-loved Monkwearmouth parishioner Linda Longstaff recently enjoyed a very special day out at Buckingham Palace with her family where she received an MBE for many years of hard work and dedication. Well done Linda! Turn to page 10 to read all about it.



# Listen! Our Year of the Word retreat

by Shawn Miranda and  
Nina McAninly

**IN CONJUNCTION** with the dedication of 2020 as The Year of the Word by the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle organised a retreat to Stanbrook Abbey, a Benedictine monastery in Wass, Yorkshire.

The theme of the retreat was Listen and its aim was to help young adults establish a deeper relationship with Christ through greater reflection of his word in the sacred scriptures.

Sister Laurentia, one of the Benedictine nuns from Stanbrook Abbey, served as our spiritual director throughout the retreat.

We were taught the traditional monastic practice of the Lectio Divina, a technique of reflective reading of a passage of scripture, and were told that this simple practice could be used to perceive the message God intended for us to receive from his word.

Crucially, we had learned that there was a profound difference between an empty reading of the passages of the bible and a deep and reflective engagement with the passages to truly listen to God's voice in our lives.

As part of our stay in Stanbrook Abbey we had the privilege of joining the Benedictine Sisters in their daily praying of the Divine Office.

These are a set of prayers originally developed by St Benedict of Nursia and evolved over the centuries, heeding the call of Psalm 119 to praise God seven times a day. The recitation of the prayers, together with the chanting of the psalms, was a very meaningful experience for all of us in bringing us to closer union with God and with our Catholic brothers and sisters who had lived through ages past.

Participants were also treated to a viewing of masterfully-crafted tapestries depicting the stations of the cross.

The work was originally commissioned to be given to a church in Molo Kenya using designs by

Dame Werburg Welch. Owing to illness, the artist was unable to complete the work and the tapestries languished in their unfinished form for many years until the project was revived and finally completed last year. This gave us a unique opportunity to view the works before they would eventually be shipped to Kenya.

Some of the participants also took the opportunity to engage the nuns in one-to-one conversation which gave them a unique window into the religious life that is not often known to the Catholic laity.

Aside from our engagement in prayer and study, we had numerous opportunities to have great fun through the sharing of food and song and playing games.

Some of the participants enjoyed a leisurely walk in the woodland areas surrounding the abbey whilst others visited the ruins of Byland Abbey, a Cistercian monastery originally founded in 1135.

The retreat proved a worthwhile experience for all the participants in helping develop a deeper relationship with Christ through the scriptures.

We learnt that even in those moments where we no longer feel close to God, we can reconnect with Him through reading and listening to His word.

Equally, by sharing His word with others we are helping God's spirit reach more people and spread His love. As God breathed life into Adam, he does the same to us through His word, and we should let His word stay with us, reflect upon it and let it guide our thoughts. By doing this we can become closer to God and give him the power to direct our lives.

We take this opportunity to thank the Sisters of Stanbrook Abbey for their gracious hospitality and spiritual direction.

It is our hope that this retreat will be the first of many activities organised by the diocese for the spiritual renewal and strengthening of young adult Catholics of Hexham and Newcastle.



□ Getting together for a photo with the Sisters outside the abbey on a blustery day, above, and the striking abbey, left, which can just be seen, nestled in the Yorkshire countryside.



□ Some of the Elect with Bishop Robert after the service.  
Photo: Iain Gelston. rcdhn.org.uk

## Rite of Election 2020

**ON THE first Sunday in Lent – March 1 – the Rite of Election took place in St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle.**

The candidates and catechumens who have been on their Journey of Faith course since September – the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults programme – were presented to Bishop Robert Byrne by their sponsors and godparents and were supported by their families and friends.

Fr Adrian Dixon preached the homily and spoke of the many choices made throughout life.

He told the congregation that the people who had decided to become members of the Church at Easter, through the Sacraments of Initiation – baptism, confirmation and eucharist – had been chosen by God, who had called them, and were to be known as the Elect.

After processing to meet the bishop and shake hands with him, 143 of the Elect wrote their names in the Book of the Elect.

They were then photographed with him at the end of a joyful and grace-filled ceremony.

You are warmly invited to  
Celebrate the Feast of



## Divine Mercy

The theme of the day is The Lost Sheep.  
A Reflection will be given by Mrs Halina Holman.

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

**2:00 pm – 3:30pm**

**St. Mary's R.C. Church, Blackhill**  
**Refreshments afterwards in the Church Hall**

*"This is the hour of great mercy ... In this hour I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of Me in virtue of My Passion." (Diary 1320).*



# Pastoral and spiritual support is at hand

COVID-19 is a very real threat which is causing many organisations many difficulties. It is also a developing situation which means constant change. Here Fr Adrian Tuckwell, Episcopal Vicar for Caritas, provides a summary of support available...



□ Bishop Robert celebrates Mass at St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle.

**DURING this difficult time many are offering their time and energy to help our more vulnerable parishioners. Parishes should compile a list of these offers of help and link them, with permission, to those in the community who are in need. Some of our parishes have outreach groups, SVP, Legion of Mary and others offering help.**

COVID Mutual Aid groups consisting of people who want to do all they can to support their own local communities are springing up across the country.

Find out more at covidmutualaid.org. They are happy to receive offers of help and to help out people in need. Most of the individual groups use Facebook, so you would need to be signed up to gain access.

If you have any updates about things happening locally, please contact me at [evcaritas@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:evcaritas@diocesehn.org.uk). Updates will be posted at [rcdhn.org.uk](http://rcdhn.org.uk).

## Mass online

- Private Masses will continue to be offered with several churches in the diocese live streaming them. The full list can be found at [rcdhn.org.uk](http://rcdhn.org.uk);
- Vatican News live streams Pope Francis' 6am Mass at Casa Santa Marta every day on Facebook and YouTube;
- The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham live streams its 12 noon Mass;
- The Dominican friars of GodzDogz at Blackfriars, Oxford, are streaming Mass every day at 7.30am and on Saturdays at 8.30am on their YouTube Channel.

## Other resources to explore online

- Cardinal Nichols has shared his thoughts

on what it means for our spiritual well-being and salvation if we can't fulfil our 'Easter Duties'. You can view the video at [rcdhn.org.uk](http://rcdhn.org.uk);

- Magnificat is providing complimentary access to its resources during this time. Find them at [us.magnificat.net/free](http://us.magnificat.net/free);

- Clicktopray.org is the home of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network;
- The Benedictine Monks of Ampleforth Abbey live stream their daily Monastic Office and Conventual Mass. This can be found at [ampleforth.org.uk/abbey/](http://ampleforth.org.uk/abbey/);

- Torch offers a new homily each week, written by the Dominican friars;

- Christian Art Today gives a reflection of each day's gospel, told through art. It is run by a seminarian of the diocese;

- Lent in Isolation is releasing a daily reflection for the remainder of Lent. They include the readings from Holy Mass, spiritual guidance from a priest and a lead act of spiritual communion;

- Sr Catherine Wybourne, a Benedictine nun of Holy Trinity Monastery in Herefordshire, continues to share reflections on her blog;

- Thinking Faith, the online Journal of the British Jesuits;

- Heaven's Road Catholic online radio;
- Fr Lawrence Lew OP uploads daily reflective photos to his Flickr account;

- Catholic Voices is running weekly webinars each Monday to share inspiring wisdom and stories;

- The Casting Fire blog by Fr Rajiv Michael, a priest at Westminster Cathedral.

## Local organisations

- All PACE groups are suspended at St Cuthbert's Care to allow the organisation to con-

centrate on residential services;

- SVP Blackfriars and Deaf Centre, Newcastle, have closed, but offer a telephone service to help people as best they can. You can contact them on 0191 2616027;

- The diocesan Justice and Peace Refugee Project has closed temporarily. No food donations can be received, but the project is searching for ways to help its destitute clients. If you would like to make a donation, the details are: HSBC DHN DESTITUTE ASYLUM FUND. Sort code: 40-34-18. Account number: 52854058. It is truly grateful for the kind support you have offered and looks forward to the day when it can reopen.

## A prayer for when Mass cannot be celebrated publicly, prepared by the Bishops' Conference

Act of spiritual communion: My Jesus, I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love you above all things and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my soul so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever.

Amen.

## A prayer for health from the Liturgy Office

Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me, Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ in quiet, Christ in danger, Christ in hearts of all that love me, Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

Amen.

## Discovering churchservices.tv

by Tom and Maureen Hoban

**TWO weeks ago we read on the diocesan website that live Masses from many locations were streamed on Churchservices.tv**

Since then we have 'attended' Mass in Ireland and throughout England.

The list of venues is quite long, but hopefully our own churches will be open again before it is exhausted.

Early in our travels we visited a large church with a number of camera positions. It was fine, but lacked 'warmth'.

It was very surprising that when we were expecting to be invited to make a spiritual communion, there was a voiceover requesting that as it was not possible to take a collection perhaps viewers would like to make a donation using a link on the parish website.

We changed our allegiance and found another church – this one chosen as it was close to the London flat rented by one of our family.

What a difference. It has a beautiful interior, a single fixed camera spanning the altar and great sound transmission.

The parish priest, his curate and the reader all have good voices, and Fr explained there were three celebrating the Mass as they lived in the same house.

We did note, however, that that they were keeping to at least the recommended distance apart.

A warm invitation was extended to all who shared in the Mass to make a spiritual communion. It is an experience we are happy to share during this time of lockdown.

## Can you help St Cuthbert's Care?

**DEAR Northern Cross readers, I am appealing for your support.**

You may know that at St Cuthbert's Care we provide frontline registered care provision for the most vulnerable people in our region. Almost all of our services are residential homes where our residents live with us permanently, with 24-hour support from our staff teams.

We must remain open and our teams are unable to work from home. Due to the coronavirus outbreak we may experience unprecedented numbers of staff unable to work for weeks at a time.

I am calling upon any person who remains well and healthy to consider volunteering for us, or possibly even becoming employed on a short-term basis, should this be a preference.

Support may be required across all disciplines of care within all functions: care, nursing, food preparation, cooking, laundry work, housekeeping and cleaning, administration and IT support, indoor activities with residents and gardening and maintenance. The list of support is wide-ranging.



□ Moira Ashman.

If you feel you may be able to help, in any way possible, please may I ask that you contact my colleague, Nicola Milne, at [Nicola.milne@stcuthbertscare.org.uk](mailto:Nicola.milne@stcuthbertscare.org.uk) to register your interest. You can also ring her on 0191 2424809 or 07824 452885.

These are the most challenging of times for us all.

Any offers of support would be most deeply appreciated.

Thank you and stay safe.

**Moir Ashman**  
CEO, St Cuthbert's Care

Buckfast Abbey Trust Registered Charity number 232497

# 'Listen, my son'

*Rule of St Benedict*

[www.buckfast.org.uk/vocation](http://www.buckfast.org.uk/vocation)  
[vocations@buckfast.org.uk](mailto:vocations@buckfast.org.uk)

  
Buckfast Abbey

God calls to us constantly, longing to guide those who yearn for life and desire to see good days into the way of peace. The Rule of Saint Benedict helps us to hear God's voice, in the Holy Scriptures, in the sacred liturgy and in our brothers in community. If you are a single man longing to live your Catholic faith in a way which brings great joy as it demands the best of you, consider whether God is calling you to be a Benedictine monk at Buckfast Abbey. Please reach out to us, and we will do all we can to help you.



# CAPNE event teaches us to speak up for those who don't have a voice

by Mary Hughes

**MORE than 270 people of all ages gathered at St Peter's Church, Gateshead, for the North East's Church Action on Poverty Sunday held on February 23.**

The theme of the day was Speaking Truth to Power.

Many of those in attendance represented local churches and communities or were from charities doing vital work in our region – including the Bensham Food Co-op, Joe's Place and Oasis Community Housing.

We were also very pleased to welcome Gateshead member of Parliament Ian Mearns, and members of Gateshead Council.

The opening address was made by Rev Hugh Sperring from the Wesley Memorial Methodist Church.

He inspired the gathering with the prayer that God would bless us with "enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in the world" and "to do what others claim cannot be done".

Pat Devlin, from Church Action on Poverty North East (CAPNE), explained the group's aims and activities, then Lucy Zwolinska from the Gateshead Poverty Truth Commission spoke about the commission's work. Lucy also shared a video featuring some real-life stories.

Hannah Davison from St Peter's Church concluded the first part of the programme by reading the poem Refugees by Brian Bilston which cleverly invites us to turn our thoughts upside down and think about things differently!

A range of speakers from the local area highlighted the real crisis of poverty that is all around us and, by using their authentic voices, called those listening to action.

The work of two local initiatives was shared by those engaged in running them. Joe's Place, one of these, is a drop-in community café which offers a welcome for the homeless and for those who are struggling in a variety of ways.

The other is the Bensham Food Co-op, an organisation which provides food, support and friendship for asylum seekers, refugees and local people living in poverty.

In each case someone with experience of poverty shared their story and the truth of their situation in a powerful way.

Oasis Community Housing also shared the reality of homelessness in Gateshead and how they are helping the situation.

They have recently been able to open a 24-hour facility for those living on the streets.

A short liturgy introduced by Fr Keith Walker, and led by young people participating in the Pope John Paul II Award,

gave a much-needed opportunity to reflect and bring the light of God's power into our situation so all of us might raise our voices to 'speak truth'.

During the final part of the afternoon we invited those who represented 'power' and 'influence' – Ian Mearns MP, Ian Stevenson from Gateshead Council and Fr Adrian Tuckwell, vicar for Caritas and representing Bishop Robert Byrne for our diocese – to respond to what they had heard.

It was absolutely appropriate that the event took place in Gateshead ahead of the launch of Gateshead Poverty Truth Commission on March 5.

CAPNE had hosted a meeting focusing on poverty in Gateshead over a year earlier and this had turned out to be a huge catalyst in the formation of an Outreach Group in two Gateshead churches: Corpus Christi and St Peter's.

The group was delighted to host this year's Church Action on Poverty Sunday, especially since it was an opportunity to raise awareness and to establish connections in order to bring people together to work for change.

CAPNE meets at 2pm on the last Friday of each month at the Mercy Hub, St Mary's Cathedral, opposite Central Station.

All are welcome to come along and find out more – although these meetings will not be held while the current coronavirus self isolating measures are in place.



□ Top to bottom: Ollie Batchelor and a guest from the Bensham Food Co-op. Lucy Zwolinska tells those in attendance about the work of the Gateshead Poverty Truth Commission. Ian Mearns MP with young people who are completing the Pope John Paul II Award.



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## A marvellous new minibus for St Columba's church

by Colin Finlay

**THE Eagle has flown, but the Lion has landed!**

This is not a secret phrase to be found in a Cold War novel, but a parishioner's summary of a big event at St Columba's, Wallsend, last month.

For many years we have benefited from the use of a parish minibus.

Sadly, after 11 years of stalwart service, the Eagle – our tough old Iveco – reached a point where it needed to be replaced.

Over the years it proved to be a valuable asset in parish work and primary school events, providing more than 5,000 passenger journeys to Mass and making hundreds of adventure journeys for young people, including family groups, beavers/cubs/scouts, confirmation and retreat groups and those going to the youth camp.

On other occasions it helped us to move furniture for parishioners and goods for fundraising events. It also

transported refugee and asylum seekers on cultural/familiarisation trips; allowed the local primary school pupils and their teachers to travel to events that would have been economically impossible to get to, and took parishioners to many special events around the diocese.

It even carried our parish pilgrimage group all the way to Iona – what an adventure that was!

However, thanks to generous bequests and donations from former passengers and parishioners over the years, the parish took delivery of a new minibus – the Lion – on March 6.

Fr David Smith blessed our new bus after Mass on Sunday, and we prayed in his blessing that our new bus will continue the outreach and support work of its predecessors and be enjoyed by all sorts of groups in the parish.

Our thanks go to all our kind benefactors and to the volunteer drivers and support team who keep the bus running and available.



□ The Lion has landed – or, in other words, our new minibus has arrived, above! Fr Smith blesses the bus, surrounded by altar servers from St Columba's church, Wallsend, left.



# Mini Vinnies are forging friendships



❑ The Mini Vinnies group from Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Primary School, Billingham, attended a coffee morning at Holy Rosary Church in February and enjoyed meeting and talking to the parishioners. Members of the group would like to thank everyone for making them feel so welcome. "We're looking forward to our next visit," said Mrs Lowe.

## The Word of God conference

LIVING Theology 2020 with The Newman Association invites you to join us at The Bar Convent, York, for our The Word of God – hearing and responding conference on July 11 and 12.

Highlights will include the following speakers:

- Fr Philip Harrison SJ – Reading the Scriptures;
- Dr George Herring – Authority in the Early Church;
- Fr Martin Poulson SDB – Catholic Social Teaching;
- Fr Henry Wansbrough OSB – The Dead Sea Scrolls;
- Dr Ally Kateusz – Women in the Early Church.

The cost of the conference is £70 for the weekend or £40 for one day (students half price) including lunches and refreshments.

For further details about the conference and to book call 01642 645732, email [tpj.egerton@virgin.net](mailto:tpj.egerton@virgin.net) or visit [jesuit.org.uk/living-theology-york-2020](http://jesuit.org.uk/living-theology-york-2020).

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## Jen's dedicated service is recognised with a papal blessing

by Deacon David Smith

MANY thanks are due to Bishop Robert for arranging a papal blessing for Jen Green, a parishioner of The Sacred Heart and St Cuthbert's parish, Amble.

Jen has been coming into what is now HMP Northumberland at Acklington, near Morpeth, for more than 20 years to provide musical accompaniment to the Saturday morning Masses as well as services of word and communion.

Over this incredible period of service Jen hasn't just brought her talent but also biscuits and cakes, Easter and Christmas cards and a constant source of support and good cheer to the residents who very much appreciate her presence.

The papal blessing was presented to Jen by Samantha Pariser, director of HMP Northumberland in the presence of Fr Paul Douthwaite, national Catholic chaplain for prisons; Phil Longhurst, managing chaplain, and Deacon David Smith, Catholic chaplain at HMP Northumberland.

During her presentation Ms Pariser thanked Jen and the volunteers within the chaplaincy and prison establishment whose presence she acknowl-



❑ Samantha Pariser presents Jen Green with the papal blessing.

edged makes a serious contribution to the day-to-day running of the prison and towards the wellbeing and rehabilitation of the residents.

Deacon David would also like to take the opportunity to thank the priests, deacons and musicians of the area who give up their time on Saturday mornings for this most worthwhile ministry to those who are often overlooked by society.

If anyone would like to be involved, in any way, please contact Deacon David at HMP Northumberland.



❑ Jen Green with Fr Paul Douthwaite, and Deacon David.

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## DARK clouds have gathered over our world this Lent.

The deadly threat posed by coronavirus is ever-present. It has claimed lives and threatens courageous NHS workers who strive to save those affected.

It has separated us from our families and friends, placed fear in our hearts and minds, disrupted our daily routines.

Our churches have closed and the obligation to attend Sunday Mass temporarily suspended.

Our concern has grown for the elderly and isolated, and for our priests and deacons, particularly those who are vulnerable and may have been exposed to the virus as well as those at a higher risk of complications.

Yet there have been so many acts of kindness, and throughout the diocese people have reported that everyone has done their best to ensure no-one is left without help or offers of assistance.

We have been encouraged to make an act of spiritual communion at home, and to continue to fast, pray, read the Gospels and to give alms, as we should at this time.

We face a Holy Week and an Easter like no others in living memory.

Confined to our homes, we cannot come together, to stand in our churches this Holy Week, or to attend the Easter Vigils on Holy Saturday, or Mass on Easter Sunday.

As Cardinal Nichols said in his recent address, the obligation to our Easter Duties – to go to confession and receive holy communion – is removed from us, but he added: “We can make an Act of Perfect Contrition to express our deep sorrow at our sins against the goodness of God.”

We can be together, in spirit, this Holy Week and Easter.

## NORTHERN CROSS 2020 AGM

**THE board of directors of the Northern Cross would like to announce that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the 2020 Annual General Meeting will be held as a telephone conference at 11am on Thursday, April 23, rather than a meeting at St Anne's parish hall, 43 Welbeck Avenue, Darlington, DL1 2DR.**

**The next edition of Northern Cross will be available to buy on Sunday, May 3, 2020.**

The Northern Cross is the Catholic newspaper for the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle & was granted a Papal Blessing on September 11, 1965. It is a not-for-profit company & registered charity. Registered at Companies House No. 6067775. Charity Commission No. 1118066. VAT Reg No. 472 0189 55. Circulation: 5,000.

**Editor:** Emma Little

**Advertising enquiries:**

07446 128433 or editor.norcross@btconnect.com

**Website:** northerncross.org.uk

**Registered Office:** St Anne's Presbytery, 43 Welbeck Avenue, Darlington DL1 2DR.

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**Subscriptions:** 01325 464008

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**Directors:** Fr Dennis Tindall, Thomas Mackin, Tom Atkinson, Tom Hoban, David Relton, Philip Smith

**Finance:** Tom Atkinson. **Operations:** Tom Hoban

**Subscriptions Secretary:** Claire Robson

## Garabandal, Only God Knows is available to view for free

**THE COVID-19 pandemic has brought about an immense health crisis.**

The suffering endured by so many families these days will also leave scars on a psychological and emotional level: many people are having to face near-death situations entirely alone, others are unable to accompany their loved ones.

The list of sorrows continues to grow daily.

The Garabandal movie had already premiered in 29 countries when the coronavirus reached Europe. Further screenings were planned in March and April but the theatres have closed so that is no longer possible.

We would like to announce that from April 3 (the Friday before Holy Week) through to Easter Sunday, April 12, Garabandal, Only God Knows, can be viewed

free of charge in English and Spanish on the film's official webpage, which can be found at garabandalthemovie.com.

Garabandal, Only God Knows, came into existence to bear a message of hope to all humanity – in these times it is more necessary than ever.

Now, more than ever, our homes must become true domestic churches that learn from Our Lady of Sorrows to contemplate the mystery of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection.

May she extend her blessing upon you and your family in this time of need.

God bless.

**Sister Miriam  
Mater Spei English**

## Experiencing isolation as a potential grace

**DURING these difficult days, I thought readers might like to see an extract from an email I received from a Carmelite who lives overseas.**

It said: “Social distancing, isolation and other containment measures to slow down the spread of the COVID-19 virus can be deeply unsettling: how can we live in a confined space within our own homes?”

“Here, the spiritual tradition of Carmel comes to our rescue.

“It could help us to experience this crisis not only as a problem but also as an opportunity, as an amazing grace that we can receive.

“St Teresa of Avila founded her first monastery of Discalced Carmelites...to create a free space protected from outside intrusions in order to lead a life centred on the presence of God.

“This is what Carmel is all about: experiencing the intensity of God's presence...within a limited space.

“Of course, this isn't easy and it takes time to get used to this limited space.

“However, St Teresa can help us in her writings by showing us the importance of recollection: to discover there the presence of God is hidden in our hearts; to experience that where we are, we can live with God.

“God is even found in the middle of the

pots and pans, as Our Holy Mother testifies! The challenge is to accept the need to master our interiority.

“This will be done differently depending on whether we live alone or in a restless house, but a pathway is possible.

“So let's try to turn the constraints of confinement into an opportunity for growth in contemplation.

“Here are ideas to help you through this period of confinement.

● Experience Lent following the rhythm of the online Carmelite retreats: the current online retreat with St John of the Cross;

● Read the writings of Carmelite saints;

● Deepen your mental prayer, silent prayer, through videos, podcasts, etc.

“When Europe was torn apart by the Wars of Religion, St Teresa of Avila wrote: ‘The world is all in flames...this is not the time to be discussing with God matters that have little importance’ (Way of Perfection 1.5).

“We're bringing that cry up to date. May this time of confinement give us the grace to come closer to God and to love our neighbour better.

“We're in communion with you!”

**Name and address supplied  
By email**

## Special Easter verses

**HARTLEPOOL born poet Dominic Windram kindly shares two of his Easter verses with Northern Cross readers.**

### A Matter of Perception

Can we still perceive the first murmurings

Of Easter's teeming, violet agenda:  
Pouring through the cracks of this stifling world?

Or have we been conditioned to accept  
The surface gloss of lesser festivals?

There are many trivial distractions  
That feed the secular imagination.

Can we still perceive spring's fresh plethora

Of lush colours blossoming all around?

Can we still embrace this Life's deeper realms:

The profound things of ultimate concern?

Can we still brave the wintry heart of darkness:

Betrayal, torture and crucifixion  
And the hard-wrought yet tender redemption?

### Spring Awakening

The light is slowly expanding  
After winter's prolonged shadowy reign.

The perfumed aroma of hyacinths  
Floats on the fresh April breeze.

Rose pink and snow white blossoms are scattered;

All over expectant avenues and streets.  
Vibrant tulips are sprouting profusely.

And there are violet strewn blessings  
To spring's prodigious Muse.

Rejoice in Easter time of redemption;  
After the heartrending sorrows of Lent.

Spring's subtle awakening brings:  
New lifeblood for the ancient ritual;

Vital wine to uplift the sovereign spirit;  
And warm, transforming communion

After the time honoured, solemn ceremony.

## An update from Minsteracres

**BECAUSE the safety and wellbeing of our community, staff, volunteers, retreatants and parishioners, is what matters most to us, particularly during this challenging time, Minsteracres has cancelled all scheduled retreat activities until April 30.**

We are closely monitoring the latest developments with the COVID-19 outbreak and will keep you updated via our website.

Following the guidance of the RC Bishops of England and Wales, daily prayer and Mass will continue in the community chapel, but this unfortunately won't be open to the public. All our measures are in line with the official advice from Public Health England, with whom we continue to work closely. While many of the measures may not be highly visible to parishioners or visitors to the retreat centre, rest assured they are in place and following medical, clinically-driven advice.

On behalf of Minsteracres team, we would like to thank you for your patience and support at this difficult time. Let us continue to keep one another in our prayers.

**Fr Jeroen Hoogland CP  
Rector, Minsteracres**

**NORTHERN CROSS welcomes letters for publication. In order to allow as many letters as possible to be used, please try to restrict the length to 300 words. The editor reserves the right to edit contributions without reference in order to reduce their length or to correct grammatical or punctuation errors. Please send to: Northern Cross Letters, St Anne's Presbytery, 43 Welbeck Avenue, Darlington DL1 2DR or editor.norcross@btconnect.com**





## Warm welcome for a special guest

**BISHOP Robert Byrne CO** was delighted to introduce **Professor Eamon Duffy, Emeritus Professor of the History of Christianity at the University of Cambridge**, at a special guest lecturer hosted by Holy Name Church, Jesmond, on Saturday, February 29, writes Catherine Hearne.

The lecture, titled *John Henry Newman – A Very Brief History*, explored the complexity of Newman's thinking on authority and freedom and its relevance for the Church today.

Professor Duffy signed copies of his book of the same name at a special reception in Holy Name parish hall after the lecture.

The organisers of the event would like to thank Professor Duffy, Bishop Robert, Pauline Books and Media, Newcastle, and Durham University's Centre for Catholic Studies for their support.

## Students get together to reflect on the Holocaust

**LOCAL** primary and secondary schools joined **St Michael's Catholic Academy, Billingham**, to mark **Holocaust Memorial Week** with events organised by assistant head teacher **Marc Scott**, chaplain **Rebecca Leighton** and the RE department on behalf of the diocese.

Embracing the theme *Stand Together*, Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, St Joseph's, St Gregory's and High Clarence primary schools experienced the Anne Frank workshop and visited the academy's chapel creating butterflies containing their own prayers.

Diane Taylor, a teaching assistant from St Gregory's, Stockton, said: "The visit allowed everyone to reflect on how one human can treat another and created a thought-provoking discussion during our journey back to school."

Secondary students from Carmel College, Our Lady and St Bede's, Ingleby Manor and Northfield schools enjoyed the performance of the student-penned song *Together We Stand* by the academy's choir and musicians.

Tarah Gow, the visiting head of geography from Ingleby Manor, said: "It was a wonderful morning and has had a huge impact on our students."

**SOLUTION  
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PAGE 28**

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# Fr Dave celebrates his golden jubilee and 50 remarkable years

**PRIESTS** from across the diocese, parishioners past and present, plus family and friends gathered at **St Peter's Church, Low Fell**, for a special Mass to mark 50 years since the ordination of **Fr Dave Tanner, JCL**.

There was a joyful atmosphere as all who attended gave thanks for a priest who has been a real help to so many facing difficulty, and who has moved in and out of the diocese but always returned home to the North East.

Fr Dave was born into a loving family in Benwell, Newcastle, in 1946, one of five children. He attended the Junior Seminary at Ushaw from the age of just 11 and was ordained a priest on February 21, 1970 at Ushaw College, before going on to the English College in Rome to study Canon Law for two years, where he gained his licence. He returned to England, and spent a period in Gateshead. At that time, social injustice was rife and "slum clearances" were being carried out.

Then Fr Dave was called back to Rome, as the Vatican had requested him for their Diplomatic Corps. This service to the Church was a great honour, but Fr Dave felt the calling to return to England, where he became a Cistercian brother and spent two years at Caldey Island – a place where monks have lived since Celtic times.

He left just before taking his simple vows, coming back to our diocese under the wing of Bishop Hugh Lindsay. He spent time covering for a variety of parish priests when they were on holiday before being moved to North Shields.

Fr Dave spent the next 11 years as a lodger at St Cuthbert's school, Newcastle. In that time, he practised Canon Law for the Marriage Tribunal, and assisted those enduring often painful, difficult times.

He then moved to Northumberland and spent more than a decade there, and after some time became a parish priest again, supporting the rural community.

In 2018, Fr Dave retired to St Peter's Low Fell in September 2018. Thanks were given for the support given to Fr Dave from Fr Keith Walker, parish priest at St Peter's church.

Prayers and thanks are due for the nurses, doctors and carers who helped Fr Dave through illness.

Christine Frazer wrote a moving, humorous and loving poem as a tribute to Fr Dave, which was shared at the celebration. It ended: "Dave, you've been in our lives for so many years, you've been a Father in so many senses of the word – only those you have touched know."

"We celebrate now, your 50 years – Ad Multos Annos."

With thanks to Christine Frazer.



□ Frs Dennis Tindall and Dave Tanner.

## World Book Day with a difference at St John's

by Ian Lamming

**A POWERFUL** message was sent to students on **World Book Day** when every member of staff at **St John's School and Sixth Form College** wore black T-shirts sporting the words: "In a world where you can be anything...be kind".

Learning Resource Centre Manager Linzi Heads said: "World Book Day celebrates reading for pleasure and the many benefits of reading, not just to help with academic progress but the positive impact reading has on mental health and wellbeing."

"We wanted teaching and non-teaching staff to share this positive message with all of our students and I thought World Book Day was a perfect opportunity to do this."

"Reading is an amazing adventure because you can go anywhere you want to go and



□ Everyone at St John's wore special T-shirts on World Book Day.

be anything you want to be!

"In a world where people are sometimes unkind to one another, often through social media, the message to be kind is a salutary reminder to us all – and it's also one which our students can take out into the

community around them."

Head teacher Lisa Byron added: "It is our Lenten message to be kind in a world where everyone is very busy and often self-absorbed."

The Catholic academy also joined the World Book Day

Share a Story initiative.

Throughout the day, lessons began with an extract of Roald Dahl's *Lamb to the Slaughter*. By the end of the day the school had shared 1,400 stories and everyone in the school had listened to the entire story.



□ Marc addresses a Youth Leadership Day group in Westminster.

## Leadership in today's society

by Marc Besford  
YCW national president

**THE Young Christian Workers movement exists to support young people and to be led by young people.**

We believe that there is a terrible contradiction between what we believe to be the value and potential of young people and what many young people experience in society which often exploits or disregards their dignity, purpose and value.

The YCW is organised by young people, for young people and amongst young people, meaning the whole organisation – rang-

ing from governance to grassroots – is done by young people.

The organisation fosters a belief that young people are the best to serve, educate and represent other young people by calling them into groups, forming and training them as leaders of their own reality.

YCW founder Cardinal Joseph Cardijn said: "Each young worker is worth more than all the gold in the world because they are sons and daughters of God."

What he means by this is that each young person is precious because they belong to God.

He also said: "Give me leaders and I will raise the world."



A personal view by GERRY LOUGHRAN

# Trying to see things in proportion while under house arrest by coronavirus

**MOST foreign correspondents, at some point in their careers, experience a period of involuntary inactivity when they are unable to report events, write stories or file their dispatches. This is because they are being detained by men with guns.**

As I write this nobody is pointing a firearm at me, but looking wistfully at people outside jogging, heading for the shops or exercising their dogs, I feel a distinct connection with unhappy, long-ago experiences in Jordan and Yemen.

I am again under arrest, but my captor this time is coronavirus or rather the threat of it.

I am bored, uneasy, distracted, missing my daily Nonagram and crossword, sleeping badly, embarrassed because friends and family are offering to shop for me and desperate to stretch my legs and breathe fresh air.

Listlessly leafing through an old missionary magazine, I come across an article that begins: "Several years ago an elderly woman was found dead in her apartment. Stuck on the screen of her television was a note: 'Goodbye, my friend! You are the only one who talked to me.' It was her final act before she committed suicide."

That old lady died of loneliness, a sad and painful condition which I suspect is endured by many more people than we ever imagine. Folks just up the street and round the corner.

A friend of mine, a self-employed cleaner, told me how she worked one day a week for an elderly man living alone. Last week he asked if she could come every day, offering to match whatever earnings she would lose. She would not have to work, he said, just have a coffee. They could sit two metres apart and chat.

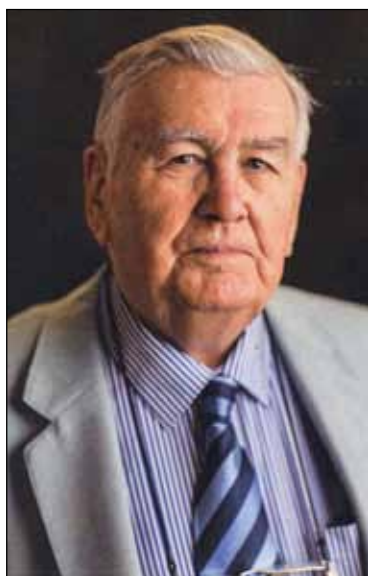
My friend explained this was really not possible as she had family, responsibilities. When she left, there were tears in the old man's eyes.

So why am I whingeing when I receive streams of emails, frequent phone calls, friendly inquiries from neighbours? When there are millions in the same predicament as myself (and odds-on not half so grumpy)? When I know that eventually this interregnum will come to an end?

Real imprisonment is a different matter, a solitariness with no end in sight, combined with contempt from captors, abuse or plain torture.

Priests in the Soviet Gulag knew all about that, often suffering the horrors of Moscow's Lubyanka prison ("Never raise your eyes," they were told) then transferred to work camps in Siberia for terms of ten, 15, 20-plus years.

We had our own jailed heroes when the Church was persecuted under Henry and Elizabeth, many suffering dreadful deaths after time behind bars... Fisher and More, two Margarets - Clitherow and Ward, Edmund Cam-



□ Gerry Loughran.

pion, John Gerard, northerners, southerners, Welshmen. Heroes by the score.

Closer to our own time, how many years were suffered in total by those imprisoned during World War II? They included Father Titus Brandsma, the Dutch Carmelite in Dachau I mentioned last month, and in another Nazi

camp, Ravensbruck, sisters Corrie and Betsy ten Boome, committed Christians both, and, like Brandsma, from Holland. Corrie survived but Betsy did not. Before she died, Betsy told her sister: "There is no pit so deep that God is not deeper still."

How comforting those words must have sounded to Corrie. How Father X would have loved to hear them.

I read his story recently. I have forgotten his name but he was arrested by terrorists in Africa and held against his will before eventually being released. A sympathetic reporter asked if he had felt comforted by his faith. The priest replied that he had not felt the presence of God during his ordeal.

How awful that must have been. Saint Mother Teresa confessed to feeling no presence of God during the last half of her life, just "silence and emptiness." Who knows why a loyal priest and a saintly nun should suffer this way.

But that surely is imprisonment of a kind that makes our present tribulations appear of very little consequence.

A THOUGHT FOR LENT. Christ's Passion in religious drama is nearly always narrated from the point of view of his blessed mother, Peter, John, Joseph of Arimathea or Mary Magdalene.

However, the Czech composer, Jan Dismas Zelenka (1670-1745), wrote

an oratorio, *Gesu al Calvaria*, from the perspective of Jesus himself. It represents Christ's final desire to believe in humanity. He can die with joy if men can shed a single tear of repentance for their sins:

If every penitent heart would render me but one repentant tear, how contented would I die!

If every loving soul in man contrite would render me one sign of love, then all the heavy grief that grips my heart would melt away.

A LITTLE BOY goes up to get a blessing and as the priest raises his hand to bless him, the boy gives him a high-five.

Another little boy goes up for a blessing. He is wearing devil's horns. Oh dear! Fire, smoke, brimstone, screams from outraged demons? Not so. The priest smiles and imparts a blessing and the child of God races back to his mum.

● Newcastle-born Gerry is a retired foreign correspondent. You can contact him at [Gerryo69@hotmail.com](mailto:Gerryo69@hotmail.com)

*The views in this article do not necessarily reflect those of Northern Cross or of the diocese of Hexham & Newcastle.*

## Beyond Hexham and Newcastle... the news in brief

**LIKE national governments worldwide, the Catholic Church has instituted serious measures to counter coronavirus.**

Churches have been closed in many countries and Masses suspended. Baptisms and weddings are widely banned, but funerals have been allowed by some hierarchies for congregations of fewer than 100.

Holy Week liturgical celebrations at the Vatican will take place without the presence of the public, usually numbered in tens of thousands. The ceremonies will be live streamed and carried on radio and television.

Spain's bishops, too, cancelled traditional Holy Week processions.

The Catholic and Orthodox Churches in Greece instructed worshippers not to kiss doorway icons and the Church in Slovakia said the sacrament of reconciliation should be administered only if transparent film is fixed across the confessional grille.

Many pilgrimages to Lourdes have been cancelled and all public masses at the shrine called off.

In Italy, several priests have died from the virus and a third

of France's bishops are in isolation.

The auxiliary Bishop of Chur in Switzerland, Marian Eleganti, said in a video that the virus was "God's punishment" for a faithless world.

He was criticised sharply by his Swiss colleagues.

**SEPARATE surveys on attitudes towards Pope Francis and President Donald Trump have shown that most British Catholics love the pope while American Catholics are divided about Trump.**

A sounding of 2,000 Catholics - part of the project called Roman Catholics in Britain - demonstrated that the Pope was popular with both practising and non-practising Catholics, particularly young people.

More than three-quarters of young, Mass-going Catholics gave the pope a "good" or "excellent" rating on ten issues ranging from upholding Church teaching to addressing the needs of the poor.

The Trump poll showed that 60 per cent-plus of white American Catholics considered their president intelligent and agreed with him on many issues, while fewer than 30

per cent of Latino Catholics believed Trump was "honest" or "morally upstanding."

**THE bell at Shrewsbury Cathedral has been restored and named John Henry in tribute to John Henry Newman, England's newest saint.**

Bishop Mark Davies of Shrewsbury explained that he was prompted to name the bell after Newman because it was installed in the 1850s, the decade when the Church's outstanding convert from Anglicanism preached his famous sermon on "the second spring, the rebirth of English Catholicism."

**THE Archdiocese of Krakow, Poland, has opened the cause for the beatification of the parents of Pope St John Paul II, Karol and Emilia Wojtyla.**

Having received Vatican approval, Archbishop Marek Jędraszewski signed an edict approving the cause on March 2.

This followed endorsement of the proposal by the Polish bishops' conference in October 2019.

**WHEN it comes to abuse in**

**religious settings, "self-regulation does not work," argued lawyer Richard Scorer before the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in UK.**

Mr Scorer said that the Catholic and Anglican Churches had been forced to admit there was a problem. The Methodist Church had been asked to take part in the inquiry, along with Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists, representatives of Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism. The inquiry's latest hearing was postponed after one day because of coronavirus.

**AN ANONYMOUS survey of 1,500 Catholics in the Diocese of Killala, Ireland, showed that 85 per cent support the idea of married priests.**

Asked if men who left the priesthood to marry should be allowed to return to active ministry, 81 per cent said yes.

Support for women deacons registered at 80 per cent, while 69 per cent backed women priests.

The consultation was part of a three-year 'listening process' designed to prepare Killala, in the west of Ireland, for a fu-

ture without priests.

**A CENTURIES-OLD human skeleton has been found hidden inside the wall of a church in Folkestone, Kent.**

Carbon-dating of teeth and bone samples suggested the person lived and died in the seventh century.

Researchers and historians judged it highly probable that the remains are those of Saint Eanswythe, a Kentish princess who became a nun in her teens.

**ERNESTO Cardenal, a Nicaraguan priest, poet and revolutionary politician, died on March 1 in Managua, aged 95.**

Cardenal became world famous in 1983 when television pictures showed Pope John Paul II wagging his finger at the kneeling priest and telling him to quit his post as a minister in the rebel Sandinista government.

The pope, then on an official visit to Nicaragua, suspended Cardenal from the priesthood, but he was recently reinstated by Pope Francis.

Controversial to the end, Cardenal's Requiem Mass was barred by Sandinista

activists shouting "Traitor" in reference to the priest's later rejection of the Sandinista leadership.

**TWO potential looters were caught in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris hours after the coronavirus lockdown in France began.**

Police said the pair was found drunk and hiding under tarpaulins with a small stock of stones which could be sold on the black market.

The cathedral is undergoing restoration after a disastrous fire last April.

**TWO nurses denied jobs as midwives in Sweden because of their refusal to perform abortions have been refused a legal appeal to the European Court of Human Rights.**

Elinor Grimmark from Sweden and Linda Steen, a Norwegian, argued that the denial of employment because of their anti-abortion stance was an illegal breach of their human rights.

The European Court refused to take up the nurses' case and found instead that the Swedish authorities had acted lawfully.



# New hymn offers comfort to all in these dark days



□ From left, Matt Papa, Jordan Kauflin, Keith Getty, Matt Boswell and Matt Merker.

**RENOWNED** hymn writers Keith and Kristyn Getty have collaborated with musicians Matt Boswell, Jordan Kauflin, Matt Merker and Matt Papa to compose a new work – Christ our hope in life and death.

The hymn reminds Christians throughout the world of the hope that can be found in Christ's death and resurrection. Keith and Kristyn are encouraging people to sing it at home to promote a feeling of belonging during these difficult times.

Keith – who is best known for writing the hymn In Christ Alone with Stuart Townend – said: "The reality of Jesus'

resurrection from the dead is central to Christian faith. By his resurrection Christ conquered sin and death and now offers forgiveness and eternal life to all who turn from sin and trust in Him.

"Therefore, we want to equip churches to sing about the resurrection.

"The resurrection transforms the way we live every day and provides unshakable hope in Jesus."

● Northern Cross reproduces the lyrics below with kind permission of Keith Getty, Matt Boswell, Jordan Kauflin, Matt Merker and Matt Papa.

## Christ our hope in life and death

What is our hope in life and death?  
Christ alone, Christ alone.  
What is our only confidence?  
That our souls to him belong.  
Who holds our days within his hand?  
What comes, apart from his command?  
And what will keep us to the end?  
The love of Christ, in which we stand.

O sing hallelujah!  
Our hope springs eternal;  
O sing hallelujah!  
Now and ever we confess  
Christ our hope in life and death.

What truth can calm the troubled soul?  
God is good, God is good.  
Where is his grace and goodness known?  
In our great Redeemer's blood.  
Who holds our faith when fears arise?  
Who stands above the stormy trial?  
Who sends the waves that bring us nigh  
Unto the shore, the rock of Christ?

Unto the grave, what shall we sing?  
"Christ, he lives; Christ, he lives!"



And what reward will heaven bring?  
Everlasting life with him.  
There we will rise to meet the Lord,  
Then sin and death will be destroyed,  
And we will feast in endless joy,  
When Christ is ours forevermore.

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□ Fr Dominic Robinson and Fr Dushan Croos with some of the young adult activists who had planned to go to the climate conference in Assisi.

## Jesuits divest from fossil fuels

**THE Jesuits in Britain have announced they are divesting from companies which extract fossil fuels.**

The announcement is linked to their £400 million worth of investment which is used to finance good works and projects in the UK and worldwide and makes them the country's largest Catholic religious order to join the global divestment movement.

Fr Damian Howard SJ, the provincial superior of the British Jesuits, said: "Climate change is the most pressing challenge the world faces as climate disasters wreak more and more destruction, hitting poorer countries the hardest – despite them having done the least to cause them.

"The decision to divest is principally a response to the clear moral imperative of acting to safeguard our planet for future generations at a time when scientific evidence is mounting that we are facing a grave climate emergency.

"What happens to the climate and the environment will have implications for us all. That's why we need to act together to protect the conditions for human life. I am glad that the Jesuits can contribute to that joint effort.

"All our institutions need to respond to this ecological crisis and take bold action to reduce energy use and switch to renewable sources.

"Large-scale investors should be doing everything possible to help avert the severe consequences that could result if adequate measures are not taken."

The decision aligns the Jesuits in Britain with a global movement of divesting institutions with a combined value of more than \$14 trillion in assets under management, up from a starting point of \$50 billion just five years ago.

Efa Ravelonantoandro, programmes officer of the Centre Sociale Arrupe in Madagascar which is supported by Jesuit Missions, said: "Southern Madagascar is now too hot so we're seeing more internal migration and with it a rise in crime and a lack of jobs. More frequent and severe flooding across the country has increased diseases among the population.

"The Centre Arrupe is directly affected because the medical clinic has been flooded. We do have lots of rivers in Madagascar, but we are not generating enough renewable energy. We need more investment in cleaner, renewable

energy and a shift away from fossil fuel sources."

Jesuit Missions is calling on the UK government to take urgent action to reduce emissions and to encourage other nations to follow its lead, especially in the lead up to the crucial UN climate talks (COP26) scheduled to take place in Glasgow in November.

James Buchanan, divestment campaigner at Christian climate change charity Operation Noah, said: "This significant decision taken by the Jesuits in Britain to divest from fossil fuel companies is the latest in a growing trend of religious institutions leading the way in shifting investments out of fossil fuels and investing in the clean technologies of the future. Of the total of more than 1,100 organisations contributing to the global divestment movement, 352 are faith-based institutions."

Operation Noah is working with the World Council of Churches, the Global Catholic Climate Movement and others to invite Churches, religious orders and faith organisations around the world to participate in a major global divestment announcement due last month, but postponed to November due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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If you do, please email your story to editor.norcross@btconnect.com, including a good-quality picture, if you have one. Please include a contact number so we can call you if necessary.



**THANKS TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS. PLEASE CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING - WE NEED YOU**



# Linda's dedication is rewarded with an MBE

by Mary Palmer

**LINDA Longstaff is well known – and loved – across Sunderland and the Monkwearmouth partnership thanks to her work as a hospital chaplain for South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust and with various other community projects.**

Linda has also worked in churches and schools across the city, teaching sign language with music and dance as part of the group she founded – Signed with Love.

I had the absolute pleasure of meeting Linda and her husband Dick who joined me for a coffee and a chat about her MBE for outstanding community service.

Linda said: "Receiving an MBE from Princess Anne at Buckingham Palace is something I never have even dreamed of."

"Since I've returned to work I've been amazed by how happy everyone is for me. As I left the hospital the other day a man up a ladder shouted congratulations down to me!"

"It's really been wonderful to share the experience with colleagues, patients, friends and family who are so excited to hear about it."

"I'd like to thank everyone at Sunderland Royal Hospital and all the staff who've supported all of the chaplaincy work and therapies we offer, as well as

everyone in all the parishes across Sunderland."

"It was a surreal experience – wonderful, but humbling."

"We arrived at Buckingham Palace and, after passing through all the security including guards, soldiers and beefeaters, found ourselves on this great big red carpet."

"The red carpet ran up these fabulous stairs with shining brass – the biggest stairs you've ever seen in your life. It was here that my family was beckoned one way and I was taken another by myself."

Before the ceremony Linda and the 65 other award recipients had plenty of time to chat to one another. Linda met others being awarded for their services to midwifery, nursing, medical research and music.

They also received instruction on greeting a member of the royal family. Linda explained: "They told us not to worry, as we would be meeting Princess Anne – and she always does her homework! Although they'd said this, I was so impressed with how much Princess Anne knew."

"She said: 'Tell me, Linda, about your work with people with Alzheimer's and how your work with sign language fits into this.' I was amazed she would remember these things about me, and every single recipient."

Linda also runs group therapy sessions, including for those with dementia

and Alzheimer's.

Linda learnt makaton and sign language as a way to communicate with her daughter, Charlotte, who was also well-loved in Sunderland.

Charlotte had severe learning disabilities after contracting meningitis as a baby, but lived a full and happy life, longer than doctors predicted largely due to the love and support of her family.

Linda and Dick shared fond memories of the joy and love of life that Charlotte had – and shared with the whole family.

Linda added: "It was Charlotte that taught me how to love."

The couple have two other daughters, who accompanied them to the palace.

Dick said: "From where we sat, we could see that Princess Anne's face was so animated and interested when she was talking to Linda. We couldn't wait to find out what they were talking about! We have received some official photographs from outside the palace, and look forward to the others of Linda and Princess Anne."

"Linda's award has given joy to everyone who knows her, but also friends of friends of friends, too! Everyone is so excited and so proud. Everyone else can see how deserving Linda is, but for her it's totally puzzling as to why she would be nominated for doing something she's always just done."

Congratulations Linda – and many prayers for your continued ministry!



□ Linda and her husband Dick proudly hold her MBE.

DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**  
VICARIATE FOR FAITH & MISSION

## Celebration of Marriage

### Love in the Family

St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle  
Saturday 16 May 2020  
11.00am

*Everyone is welcome*



Principal Celebrant: Bishop Robert Byrne CO

This event may be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.  
Please check [rcdhn.org.uk](http://rcdhn.org.uk) for updates

## Celebrating marriage and love in the family

by Deacon Rob Wareing

OUR diocese had planned to hold a special Mass celebrated by Bishop Robert in St Mary's Cathedral on Saturday, May 16, to give thanks for marriage and family life.

Its theme was to be Love in the family – a reference to Pope Francis' Exhortation, Amoris Lætitia, The Joy of Love.

We were particularly keen to hear from married couples celebrating an anniversary in 2020 – from one year to 70 years and beyond. We had asked that they, or their families, email me at [rob.wareing@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:rob.wareing@diocesehn.org.uk) or phone or text me on 0784 1530991, so that a certificate of appreciation of their married life could be made available at the entrance of the cathedral before Mass.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, it is likely that this Mass will be cancelled, sadly.

But if you would have liked to attend, I would encourage you to contact me in one of the ways listed above.



□ Deacon Rob Wareing.

Our diocese, in collaboration with Marriage Care, is also very keen to recruit more married couples – either newly married or those who have been married for some years – to become volunteer facilitators to provide our vital, interesting and interactive marriage preparation days.

If you would be interested in doing this, please get in touch with me for more information – and to find out what would be involved.

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Future Focus – the North Tyneside SEND Careers Fair – which was to have been held on Wednesday, April 29, has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



# Hugging a saint, firm faith and friendship: the diary of a first-time Camino pilgrim

by Douglas Lamb

**THE Camino de Santiago looked to be a great adventure and a challenge for celebrities on a recent TV series. It certainly was for me this Lent.**

My journey began at an information evening at St Cuthbert's Church, North Shields, which was led by Kevin and Heather of Explore4All.

I signed up on the spot, hoping to return home at peace, having completed a physically challenging and spiritually uplifting experience – and perhaps stronger and less uncertain about the future.

My training walks began in December and lasted for 12 weeks, often for three to four hours walking in heavy rain, hail showers and strong winds.

I had never done this type of activity before.

I am a reasonably fit and healthy 67-year-old man with no major health issues, but I found the Camino's uphill walks challenging. I didn't expect them to be easy and they certainly weren't!

Our group of 14 pilgrims left Newcastle for Spain on March 1. We were very fortunate that Fr Michael Hickey came along with us to provide daily prayer, evening Mass and spiritual guidance – as well as good companionship and friendship.

After three flights and a coach trip from Coruna, we arrived at our hotel in Ferrol.

The next day we were given a warm welcome by the local mayor at the quayside near the Camino stone starting point.

Fortunately Kevin, a very good Spanish speaker, translated for us, as did our Spanish guide, Cristina, who regularly met with us along the way.

The first of many group photos was taken by local officials.

We also met Cristobal, a journalist friend of Kevin's, who wrote regular updates about our progress for his

newspaper column.

Our journey was significant to us and the welcoming Spanish dignitaries. We were aware that we – as an organised group – were the first English pilgrims to walk the Camino from Durham (Finchale Priory) since the time of Henry VIII.

We walked the 131km – or 81.4 miles – from Ferrol to Santiago de Compostela over six days, averaging almost 22km daily through rain, some hail and warm and sunny spells.

I enjoyed the tasty, hearty fresh food along the way – bread, cheese, tomatoes, two types of tortilla, prawns and mackerel. One of our pilgrims ate octopus and razor clams.

Some of the soups and meals served in the hotels and the local cafés were delicious – as were the pastries and cakes.

The Spanish people we met on the route were welcoming, responding to our "Hola!" with "Buen Camino" or a smile and a wave.

We followed hand-painted yellow arrows and saw a variety of Horreos – small windowless barns that store corn, raised off the floor to protect the cobs from damp and mice.

As an artist I enjoyed seeing the ancient, traditional and contemporary artworks on the journey.

I use geometric forms and primary colours in my own art practice and was struck by the use of similar designs and colours – such as the striking modern shell design of the blue and yellow Camino tile on stone roadside markers, walls, telephone posts and paths.

Cristobal met us on the medieval trail and gave a knowledgeable and passionate talk on the importance of the pathways to Spanish history, tradition and culture.

It was inspiring to know we followed in the footsteps of medieval and modern pilgrims, trudging on each pathway with forests and fields on both sides.



Fr Michael Hickey and the pilgrims.

I reflected on what life must have been like for medieval pilgrims facing hardships and dangers including food and water shortages as well as danger from thieves and bandits.

Modern pilgrims face fewer trials. I experienced physical problems including lower back pain, blisters, soreness from a corn, and a swollen ankle.

I had a real sense of relief and achievement when we reached Santiago on Saturday, March 7.

My back and left foot hurt, but my spirits were high.

The cathedral is a magnificent Romanesque structure which is undergoing major refurbishment and was

covered in scaffolding and sheets.

We entered through a side door and I glimpsed one of the awesome twisted golden columns of the nave, then lined up behind pilgrims to follow the custom of 'hugging' a saint.

I walked up stone steps to a small opening then went into a room that sits behind the head and shoulders of the giant figure of St James.

I paused for a short time, said a prayer and 'hugged' the saint.

The cathedral has a holy door which pilgrims can only enter during a holy year, like 2021, when the Feast of St James – July 25 – falls on a Sunday.

I can imagine how spectacular next

year will be!

The giant swinging incense holder will be a sight to behold.

We shared prayer, Mass, fellowship, friendship and laughter and I felt accepted.

I made a lot of new friends, returning home joyful and peaceful with my trust and faith in God much stronger.

I will also treasure the mementos of the walk to Santiago de Compostela – a stamped Cathedral de Santiago passport and official certificate. The certificate is in Latin and refers to me as Douglasium Lamb.

● Douglas Lamb is a parishioner at St Teresa's, Heaton, Newcastle.



## Here's looking at you, Fr Richard

ALAN Nixon, a parishioner of St John the Baptist, Annitsford, used his artistic talent recently to paint parish priest Fr Richard Harriott, writes Monica Mills.

For Alan – who served in the RAF police for 22 years – painting is a

hobby, often done in the evening.

He and his wife, Kath, have two sons. Their much-loved disabled daughter died last year.

The couple also care for their disabled foster children and run a charity for disabled children.

## Another new home for church's cruxifix

THIS beautiful crucifix stood inside the church of St John the Baptist, Annitsford, from the 1900s to the 1980s, when it was repositioned in the porch by Fr Austin Tomaney, writes Monica Mills.

Thanks to Fr Richard Harriott, it has now been resited once again – this time to the cemetery where it is on view to all entering the church and acts as a wonderful sign of witness to passing motorists and those on buses.

The crucifix was made and donated by parishioner Joseph Simmons, whose wife, Abigail, taught in the village school.

There were four Simmons children – Jack, who was head teacher at Our Lady and St Edmund school, Backworth; Thomas, who was killed in a World War Two bomber raid; Bill, who served on the altar for many years and Molly, who sang in the choir.

Thanks to lifelong parishioner Austin Todd, 86, for providing the parish history.







Thousands of Catholics joined protests organised by the Make Poverty History movement in its 2005 launch year.

# The Spirit of Jubilee – what can we do?

Last month's article on God's 'year of favour' – the jubilee – described the release of slaves and rest for the land. Here Cathy Marshall considers the cancellation of debts and restoration of land, houses and property

**THE jubilee laws prefigure many of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, including human dignity, care for the environment, universal destination of created goods and the option for the poor. They make it very clear that when God designs a society, it doesn't look anything like ours!**

## Recall of debts

Every seventh year – and in the jubilee year – all debts were to be remitted (Deut. 15:1-6, 7-11). The reason given was so that "there will be no poor among you" (Deut. 15:4).

In biblical times, debt bondage was common because when people fell into poverty, the only way of getting back on their feet was often to sell themselves into slavery.

This was to last seven years (Ex. 21:2-6).

The poor could also become hired or bound labourers, to be freed in the jubilee year (Lev. 25:39).

But God makes it very plain that he does not will either slavery or other forms of bondage because of debt.

God also tells his people that they should not view the needy and those in debt with hostility (Deut. 15:9). He repeatedly reminds us that we should give to those in need out of the bounty that he has given to us: "I therefore command you, open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour in your land" (Deut. 15:11).

## Restoration of land, houses and property

The jubilee regulations also limited the sale of land and ensured its continuing fair distribution among all the families of Israel (Lev. 25:13, 25-38).

Land was not to be owned in perpetuity.

God reminded his people that in his eyes, all of us are aliens and tenants (Lev. 25:23); the Lord is the true landowner.

The jubilee laws also provided that every 50 years land and houses that had been lost by their original owners through poverty or debt were to be restored to them or their descendants.

These laws ensured that succeeding generations did not suffer forever from the misfortunes of their parents or grandparents. They were also designed to minimise the impact of debt bondage.

## The spirit of the jubilee

Why should the jubilee and its laws matter to us today?

Contrasting its rules with today's lifestyles is quite sobering, but there are an immense number of things we can do to live by its spirit.

At the beginning of his public life (Luke 4:18-21), Jesus told the people in his local synagogue that Isaiah's words (61:1-2) about the "year of the Lord's favour" were being fulfilled in their presence.

What Jesus meant is that from then on, every day was to be considered in jubilee terms.

Followers of Jesus are called on to "bring good news to the poor,...proclaim release of captives,...recovery of sight to the blind, and...let the oppressed go free" – to combat evil and work for the common good in every way they can.

Or: "Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation" as St Paul says in 2 Corinthians 6:2.

Fr Chris Hughes notes that when the four major themes of the jubilee are taken as a whole, their meaning becomes obvious. They were intended to challenge unjust social structures and periodically level the playing field.

Today, sadly, we lack any formal mechanisms to tackle huge inequalities among citizens or nations.

## The great debt disaster

The global debt crisis reminds us we need to achieve a more level playing field as whole countries are caught up in a vicious cycle of unpayable debt.

Tragically, the amounts that poorer countries must put aside for debt repayment exceeds what is allocated for education, housing and social services. They never escape poverty.

As Michael Northcott states in his book *Life After Debt*: "The human and environmental costs of the great debt disaster have been incalculable...The United Nations Children's Fund estimates that in one year half a million children died because of the burden of debt interest and repayment...tens of millions died from preventable diseases, malnutrition or drinking contaminated water."

The theories of the British economist John Maynard Keynes are at the heart of this unacceptable situation.

Keynes argued that public debt was good for the economy and society.



Children in the Muthari Valley, Nairobi hungry await lunch – the money poorer countries put aside for debt repayment exceeds what is allocated for social services and disaster relief. Photo: Ray Buchanan

Northcott calls this theory deeply flawed.

Today many countries have crippling debts which were incurred through colonial exploitation, selfish acts by dictators, embezzlement of loan money intended for development, or actions carried out by private companies without the knowledge or consent of the people.

In 1923 the concept of 'odious debt' was first broached.

This legal theory holds that national debts incurred by despotic governments should not be accepted as valid. Instead, the indebtedness should be considered a personal one by the despot in question – a position analogous to contracts signed under coercion.

Unfortunately, despite a long history and widespread support, this concept is not recognised in international law.

Most developed nations have mechanisms whereby individuals can have debts cancelled by declaring bankruptcy. However, a similar lifeline has not been extended to the poorest nations.

This is particularly troubling because many European countries, including the United Kingdom, were only able to recover and reconstruct their societies after World War II because hundreds of millions of pounds of unpayable debt were cancelled by North American bankers.

We now have obscene situations such as billionaire Donald Trump's claiming bankruptcy six times on some of his business ventures and having those

debts written off, while the poorest of the poor are held accountable for every penny.

To make matters worse, as Carlos H. Abesamis points out in *A Primer of the Biblical Jubilee*, the interest rates on borrowed funds are so high that the amounts poorer nations have repaid add up to many times more than the original capital – with no end of their debt in sight.

In richer nations many people are living close to poverty and depend on payday loan companies like Wonga, which charge exceedingly high rates of interest.

Wonga has gone into administration, but numerous other similar companies still exist.

## Jubilee 2000 and beyond

The Catholic Church also celebrates a jubilee every 25 years, although this often has a spiritual focus.

The Church's Great Jubilee of 2000 was the main inspiration for an international coalition of more than 40 countries.

The aim of this movement was the cancellation of all third world debt. It did not meet its goal, but did have an impact on poverty and economic policy.

Sustained support from Christians and others led to the cancellation of more than \$100 billion of debt in 35 of the world's poorest countries.

Its success was helped by the actions of numerous well-known musicians and entertainers including U2, Quincy Jones and Bob Geldorf, who gave concerts

and publicised the movement worldwide.

Some offshoots are still in existence around the world.

These include The Jubilee Debt Campaign – [jubileedebt.org.uk](http://jubileedebt.org.uk), Make Poverty History and Christians Against Poverty, all of which are concerned with the cancellation of debt.

The latter offers debt counselling through local churches – find out more at [capuk.org](http://capuk.org).

It is not too early to start planning a similar movement for the next ordinary Church jubilee in 2025.

Christians and others can get in touch with the organisations listed right now to help with grassroots planning.

Other examples of what we can do to live the spirit of the jubilee, in an attempt to achieve a more level playing field, include the following:

- Campaign for justice and equality;
- Raise awareness of social problems;
- Develop increased vigilance;
- Support existing programmes;
- Be willing to act when we see something that needs righting;
- Encourage our governments to support the option for the poor.

An interesting question arises: Would we view our own debts differently if, in praying the Our Father, we used the version in Matthew 6:9: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors?"

● For more information on Catholic Social Teaching, please contact Louise Harrison at [maryalichelouise@outlook.com](mailto:maryalichelouise@outlook.com).



# Kumi's great work continues

Northern Cross readers have generously supported the Kumi Community Foundation, Uganda, set up by medic Elspeth Robinson, from Darlington. In late March, Elspeth returned from Africa and here reports on her work as well as offers thanks for your messages of goodwill and donations

**LAST year I met Fr Martin Wambeo, a Ugandan priest whose parish was in Kyere, a couple of hours drive from Kumi in eastern Uganda.**

He was standing in for Fr Tony Cornforth at St Mary's RC Church in Newton Aycliffe and he almost fell backwards when I greeted him with "Yoga Noi" which is "Greetings" in the Ateso language.

We have since formed a strong link and, although he has been moved to a new parish in Amuria, which is quite far north, we have man-

aged to hold outreach clinics for his people on two occasions.

Last year, we managed to screen about 300 people for disability, eye and dental problems in one day.

This year, on February 20, we returned to help those with eye problems and disabilities.

On arrival we sat down for breakfast in Fr Martin's new house then started the clinics in his church.

Everyone who queued up – from mothers with their children to the elderly with their aging bodies – was assessed.

An eight-year-old boy called Shadrak, who was born with osteogenesis imperfecta – brittle bones – had been given a wheelchair from the Wheels for the World team.

He looked glum but, on seeing a balloon, he soon interacted with other children, and before too long was pushing his wheelchair with his arms.

Wheels for the World had distributed more than 140 wheelchairs in Kumi Hospital two weeks earlier.

In total we saw 247 people and all were helped in some way.

People were carried in having travelled for many hours on the back of trucks.

Many arrived by motorcycle taxi while mothers without transport carried their children on their backs.

By the end of the day we witnessed very many with smiling faces wheeling themselves out while others walked out with their newly-acquired crutches or sticks.

Mothers no longer had to carry their children and we watched some return home with the wheelchair strapped to the back of the motorbike and mother and child sitting between the chair and the driver.

Christine, a girl with spina bifida, and a 20-year-old young man called Wilson who had fallen from a mango tree and was paralysed from the waist down, were admitted to the ward with severe pressure sores. Their hospital bills would be settled by the Wheels for the World team and the Kumi Community Foundation.

Once the team had left the Kumi team continued with our fieldwork, during which time we were joined by Dutch and German medical students who are based in Kumi Hospital for their internship.

Babies with malnutrition needed hospital admission for treatment, amputees would be given

artificial legs, paraplegics would benefit from a tricycle and brain damaged children could attend rehabilitation in Kumi Hospital with special seating made in the orthopaedic workshop.

Parents living in extreme poverty could rest assured that their children in need of orthopaedic surgery would not have hospital bills to settle. The KCF would cover the costs for all these families who show great gratitude for our support.

We visited schools where we have children receiving education, including three blind children – Betty, Grace and Lazarus; Agnes who suffers from arthrogryposis and also received a wheelchair; Faith, who was born with brittle bones and fractured her arms and legs during birth, and Moses, who has a syndrome which has stunted his growth and who is incontinent, an issue which he manages by using a surgical glove instead of a catheter.

Fundraising continues. We hope to raise enough funds to reduce the waiting lists for amputees and post-polio paraplegics, to fund orthopaedic and plastic surgeries for children and generally to help others to help themselves.

COVID-19 has reached Uganda, a fact which has caused the hospital extreme concern – as it has to all others, I'm sure – due to the complete lack of facilities to control infection.

I have asked our team to buy soap to be distributed to the patients but this may not be possible because all markets have been closed, as have the schools.

The hospital has requested infrared thermometers, but they are not available in Uganda and DHL is not delivering due to an absence of flights.

Please pray for them, and for all those throughout the world who have no appropriate medical facilities such as our NHS, which gives us such a wonderful service.

● For more information please visit: Facebook @kumicommunityfoundationuganda; throughtheroof.org/international-mission/wheels-for-the-world or kumicommunityfoundation.co.uk.

If you would like to make a donation to our fundraising efforts please contact me at kumicomfound@yahoo.co.uk, or call the Northern Cross office and leave a contact number. We are registered with the Charity Commission and can claim 25 per cent Gift Aid from tax-paying donors.



□ A good-humoured plea from Ugandan priest Fr Martin, above. Young patient Shadrak in his new wheelchair, right.



□ A mother carries her child to the clinic, above, while many – like the boy, left – travelled miles to receive help and waited patiently until they were seen.

## Youth Village welcomes School of Evangelisation retreat



□ Silbi Kuriakose talks to one of the groups.

by Alison Rebello

**FAITH took centre stage as 83 youngsters aged between nine and 16 took part in the four-day School of Evangelisation retreat held at Emmaus Youth Village, Consett, during February half-term.**

The retreat – which was organised by Anointing Fire Catholic Ministries, Newcastle – welcomed children from our diocese as well as those from Birmingham, Hull, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Darlington, Northallerton, East Yorkshire and Chesterfield.

A number of participants said they felt the presence of the Holy Spirit during the retreat and gave testimony to this.

During the retreat participants focussed on prayer life, purity, the importance of sacraments, how to follow Christ, the sacrament of reconciliation and social media management.

All retreatants were given guidance on how to make detailed confession and prepare them-

selves for how to overcome sinfulness and lead holier lives.

Daily adoration also formed part of the experience, which helped many children to get closer to God.

Priests from our diocese celebrated Masses for the children and the organisers.

Celebrating the opening day Holy Mass Fr Saji Thottathil asked the children to be a beacon of light as the visible sign of Christ in our communities.

Fr Chris Hughes celebrated the Mass on the second day, encouraging retreatants to follow Christ and praising the organisers for this initiative.

On the penultimate day, Fr Alexander Ligori celebrated the Holy Mass, during which he shared stories of hope and steadfast love in Christ, while Fr Michael Hickey's Sunday Mass asked the children to remain grounded in Jesus.

Fr John Ulaganathan, Fr Ligori and Fr Hughes made themselves available to listen to confession and were moved by the prepared-

ness of the children.

During the four days a team of 13 young speakers shared stories of how God can work if we welcome him into our hearts.

The teenage group was led by Amy Sales and the younger group was led by Silbi Kuriakose.

Ethan Binu from English Martyrs Church, Newcastle, was deeply touched by the Holy Spirit and shared that joy in a testimony during Fr Shaun O'Neill's farewell Mass the day after the retreat.

A special adoration for the intentions of the retreat was organised by AFCM Newcastle. Parents of retreatants took turns to pray before the blessed sacrament at the chapel in the Youth Village for 12 hours each on the first three days and two hours on the final day. They also attended a one-hour retreat on how to help the children continue daily prayer together at home.

As a follow up, the children have been divided into three Skype prayer groups and will pray together on Sundays.





ABOVE: The team of volunteers from the chaplaincy and across the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle pictured in St Mary's church. BELOW: Fr Marc Lyden-Smith and Mary Palmer from Sunderland University Chaplaincy. BOTTOM: Rebecca Leighton and Michael Thompson led music throughout the time of Adoration. Photos: Frank Sverha.



## MatchFever in March helped football fans and many others experience a moment of peace and prayer

A HOME game for Sunderland AFC means many supporters walk directly past St Mary's from the city centre to the Stadium of Light. How many of these people have walked past at every home game, but never stepped foot in the church?

MatchFever was a great opportunity for us to share our faith, in a simple but active way by inviting them to do so.

Just like NightFever, ReachOut or other similar events, the idea behind MatchFever was simple.

Although the church is always open and welcomes anyone, at MatchFever we made an extra effort to reach out and invite passersby into church to light a candle for their own intentions

before the Blessed Sacrament, and stay for a moment of peace if they wished.

A team of around 20 volunteers was made up of Sunderland University students, members of the Youth Ministry Team and helpers from all over our diocese, including Whitley Bay in the north and Hartlepool in the south.

Volunteers gathered for Mass with St Mary's parish before sharing lunch and a team briefing.

Between 12pm and 3pm, when the Sunderland match started, pairs of volunteers waited outside the church and in the city centre, offering people a tea light, prayer card and a warm welcome to light the candle in church for their own intention.

Some people were a bit wary, presuming it

was a sales pitch or collection, and did a double take when they realised there was no catch – it was just a simple welcome.

Some people came into church for the first time or after a long time away.

Some didn't hesitate and had an intention on their hearts – a loved one or specific situation – while others took the candle and prayer card home to light there.

People who came in were welcomed into a warm church with the Blessed Sacrament exposed on the altar and a growing collection of candles at the foot of the altar.

Rebecca Leighton and Michael Thompson both provided beautiful reflective background music, so that visitors could feel comfortable to

take a moment to sit and just "be".

Volunteers and parishioners also took the opportunity to spend some time in adoration to pray in particular for all we met in the city.

By the end of the afternoon there were more than 60 tealights lit before the altar, and plenty more had been taken home by passersby. We may never know the effect of the invitation to pray or the simple smile and hello we offered.

Mary Palmer, assistant chaplain at Sunderland Catholic Chaplaincy, said: "One thing that stuck me and gave me great hope was the number of younger people who came in, intrigued to see inside and asking the university students who the saints in the windows were."

"One young girl asked her family to go in, and

once inside they lit a candle for someone they knew who had died recently. I think it shows that there is still a great desire and inquisitiveness, especially amongst young people, about the divine and a simple act of faith."

Regular churchgoers also found it encouraging to see the church in action.

Mary added: "One man, who'd seen the volunteers in the city centre, said to us when he reached the church: "You're all doing a great job!"

"I have to agree! We couldn't have done it without such a great team of volunteers giving up their Saturday."

"It was also a great opportunity for people from across the diocese to get together. We look forward to similar events in other cities, too."



Q ABOVE: Ingelise McNulty and Fr Stephen Watson joined us for the event. LEFT, BELOW AND BELOW LEFT: Pairs of students took to the streets to share their faith and invite passersby into the church.



Q RIGHT: Prayer cards and tea lights were offered to passersby. LEFT: The group gathered before the Blessed Sacrament to say prayers for everyone they had met during the day.





## SMILES OF THE MONTH



If you're in need of cheering up this month, make sure to read the paper from cover to cover and you'll find reasons to be optimistic. The smiling faces in our pictures have, so why not find their photos to read the stories behind their smiles...

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□ A display of Zimbabwean musical instruments, traditional fabrics and a map of the country, above. Ecumenical leaders from various churches leading part of the service, right.



# Do not be afraid to act on God's word

by Alison Rebello

**NORTH Tyneside Mayor Norma Redfearn OBE joined 50 women – and a few men – from the Benton Churches Together group at St Aidan's RC Church, Benton, to mark the World Day of Prayer, a female-led global ecumenical movement.**

Every year the service is written by a different country.

This year it was prepared by the Christian women of Zimbabwe, who called on us all to: "Rise! Take your mat and walk".

A song of the same name – with inspiring lyrics and uplifting music – was composed by Sylvia Marowa.

The Benton Churches Together group which participated in the special day included parishioners from the Church of England's St Bartholomew's Church; St Mary of the Rosary RC Church, Forest Hall; the Church of England's St John's Church in Killingworth; St Andrew's United Methodist Church, Longbenton; Longbenton Methodist Church, and West Moore Methodist Church – along with the hosts from St Aidan's RC Church in Benton.

More than 120 countries took part in this year's World Day of Prayer service, praying

in unison for the challenges the people of Zimbabwe face in their everyday lives.

The church was decorated to represent Zimbabwe, which means 'house of stones.'

At the entrance to the church was a display of musical instruments from Zimbabwe, including a marimba, drums, tambourine and hand rattles, while at the altar the ladies from the Churches Together group had arranged a table with fabrics in the colours of the Zimbabwean flag (green, yellow, red, black and white) to symbolise unity.

Items including beadwork, a reed basket, sweet potatoes, wheat and rice were displayed in a separate table near the altar.

The World Day of Prayer Zimbabwe artwork specially designed by renowned Zimbabwean artist Nonhlanhla Mathe was displayed around the church.

Three ladies from different churches took turn to light the red (representing love), white (representing peace) and yellow (representing reconciliation) candles, as the service commenced.

Prayer of praise, a hymn, a prayer of confession and a letter from the women of Zimbabwe were read by ladies from different churches.

The bible reading, which followed there-

after, was taken from John 5:2-9.

Everyone present was asked to silently reflect and write down commitments to support local communities with actions of love, peace and reconciliation.

The theme song: Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk was sung and everyone was asked to move on the spot.

Three ladies wearing red, white and yellow scarves came forward and read three statements, then asked the gathered congregation for words of commitment. This was followed by an offering during which the notes people had written were placed alongside the offerings made.

The service concluded with a prayer of thanksgiving and intercession, benediction and a closing song.

All participants were given a sisal plait made specially by Carole Lee from the host church.

Tea and refreshments were served at the church hall, giving people time to make new friends.

Next year's theme – Build on a Strong Foundation – focusses on Vanuatu, then in 2022 England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be leading the World Day of Prayer with the theme: I know the plans I have for you.



□ Carole Lee from St Aidan's Church, who led the prayer service.



□ A view of the participating ladies in the World Day of Prayer, above. Gifts displayed at the altar during the World Day of Prayer service, right. The coloured sisal plaits given to participants to be used as bookmarks in remembrance of the day. Photos: Alison Rebello.







# Corona speak: getting a handle on the pandemic perspectives

Where were you when you heard it first? That could be the Church quiz question in years to come as we remember the year the nation got a dispensation from attending Mass on Sunday without asking for one. Sitting at the computer screen typing would be the answer from JOHN BAILEY, looking at historical comparisons as he ponders what it all means for us now – then ends with a quotation from 6th Century BC China...

**THERE is only one topic on everyone's lips: the virus – and for Catholics the astounding decision to suspend all public Masses and remove the obligation for the faithful to attend Mass on Sunday or Holy day of Obligation "until further notice".**

We're asked as good, obedient lay people to accept this unrequested dispensation from an obligation many have fulfilled, often against the odds, all their lives for as long as memory serves.

It doesn't come easy.

Nor any easier to accept the rationale being explained in daily government press conferences.

First question, therefore, for That Was Then – has it ever happened before? Not in living memory is an easy first response...but what is the Church perspective?

**UNPRECEDENTED – that was the word the spokesman for Scottish Bishops chose to describe the decision to cease all public celebrations of Mass until further notice. Next day the Bishops of England and Wales took a similar decision.**

They were following government advice and guidelines on large groups of people meeting together.

Extraordinary advice, extraordinary times.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak used a similar phrase repeatedly when revealing that the state would step in to cover workers' wages because of the health crisis. "Unprecedented measures for unprecedented times" he said.

Lourdes closed for the first time since the apparitions in 1858.

St Peter's Square, normally crowded

with 60,000 people, is now empty.

Millions of people now follow the pope's private chapel Mass on TV or online at 7am each day, or listen to it on the radio.

Pope Francis' decision to livestream the liturgy was also described by the Vatican as "unprecedented".

**THE CHURCH of England announced its restrictions before the Catholic Bishops.**

The Column liked the honesty of this statement from Durham Cathedral's precentor, Canon Michael Hampel, commenting on the decision of the Anglican archbishops of Canterbury and York to suspend public worship: "This is very sad news and we feel greatly conflicted, but we know that, by following this clear instruction, we will play our part in stemming the flow of coronavirus."

**EACH day the Column has paused to reflect on any sensible conclusion about the way to proceed with ordinary life.**

The ability to comment and offer some perspective worth reading is pushed further out of reach by each new measure. Yet, everyone needs some yardstick to measure all that has been happening in our name and interest.

Perspectives from history?

The Column looked up accounts of the Spanish 'flu that reportedly infected 500 million people worldwide from 1918-1920 – at the end of the First World War – and possibly left 50 to 100 million people dead.

There is also the poignant 17th century story of Eyam in Derbyshire, whose population heroically agreed to

quarantine the entire village for 14 months in order to save the rest of the nation from the plague.

It started with a flea-infested bundle of cloth and estimates vary from half to three-quarters of the village dying. But 273 deaths by plague are recorded in Eyam's parish church, whose rector – the Revd William Mompesson – led the self-imposed quarantine with Puritan leader Thomas Stanley.

The London Blitz and widespread bombing of British cities during WW2 didn't stop public Mass or churchgoing.

**THE Column would love to know what you think – we sense a sea-change under way, not just in Britain but the world.**

Perhaps the most profound reflection may be to acknowledge that each of us will see this strange situation in a different and individual way, but we're being asked to respect each other's take on it.

Is it too big a hope that capitalism and socialism come together for the common good?

Is that what chancellor Rishi Sunak was signalling with that unprecedented move for state funds to meet 80 per cent of the nation's wage bill?

Now there is something to hope for, perhaps.

If you need an illustration on why the way we live needs to change, call up a brilliant TED talk by Catholic billionaire Bill Gates.

He made a compelling case for germ-games to replace nuclear wargames and put medicine on a war-footing to beat the Ebola epidemic. Part of his evidence was the same WW1 Spanish 'flu we quote above.



**Before the lockdown. These days millions listen to or watch Pope Francis celebrate Mass in his private chapel. Photo: Mazur/catholicnews.org.uk**

That talk was given on April 3, 2015. Five years later, we're not closer to achieving the global co-operation needed to defeat coronavirus.

**CHUCKLE CORNER today turns to the letters page of The Guardian on March 18 and reader Margaret Harris from Isleworth, London.**

Margaret writes: "If I knew how to get there, I'd move to Ambridge. No sign or mention in The Archers of any coronavirus yet."

**SO, where to end? With hope, of course.**

We choose a thought for the day favourite called Lao Tzu, a 6th century BC Chinese philosopher and writer who

crops up regularly in Sister Stan's Gardening the Soul.

A recent offering ran:

"Hope is about attending fully, to be without cleverness.

To be open to all things and to do nothing."

The Column openly confesses to being guilty of failing the first two of those notions, and has a ready default for the others, particularly the last.

Plenty there then to mull over while coping with cabin fever before we're back in May.

● If you would like to contribute to TWT or contact John Bailey, please email thesloopjohnb@dsl.pipex.com or call 01429 264577.

## BACK NUMBERS – April 1990

**A LOOK back at issues of Northern Cross from 30 years ago. This month, some items of news in the diocese in April 1990.**

**THE big talking point today is COVID-19 and the reactions worldwide to the pandemic. Thirty years ago, the Bishops of England and Wales were responding to emergencies in Ethiopia and the Sudan.**

Cardinal Basil Hume had launched a joint Disasters Emergency Committee appeal to get food and medicine urgently into the famine-hit Tigray region of Ethiopia and the bishops were renewing the appeal for money to avoid "huge loss of life and very much more suffering".

In Juba, a town cut off from food supplies, ringed by minefields and subject to repeated shelling, life had become "a crucible of despair" for 300,000 people. It triggered another Bishops' appeal to the UN and World Council of Churches through Cafod to avoid the loss of 2,000,000 lives in Sudan.

**DANIEL Moore, wearing the green**

**for St Patrick's Day, was leading the cheering for Ireland's hopes in the World Cup 30 years ago.**

His striking picture on page one in April's Northern Cross directed the reader to a St Patrick's Day special as well as the international football to come that summer. Daniel must be in his early 30s now. We wonder how he spent St Patrick's Day this year?

**IT WAS a case of the soaraway Cross country race completing its second year in 1990.**

Up, up and up, reported former Sunderland St Aidan's teacher Mike Winter, chief marshal of the Northern Cross Paper Chase.

The number of complete teams who took part (39) was up. The number of runners taking part was up at 328, and the number of schools (16) supporting the event was also up.

First home among 60 girls in the

under-13 race was Karen Riley from St Joseph's, Hebburn. First in the boys under-13 was Keiron Routledge from St Aidan's, Sunderland, who led home 84 runners. Are these 40-somethings still running?

**A DELIGHTFUL story from 30 years ago is the perfect way to sign out this month.**

It reminds us of late colleague Bernadette Lawson.

She was striving to give up smoking to help husband Gerry, also now deceased, and was encouraged by a No Smoking Day, reported Cuthbert Bede. That Wednesday, on her way home from proofreading the Northern Cross, Bernadette spotted a tramp. She stopped him, emptied her handbag of cigarettes and presented the man with her lighter. The man thought that Christmas had arrived early!



## For sale: someone's football treasure!

**A TRUE Toon fan might recognise the era of this team strip.**

The photograph, mounted on card, was donated to an Oxfam shop in Newcastle where writer Alison Rebello regularly helps out.

There is only the caption:

"NUFC team 1969, Fairs Cup", with no photographer's name or studio title to credit the copyright.

Can any reader help with a name check on the squad of 17 players and manager or team coach?





## Proud moments at Pope John Paul II Awards ceremony

ON SUNDAY, March 1, the diocese celebrated the fourth presentation ceremony for the Pope John Paul II Awards.

During an afternoon which recognised and celebrated the work and commitment of the participants, 83 young people received medals from Bishop Robert and certificates from Tony Lawless, director of Youth Ministry.

As well as giving out gold, silver and bronze awards, a Papal Cross was awarded to Bethany Dobson.

Three award recipients – Praneeth D'Silva, Jheter Dagdag and Chloe Gallagher – were interviewed by Gap Year team member Josie Shilcock. They spoke about their experiences of taking part in the award as well as the impact their work had had on them, their parish and the local community.

Some 350 people attended the ceremony to support those receiving awards and celebrate the hope for the future of

the diocese.

Bishop Robert said: "The great things the youth of our diocese are doing, their great commitment to their faith and to humanity is a clear sign of hope for us all."

Two musical, prayerful highlights were provided by the worship choir from Our Lady and St Bede's, Stockton, which was led by Megan Daily. The quality of the singing and passion with which it was delivered was inspirational.

This was the first time the Hilton Hotel in Gateshead was the venue for the ceremony and it seems to have gone down well. The staff in the Hilton could not have been more accommodating – we plan to use it again next year.

All of those participating in the awards complete a reflection/presentation about their experience and how the work relates to being part of a worshipping community.

What follows is a small sample of the honest and inspirational words found in

the reflections:

"I have enjoyed participating in this award because it has made a link between normal life and my faith, which I had previously kept quite separate."

"It is important for youth to be involved in helping with Mass and being a voice for the bishop to let him know what happens at a local level."

"My faith is submitting to God in the most consciously sincere manner and viewing the sublime universe surrounding me as the masterpiece of a transcendent artist."

"During my 20 weeks I felt like I was finally a member of the Church, no longer made to feel like I was just another person to warm a seat – moving in and out of church as if I was never really there."

"In some ways it has shaped me to be less judgemental because standing at the doorway and greeting people into church you find many walks of life come to seek the face of God."



□ Bishop Robert with some of the Youth Ministry Team, award recipients and guests, top. Above, from left, Josie Shilcock with Praneeth D'Silva, Jheter Dagdag and Chloe Gallagher.



□ Bishop Robert presents Bethany Dobson with a Papal Cross, right. Our Lady and St Bede's School choir, left.





# St John's is simply outstanding

by Ian Lamming

**STUDENTS and teachers have been hailed as outstanding after coming under the scrutiny of diocesan inspectors.**

St John's School and Sixth Form College, Bishop Auckland, has been given grade ones across the board in an outstanding report by inspectors from the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

Inspectors reviewed all aspects of life in the school, from the warm and welcoming atmosphere of its reception to the high standards and expectations in lessons.

The charitable work of students and staff was recognised as one of the school's many strengths, forging as it does positive working relationships with primaries, parishes and the wider community.

The inspectors assessed the extent to which students contributed to school life, how well leaders performed and the academy's overall effectiveness. All categories were

graded one, leading to an overall judgement of outstanding.

The inspection team highlighted St John's strong Catholic ethos and outstanding levels of teaching.

The report said: "St John's is an all-embracing community. Support for each other is tangible. Staff are superb role models for students. The school promotes the Bishop's vision for education through policy, practice and initiatives."

Headteacher Lisa Byron added: "We are thrilled and delighted the inspectors have recognised how special our learning community is."

"It is a testament to the hard work and commitment of our students, the expertise and dedication of our staff and the continuous support of our parents and carers that we have been able to create a learning environment in which everyone can flourish."

"Praise and recognition are always most welcome and inspire us all in our relentless pursuit to provide the very best education we can for all of our students."



□ Celebrating success – head teacher Lisa Byron, left, and RE department KS3 co-ordinator Eileen Urwin, right, with students.

## Michael is a role model for us all

by David Swindells

**ST Cuthbert's Catholic High School student Michael Ndiweni was recently awarded the Chronicle Champions Young Role Model award for 2019**

The nomination was completed by Michael's head of house, form tutor and sports leader coach.

Chronicle Champions awards recognise those who make the region great, with readers nominating the selfless people in their community who make a difference.

Michael, 16, from Throckley, was nominated due to his exceptional attitude both in and out of school, and was commended for showing incredible dignity and compassion.

Always leading by example and consistently helping others, Michael embodies the ethos of St Cuthbert's Catholic High School: Faith. Leadership. Learning.

Younger students look up to Michael for advice and guidance and everyone agrees he is a perfect example of what young men at St Cuthbert's High School in Newcastle should aim to become.

Despite balancing a hectic training schedule for Newcastle United Football Club's U16 academy and his school work, Michael continues to find time to help others.

His self-confidence has grown through his work as form captain where he often leads assemblies and discussions among his peers.

Congratulations, Michael!



## Awards evening puts the spotlight on a year's worth of achievements

**STUDENTS from St Cuthbert's Catholic High School, Newcastle, lined up on their annual awards evening to speak to the guest of honour, Professor Chris Day, vice-chancellor and president of Newcastle University, writes David Swindells.**

Prof Day inspired the young men with a superb speech and congratulated them on their achievements over the previous academic year. The audience was treated to music performed by students.



## Mini Vinnies lead school's fundraising for CAFOD



**ON ASH Wednesday, four of the Year 6 Mini Vinnies at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary School, Billingham, led a whole school assembly during which they introduced CAFOD's Lent Appeal, writes Mrs Lowe.**

They did a fantastic job of explaining how they were going to turn concern into action by holding a sport's themed non-uniform day to raise money for this appeal and help to turn the tide of environmental devastation, including deforestation in South America.



## Obituary:

# Fr John Sherrington

## March 1947 – February 2020

**GENTLE and sensitive, Fr John Sherrington was a designer, Passionist priest-worker, street sweeper, trade unionist, anti-apartheid activist and domestic carer, friend of Catholics and other Christians living with HIV and AIDS, Passionist Provincial – and finally, a good neighbour to all in Byker, Newcastle.**

He was also a passionate, determined and radically prophetic presence who inspired and challenged many of those he encountered.

Fr John's faith fired in him a total commitment to the God of justice, present for, with, among and in the poor.

Baptised Peter John, he was born into a Catholic family in Blyth.

John's father was a miner, but he followed a different path to art school, working as a designer before joining the Passionists in his 20s.

John was influenced by Passionist Fr Austin Smith CP, who responded to the call for an 'option for the poor' emanating from the Second Vatican Council, liberation theology and the French worker-priest movement.

Austin and Fr Nicholas Postlethwaite CP founded the Passionist Inner City Mission – ICM – and in 1971 they moved to Toxteth, Liverpool.

John and Michael Bold started an ICM counterpart in London, following the lead of the worker-

priests into the world of low paid manual work.

John found a job as a street sweeper for Islington Council and ran a project providing accommodation, support and life skills for young homeless people.

In the 1980s his home was the top secret drop address for mail for the South Africa Defence and Aid Fund.

John became a local union organiser, negotiating on behalf of his colleagues with local management, and was involved in the miners' year-long confrontation with the Conservative government.

He moved to work as a carer in an Islington Council residential home, then as a home carer for people with HIV and AIDS, until the local authority made him redundant.

John was involved with LGBT Catholics and on the rota for celebrating the Soho Masses. He also worked with the charity Catholic Aids Prevention and Support.

John moved to Byker to be near his mother in her final years at St Joseph's care home and, against his own inclination, was elected Passionist Provincial in 2009.

He initiated what can be described as a new way – a group open to all who share the desire to keep alive the memory of the Passion by their commitment to the crucified ones of today, as well as the Crucified One.

Four years later John was diag-



□ Fr John Sherrington.

nosed with Parkinson's disease at the age of 66.

He continued to be a faithful presence and a good friend to members of the diocesan refugee and asylum drop-in centre.

John found himself the beneficiary of the same home care he had given others in their hour of

need, then spent some time in the RVI in Newcastle.

He was later cared for at St Joseph's, where he had previously given chaplaincy support, and died there after a rapid decline.

His requiem Mass was held at Minsteracres on February 19. May he rest in peace.



□ Westminster Cathedral's altar during Lent.

## St Alphonsus' prayer

**MY JESUS, I believe that you are present in this holy sacrament of the altar.**

I love you above all things and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my soul, so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever.

Amen.

Celebrate your loved one's life with an obituary tribute in the Northern Cross. Write to the editor, enclosing a good quality photograph where possible. Addresses on Page 6.

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## Obituary:

## Anne Rignold Boyd

### January 1939 – March 2020

A LITTLE bit of South Shields appeared at a funeral in Singleton, New South Wales, on Thursday, March 19, when we heard Oh, the love of my Lord towards the end of Mass.

The Mass was live streamed from St Patrick's church, Singleton, the town where Anne and Phillip Boyd had raised their sons, Tom and Damian.

Anne and I had met in the children's home run by Mother

Teresa's nuns in Kolkata in 1972.

She had already run a Ryder-Cheshire home called Raphael in Dehra Dun.

Just before Anne, a trained nurse, arrived we had had to deal with an Australian drug addict, so when I heard Anne's voice I wondered if we had another one on our hands: mercifully not.

Anne came to London that summer to do a TB course. My parents had a pub in the same road so we

got to know each other well.

She went back to India to run a mobile TB clinic then returned to Australia to marry Phillip, a fellow Australian whom she had met on Australia Day in London.

Over the years we met more often than I expected.

Last year I went to see her when she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She faced her death serenely.

As Anne's funeral Mass came to

an end we heard Estelle White's hymn.

I had sent her my biography of Estelle and she would tell me whenever she heard that hymn in Australia.

Anne came to the North East several times. She and Phillip particularly enjoyed the company of Fr Colin Carr, who had been born not far from Dehra Dun.

May she rest in peace.

Veronica Whitty

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# Coronavirus – one of the greatest challenges humanity has faced

**WE PRAY with the pope each month, sharing his specific intention for the challenges that face humanity and the church's mission, writes David Stewart SJ.**

During Holy Week and the Easter triduum, our prayer will be focussed on the coronavirus epidemic.

The pope had already selected an intention for this month: "that those suffering from addiction may be helped and accompanied".

When our hearts are open to the possibility of prayer, then we can be open to all that humanity experiences.

We can all be apostles of prayer.

There is nothing in human experience that cannot be the topic or substance of our prayer. Nothing is strange or alien to God.

## Praying with the unexpected

Sometimes we have to adapt.

Are we annoyed because an enforced change is inconvenient?

Are we open to remembering that others, too, are affected?

Do we hear the call to look out for others, for the common good?

Most of us – if we are truthful – probably experience a mix of both reactions in ourselves.

As we look over each day, towards the end of each day, asking God's Holy Spirit to shed its gentle light on our day, we will recognise when we have been closed in on ourselves.

We should take a few moments of reflection, in the Ignatian tradition, in what is sometimes called the Daily Examen.

As with every tragic situation, we must remember the importance of discerning well and praying well, so that the bad spirit has fewer opportunities to lead us down a pathway of despair and hopelessness.

There has been a lot of fear – but fear is not from God.

The darkness that we're living through will make us hesitate – what use is prayer or religion?

Churches closing down, events and even Masses cancelled.

But Christian love, prayer, laughter and friendship have not been cancelled.

The compassion of the heart of Christ for all of creation – that's not cancelled.

Solidarity, a pillar of Catholic Social Teaching, is not cancelled.

We are concerned for the most vulnerable, who are also often the least able to speak up.

We are not separate – we ARE each other.

As this situation has unfolded, we have seen and heard of extraordinary acts of human kindness. Each of these speaks of hope.

St Ignatius invites us into the extremes of the Passion in solidarity with Christ. Holy Week. Good Friday. The Stations of the Cross.

Some of us will hesitate.

St Ignatius knew this, and so suggested that we pray for this grace: to pray to be sorrowful with Christ sorrowful, for anguish with Christ in anguish, for tears and deep grief because of what Christ endures for me, for us.

Unify your prayer with Christ's, for he unifies his with yours.

Keep looking for the face of Jesus in all of this; turn to His blessed mother with our heartfelt prayers, for her prayers are heartfelt too.

In our hearts, our souls, will well up that spring of living water, welling up to resurrection and eternal life.

## Prayer to Our Lady

Pope Francis composed this prayer to Mary, referring to her by the Roman title of Mother of Divine Love.

Let's pray it with him and share it with anyone who would like to pray it too.

O Mary, you shine continuously along our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, health of the sick, who at the cross were near to the pain of Jesus, keeping your faith firm.



You, salvation of the Roman people, know what we need and we trust that you will provide for those needs so that, as at Cana in Galilee, joy and celebration may return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the will of the Father and to do what Jesus tells us. He took our sufferings on himself and took up our sorrows to bring us, through the cross, to the joy of the resurrection.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Amen.

● *The Pope Video is an official global initiative to disseminate the Holy Father's monthly intentions. It is carried out by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer). To find out more about it, log on to [thepopevideo.org](http://thepopevideo.org).*



□ Catholics watched the extraordinary Urbi et orbi papal address, above, online last month. At Westminster Cathedral, top, one woman prays near the pieta while another lights a candle during the last public Mass.

Photos: Mazur/ cbcew.org.uk.

**Celebrate your loved one's life with an obituary tribute in the Northern Cross. Write to the Editor, enclosing a good-quality photograph where possible. You'll find our contact details on page 6.**

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**HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR APRIL:** Universal prayer intention – freedom from addiction.

We pray that those suffering from addiction may be helped and accompanied.

**WE PRAY** for Bishop Robert Byrne, the 14th Bishop of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. May the Lord guide him and may our people support him and continue to make him feel welcome.

**WE PRAY** for all of those affected by coronavirus. We pray that they will recover from their illness and also for the continued care provided by NHS workers, family members and others. **PLEASE PRAY** for the health and wellbeing of all of the priests in our diocese for the month ahead.

**PLEASE PRAY** for Robert, Brian, John, Michael, Alan and David. May their hearts continue to be healed.

**WE PRAY** for the poor and the lonely in our diocese, who have few people to turn to for comfort.

**PRAYERS PLEASE** for Teresa, her family and all those who care for her.

**WE PRAY** for the continuing work of the Little Sisters of the Poor in Newcastle.

**PLEASE PRAY** for the sick and the elderly, particularly those who are parted from their families or friends at this time.

**WE PRAY** for all of those working in the hospices in our diocese, whose love and tenderness counter the suffering of so many.

**WE PRAY** for all those being helped by the St Vincent de Paul Society in our diocese and around the world.

**WE PRAY** for the dedicated service of those in our diocese who are helping to run food banks for those in need. We pray that people continue to kindly donate to these good causes and give their time to help when they can.

**FATHER**, thank you for all those men and women who have given their talents to educating our young people.

Through the challenges they encounter each day, lead them to an ever deeper

# Prayers & Petitions

**WELCOME to Prayers and Petitions – a Northern Cross free service to readers. Please feel able to participate in our open prayers, published here in the hope that our readers will peruse them and add their prayers to yours and ours for the improvement asked for in the published petition.**

**Write out your prayers or petitions and send them to: Prayers and Petitions, Northern Cross, St Anne's Presbytery, 43 Welbeck Avenue, Darlington DL1 2DR. No payment is required, but please add your name and address to show your good intent. Names and addresses need not be published (unless you wish them to be), but initials are generally a requirement.**

**A petition may be continued for more than one month, but you will need to indicate if it should continue and supply a telephone number so the topicality of the prayer can be checked.**

appreciation of the sacred duty to which you have called them.

We give thanks for the invaluable work of all those who contribute to the efficient running of our schools; support staff, kitchen staff, maintenance staff, governors and chaplains.

We thank them for their hard work and dedication and we pray that they may continue to work in support of our schools.

Thank you for all those who lead our Catholic schools. May they be people of integrity so that they can be witnesses as well as teachers.

We pray that the schools they lead will become places where our young people can experience your love in their lives.

Thank you for our Catholic schools. Help us to pray without ceasing, to work without wavering and to give without grudging in order to ensure the future of Catholic education for all of our children.

We make this prayer through your Son, Jesus Christ, our teacher and our Lord. Amen.

**WE PRAY** for the work of all those at The Road Centre

and for those who are struggling with mental health problems in our diocese.

**WE PRAY** for young Michael, who is growing stronger every day. For that we give thanks.

**WE PRAY** for the soul of Mary, a good friend to all. May she rest in peace and may perpetual light shine upon her.

**WE PRAY** for peaceful and thriving diocesan partnerships for the rest of the year.

**PLEASE PRAY** for the souls of our dearly departed. May perpetual light shine upon them.

**PRAYERS PLEASE** for all of the patients in hospitals and care homes in the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

We pray for those who have no-one to visit them and for those who have no-one to talk to during the long days and nights. We also pray for all of the nurses, doctors and healthcare workers who give them care and love. We pray for their continued good health and thank them for the difficult work they do.

**WE PRAY** for the soul of Jimmy Crook. May he rest in peace and perpetual light shine upon him.

**WE PRAY** for the soul of Franca Warrington. May she rest in peace and perpetual light shine upon her.

**PLEASE PRAY FOR THE PRISONERS** who are alone and have no-one to talk to. We pray that the Holy Spirit will heal them and comfort them. God, in His divine mercy, loves each one of them as His children. Make them aware, too, of their own personal dignity whose purpose in life is to love and be loved by God and others.

**PRAY** for the good health of retired Bishop Seamus Cunningham.

**WE THANK GOD** for those retired priests of our diocese who forgo their well-earned rest to come and say Mass in many parishes. Lord, give them strength and stamina to continue their valuable ministry to your people. JS. **PLEASE PRAY** for the soul of Andrew Longworth, 1978-2018. May he rest in peace. Amen.

**PLEASE PRAY** for help for all who are lonely, unwell or are afraid or troubled in mind. Pray too that we will be aware of people who need help and do what we can for them.

**PRAYERS PLEASE** for those at sea and for the good works of the Apostleship of the Sea and its chaplains.

**HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE DIOCESAN PARTNERSHIP**

**PRAYER:** God of all creation, you have constantly poured out your Spirit upon our diocese and kindled a light which has spread throughout the world.

Lord Jesus, you gathered disciples to yourself to learn from you and to model their lives on you. Your Holy Spirit empowered them to continue your work in the world.

Come upon us, Holy Spirit, deepen the faith you invite us to share and inspire us to become faithful witnesses.

Help each one of us to use the gifts you give us to nurture one another, to serve the world and to live in harmony with the whole of creation.

All of this we ask in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



□ Blind and partially-sighted passengers prepare to board one of the new buses in Newcastle.

## Talking buses wheeled out across the North East

**BLIND and partially-sighted people in the region have welcomed a new fleet of 18 talking buses.**

Bus company Stagecoach has been working with charities the Royal National Institute of Blind People, Guide Dogs and Newcastle Vision Support to improve the accessibility of their services.

Together they created plans to introduce buses with audio systems which announce the next stops for passengers so that people with vision impairment don't have to rely on asking other people or the driver for guidance.

Lewis Winton, the RNIB's regional campaigns officer, said: "For people who can't drive, including those registered sight impaired, public buses really are a lifeline."

"They enable people to get to work, meet family and friends, take part in everyday leisure activities and remain independent."

"However, the uncertainty of whether you've got the right bus, where you are on your journey or when your stop is coming up makes bus travel need-

lessly difficult for blind and partially-sighted people using this essential form of transport.

"Audio announcements on busses make a real difference to travellers with vision impairment, enabling them to travel independently with confidence."

"We're thrilled Stagecoach has introduced these new talking buses to their fleet and hope other bus providers take the opportunity to follow suit."

David Sharp, commercial manager for Stagecoach North East, said: "I am delighted that our latest bus arrivals feature such state-of-the-art technology, including low emission Euro VI engines, large rear destination screens and audio visual next stop announcements with scrolling LED displays."

"A great deal of work has gone into making the next stop announcements as clear and as informative as possible, and we are extremely grateful to the RNIB for taking the time and effort to experience them in a live environment and offering valuable feedback as to how they may be improved going forward."

**Celebrate your loved one's life with an obituary tribute in the Northern Cross.**

**Write to the editor, enclosing a good-quality photograph where possible.**

**Our contact details are on page 6.**

## A little reminder

**A LITTLE reminder of feasts and days of special prayer during April.**

**April 2:** St Francis of Paola, hermit

**April 4:** St Isidore, bishop and doctor of the Church

**April 5:** PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

**April 6:** MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

**April 7:** TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

**April 8:** WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

**April 9:** MAUNDY THURSDAY

**April 10:** GOOD FRIDAY

**April 11:** HOLY SATURDAY

**April 12:** EASTER SUNDAY

**April 13:** EASTER MONDAY

**April 14:** EASTER TUESDAY

**April 15:** EASTER WEDNESDAY

**April 16:** EASTER THURSDAY

**April 17:** EASTER FRIDAY

**April 18:** EASTER SATURDAY

**April 19:** SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

**April 20-April 22:** WEEKDAYS OF EASTER

**April 23:** St George, martyr and patron of England – solemnity

**April 24:** St Adalbert, bishop and martyr

**April 25:** St Mark, evangelist – feast

**April 26:** THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

**April 28:** St Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort, priest

**April 29:** St Catherine of Siena, virgin, doctor of the Church and patron of Europe – feast

**April 30:** St Pius V, pope, religious

**COMING SOON**

Let our readers know of key events such as fundraisers, concerts and sports days, plus term dates

Contact Claire Robson on 01325 464 008 or norcross@btconnect.com to book your space

**SCHOOL NOTICEBOARD**

**What's happening each month at your school?**

**OK, so we're better at removing bad ads than making good ones.**

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www.asa.org.uk



Keeping advertising standards high





***Little Sisters of the Poor***  
*Caring for the elderly - inspired by our faith*

**EMERGENCY APPEAL TO SUPPORT CARE HOME STAFF AND RESIDENTS**  
**The Little Sisters of the Poor have launched a vital fundraising appeal, in response to the increasing pressures faced by St Joseph's Care Home during the current COVID-19 pandemic.**

The Little Sisters of the Poor are a charity committed to providing safe accommodation and professional care for vulnerable older people, and in these unprecedented times, our staff and volunteers are going above and beyond to make sure that this high quality care continues.



However, due to the recent Government restrictions, St Joseph's Care Home in Newcastle has been forced to implement emergency measures to aid efforts to fight the Coronavirus pandemic. Unfortunately, along with residential visitations, this also includes cancelling charity events and collections which has had a massive impact on the donations we rely on to help with our increasing running costs.

We are appealing for your crucial support at this uncertain time, to help us safeguard our Homes and meet the ever-evolving needs of our Sisters, staff and residents. Your crucial donations will enable us to purchase extra essential Personal Protective Equipment such as gloves, sanitising gel, eye protection, face masks, safety clothing and chemical cleaning products to ensure we can continue to comply with all health and safety regulations.



All donations, no matter what size, will be very gratefully received and will make a real difference to the lives of our vulnerable elderly residents. Cheques made payable to 'Little Sisters of the Poor' or PPE supplies can be sent to; St Joseph's Home, Westmoreland Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 7QA. Alternatively, you can make a secure, online donation, by visiting;  
[littlesistersofthepoor.co.uk/donate-here/](http://littlesistersofthepoor.co.uk/donate-here/).

**Thank you so much**





Happier days – club delegates outside North Shields Catholic Club two years ago. The March clubs association meeting had to be cancelled to comply with coronavirus isolation rules.

# Coronavirus closures are a 'hammer blow' to clubs – but there's a ray of hope from Heaton

by Clubs Editor

**MEETINGS of the National association of Catholic clubs always open and close with a prayer.**

No doubt delegates to the March gathering at North Shields would have prayed for the safekeeping of all clubgoers from the approaching virus infection.

They had no idea, however, the virus threat would cancel the spring meeting or that the prayer would widen to include the safekeeping of clubs themselves.

The virus poses probably the greatest threat ever faced by clubland.

The notice posted on Wallsend's Lindisfarne Social Club's website succinctly sums up the general state of play. It reads: "Important message to all members. Due to the unprecedented situation we now face with the COVID-19 virus and the government's recent guidelines, the committee has taken the decision to close the club until further notice. Signed: Secretary N J Huscroft."

Hebburn Iona Social Club said: "Due to the government's announcement this evening, the club will be shut from tomorrow until further notice."

"Any bookings made for the concert room over the next few weeks, and for however long this lasts, will obviously not be able to go ahead. We wish all our members and guests the best of health through this incredibly difficult period and we look forward to welcoming everyone back when we are able to do so."

At South Shields Catholic Club secretary Michael Sleightholme outlined the scene for Clubs Cross at the start of the second day of shutdown.

He said: "We will be holding weekly committee and staff meetings to let staff know about their pay. We have had no contact from HMRC or the local authority about how to apply for or implement the financial help measures mentioned in the press."

"Our concert room, normally well supported by people who would be classed in the vulnerable age group,

was very quiet by comparison to other weeks."

At North Shields, secretary Tom Turner said the shutdown meant 12 or 14 parties had to be disappointed as well as a monthly pensioners' Tuesday entertainment, weekly Thursday bingo nights, a VE Day anniversary party in April and even a children's Easter egg party on Easter Sunday.

"All the eggs are bought," Tom reported...with the afterthought: "They all have a July best-before date on them!"

The club's committee will review the situation monthly but had already decided to support staff throughout the closedown – a decision made easier by the Chancellor's later announcement to meet 80 per cent of all staff wages.

Beer and drinks stocks had been another concern, but secretary Tom's predecessor Joe Cartwright confirmed North Shields committee's immediate reaction to Prime Minister Johnson's closure order. A free-drinks night was declared, word spread rapidly, and it became a very busy night. Said Joe: "It was like an old-style New Year's Eve!"

Brian Marsh, sports and social secretary at Lindisfarne Social Club said he was upset that the funeral reception of a club member of more than 40 years' standing was thrown into confusion for the Monday following the closedown.

Mothers' Day meals in Lindisfarne's restaurant – "stowed out last year and fully booked this time" – had taken a crushing blow, Brian reported, but the kitchen team had had the forethought the previous Sunday to announce a home delivery service for Sunday dinners if restrictions closed the restaurant.

President Docherty didn't want to sound a gloomy note about the future. He said: "I want to wish all clubs the best of luck and ask them to keep safe and healthy – we'll come through this. It's going to be a long and hard time. Let's hope this is not the end of clubland. We need the revenue coming in at some point

to survive."

Secretary-treasurer Livett was sanguine about the future: "To me, this now enforced closure could be the death knell for some of the smaller, struggling Catholic Clubs, along with other outlets, companies in the supply chain, micro-pubs and micro-breweries."

"That is the same for all NACC delegates, club members and family and friends. It is a major upheaval and life-changing situation, but we all must be strong, stay safe and look after each other."

"I always say a prayer for the association and the clubs at Mass each weekend, but now with no more Masses, they will still be in my thoughts when I spend some quiet reflection time sitting at home."

It was left to Heaton St Teresa's Catholic Club in Newcastle to sound the ray of hope in a depressing storyline.

Secretary Brian Dale revealed the club was on the verge of closing its doors for good a few months ago when the management committee decided to sell the space upstairs to be developed as two apartments.

That provided homes for two families and funds to enable the club to refurbish the ground floor.

Brian said adopting pub-style décor and fitting clear-glass windows – doing away with the old frosted glass – had transformed the club, its revenue and its fortunes.

The student population and local residents suddenly began using the club, leading to Brian's thoughts that this might be the way forward for clubland to re-invent itself.

Brian said the fortunes of the club were really improving over four or five months, including employing two more staff during the stewardess' illness – but that was before the national shutdown.

"It's a hammer blow really," he said, before adding he hoped the club would be able to offer a take-out service of two-pint jugs of beer like in the old days.

To help stock control, the final night's bar offered beer at £1 a pint.

## Club delegates and officers play catch-up on cancelled meeting

**THE March meeting of the National Association of Catholic Clubs was cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak – and October's national indoor games in Rochdale will not go ahead.**

National secretary Gary Livett said he had little correspondence to report, but had intended to discuss the future of Chester-le-Street Catholic Club which had appeared in a recent Facebook post.

"Financially there have been no major changes," said the secretary who doubles as treasurer, other than the receipt of £1,000 from LWC Teesside, the beer and drinks supplier which sponsored the 2018 indoor games at Hartlepool.

Gary also holds a supply of the January ABC bulletin from the Alliance of British Clubs. Any club which would like a copy can email nacc859@aol.com to request one.

ABC chairman Eddie Charnley from Manchester had mailed his report but it hadn't reached the secretary.

"On speaking to him about the can-

celling of our meeting, he advised that the ABC has also suspended their meetings," Gary reported.

Rochdale Catholic Club also had to postpone its March AGM, but most club constitutions provide for an 18-month period to stage AGMs.

He also felt the government decisions on the deferment of VAT payments and help with wage bills would help clubs to survive. Many might use the down time to work on DIY projects to club premises.

**LINDISFARNE Social Club has announced its secretary, Bob Train, has had to step down because of illness.**

Elected in his place is Nigel Huscroft, a Lib-Dem councillor on North Tyneside Council.

Bob has agreed to remain a member of the club's management committee while the handover to Nigel takes place. The club also has a new chairman after Joe Taylor resigned to cope with an urgent family illness.

### BENEDICTINE CATHOLIC SOCIAL CENTRE

GLENLUCE DRIVE, CRAMLINGTON. TEL. 01670 - 714694

**CONCERT ROOM  
CLOSED UNTIL  
FURTHER NOTICE**

### Hebburn Iona Club

**Closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please call the club or check [northerncross.org.uk](http://northerncross.org.uk) or Facebook for updates**

Station Road, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear NE31 1PN  
[www.hebburniona.co.uk](http://www.hebburniona.co.uk) - e mail [hebburn.iona.club@gmail.com](mailto:hebburn.iona.club@gmail.com) ☎0191 483 2773

### Tyneside Irish Centre

43 GALLOWGATE, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE1 4SG

**Closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please call the club or check [northerncross.org.uk](http://northerncross.org.uk) or Facebook for updates**

[www.tynesideirishcentre.com](http://www.tynesideirishcentre.com)



**Birthdays**

**BAILEY:** sounds like it will be a lockdown birthday. Colette, on April 13, but still a happy one. We'll share in your virtual cake and hope to have the video conference set up by then. You could christen it the Corona Suite! Love, Mum and Dad

**BAILEY:** a very happy birthday on April 23, Thea. Loves you lots and we hope it will be a memorable day for you in the present lockdown alert. Fifteen ways to celebrate at home alone with Mum and Dad maybe! Love from Nana and Poppa

**Wedding anniversary**

**MCCABE,** Joe and Valerie – congratulations on your 22nd anniversary on April 18. It will certainly be a little different this year and memorable for the way you coped with the coronavirus alert. We gather you still have the video recording of the wedding in St Cuthbert's at Chester-le-Street. Will there be a screening when life returns to normal after Covid-19? Love, Maureen and JohnB

**In Memoriam****BUTLER**

**CATHERINE** Margaret. Grateful memories of Cath, of Hartlepool and Jersey. On April 17, her birthday, and on April 23, her fourth anniversary. Love bears, believes, hopes and endures. Love never ends. Cath's Mum and Family

**BUTLER,** Cath, on April 23, 2016 – first management board secretary in the 1980s revival of Northern Cross and still a treasured memory among friends and colleagues at the paper. RIP – Maureen and JohnB

**KELLY,** Rosaline, on April 11 – remembered fondly by all your surviving pals at Northern Cross who still benefit from your past generosity to the paper. The crossword competition isn't quite the same without that faithful Irish entry. RIP – Maureen and JohnB

**NEENAN,** Marjorie Dorema on April 6, 2009, aged 92. The head of our family for so many years, your grace and dignity live on, along with happy memories of family and church life in Burntwood, Chasetown and later Chase Terrace in

# Family announcements are always welcome in your Classified Cross

**PERSONAL** messages and announcements are welcomed from readers. These will be listed under classified headings each month. Pre-payment at the rate of 28p a word, inclusive of VAT, is requested. But an invoice can be sent to advertisers if requested in advance. Particularly welcome will be any acknowledgements, announcements of births, deaths and marriages, public notices, thanksgivings and intercessions.

Staffordshire. – Maureen, Patrick, John, Dorothy (Dot) and Catherine (Kate)

**Clergy of Hexham & Newcastle Diocese**

Please pray for the repose of the souls of the priests of Hexham & Newcastle Diocese whose anniversaries occur this month.

**REMEMBER**

in your prayers those priests of Hexham & Newcastle Diocese whose anniversaries are this month April 1: Rev Francis Duffy; April 2: Rev John Duggan, Rev Joseph Connolly; April 6: Rev Francis McKenna; April 8: Canon Thomas Murray, Rev Henry Higgins; April 9: Rev Richard Crawford; April 10: Rev Henry Mackin, Canon John Bell; April 11: Rev Joseph McLeary; April 15: Rev Paul Harrison; April 16: Rev William Meagher; April 17: Rev James Key, Rev Arthur Wills, Rev James McKenny, Rev Thomas McCormack; April 19: Rev Christopher Rice; April 21: Rev Francis Rice; April 23: Rev Daniel Keane, Rev Osmund Curry; April 24: Rev Austin Pickering; April 26: Rev Martin McBrien; April 27: Canon Thomas Gaughan, Rev Denis O'Kane, Rev Lawrence Jones; April 29: Rev Michael O'Herlihy; April 30: Mgr Martin Campbell. May they rest in peace.

**Roll of Honour**

**PLEASE RE-MEMBER** the following in your prayers

**MARCH**

1958 Bishop Joseph McCormack  
1997 Frank Brennan  
2004 Fr Adrian Dowling  
2008 Bishop Kevin Dunn

2011 Leo Dillon  
**APRIL**  
1982 Lily Mirley  
2002 George Heron  
2008 Bill Allinson  
2011 Betty Wilcox  
2011 Kath Monaghan  
2012 Pauline Mahoney  
2014 Kevin Rowntree  
2016 Cath Butler

**MAY**

1986 Len Woodley  
2003 Sheila Crowther  
2009 Joan Wilson  
2011 Terence Wynn  
2016 Gloria Hughes  
2016 Pat Stott  
2017 Barbara Gray

2018 Brian Nicholls  
Latest Roll of Honour is available from the Northern Cross office on 01325 464008

**Items for Sale**

● Northern Cross accepts no liability for the reliability of goods offered for sale.

**ELECTRIC MESSAGE CUSHION** unused £15. Blackhall 0191 5871552

**ELECTRIC STEAM CLEANER** with attachments, floor, kitchen, bathroom etc. £20. Blackhall 0191 5871552

**NATHAN** coffee table. Good condition. £25. Blackhall 0191 5871552

**ANTLER** shopping/travel trolley bag, black/red. Good condition. £10. Blackhall 0191 5871552

**PORTMERION.** 6 cups, 6 saucers, teapot, milk jug, sugar basin. Pomona Fruit salad design. As new. £50. Blackhall 0191 5871552

**AIR COMPRESOR.** Stanley 24ltr Air Compressor 1.5HP electric. Brand new with lots of tools. Light and compact, oil free lubrication. £60. Boldon 0191 5194952

**WEDDING OUTFIT.** Pink wedding outfit, as new. Size 18. Beautiful ¾ Jacket embroidered lapels. Straight dress, short sleeves, length 44". £40. Wallsend. 0191 2629087.

**SINGLE REMOTE CONTROL BED.** Remote control rising bed, approx. 95cm x 195cm. Very little use. £195 ono. Hartlepool collection. Contact 01642 647425

**RISE AND RECLINE CHAIR.** Good condition. Brown fabric. Hartlepool Collection. Contact 01642 647425

**COLLECTION** of brass objects. Kettle, small milk can, 2 small plates, 4 candlesticks (2 large 2 small) £40. Willington 01388746412

**ERCOL** occasional table. Dark wood. Excellent condition. £45. Willington 01388746412

**3 CAMERA TRIPODS.** £25.00 each or all 3 for £60.00 ono Blackhall 0191 5864173

**CELESTRON BINOCULARS** 25x70. £60.00 ono Blackhall 0191 5864173

**ACUTER GRAND VISTA** spotting scopy. Brand new. 22-67 x 100m, includes carry case. £120.00 ono. Blackhall 0191 5864173

**CITROEN SPACE SAVER** spare wheel & tyre. T125/85 R16. Never used. £25.00 ono. Blackhall 0191 5864173

**AFTERNOON TEA SET.** 6 cups & saucers, 6 tea plates, Teapot, sugar basin, milk jug. White with pink rosebud design. New

Condition. £35 Blackhall 01915871552

**SLEEPING BAG.** Adult size, thick comfort range 21.7c, protects against freezing with thermal collar & hood. New Condition. £15 Blackhall 0191 5871552

**KITCHEN CHAIRS.** Four Kitchen Chairs, Black Chrome. Collection only. £60. Whickham 0191 4885062

**R A L E I G H ELECTRIC BIKE.** Nine months old. Offers nearest £400. Tel 07557006987

**LLADRO** porcelain, 2 pieces, with box, as new. £75 Gateshead 01914693473

**CREAM RUG,** never used. £10 Gateshead 01914693473

**BROWN LEATHER** high back Georgian chair. Good condition. £95. Blackhall 01915181341

**DINING CHAIRS.** 6 folding dining chairs with upholstered seats. Will separate. Hartlepool 01429 295261

**HEADBOARD,** double size, ranch style solid light wood, as new £20. Blackhall 0191 5871552

**INDESIT** washer, good working order. Collection only £45. Peterlee 07510992013

**WICKER CHAIRS.** 3 wicker chairs, cushions with loose zipped covers. Suitable for conservatory. Excellent condition, £30 each, willing to separate. Bishop Auckland 01388 309350.

**MASSAGER,** Infra-red hand held massager, ideal for Aches and pains. As new £ 5. Blackhall 191 5871552

**MICRO** electronic fitness belt. Boxed as new £5. Blackhall 0191 5871552

**SLIM SHAPE** face and body toner. Boxed as new £5. Blackhall 0191 5871552

**LADIES GOLF SHOES** Etonic Lite, size 5, never used. £40. Whitley Bay 0191 2529915.

**ACOUSTICS GUITAR.** Fender 60/nat. Excellent condition, rarely used. £60. Whitley Bay 0191 2529915.

**KIPLING BAG.** Black bag with monkey cross body. Many storage features. Very good condition. Blyth 07548595157

**DIAMONIQUE EARRINGS.** Sparkling diamonique ½ ct each stud earrings, sterling silver, boxed. Very good condition. Blyth 07548595157

**BIBLE.** New with Hebrew, Greek and English translations. Blyth 07548595157

**PEARL EARRINGS.** Genuine 9ct gold pearl earrings with butterfly studs. Very good condition. Blyth 07548595157

**WILLOW TREE.** Angels of Miracles ornament. 3 angels holding hands with te lite centre. Boxed, very good condition. Blyth 07548595157

**PEARL NECKLACE.** Jaqueline Kennedy single rope made by Camrose & Kross to Kennedy family exact specifications, blue & white stone fastening in metal box, flocked as all her jewellery was. Very good

condition with certification. Blyth 07548595157

**LADIES' SHEEPSKIN** Coat. Three quarter length, leather trim, size 12. As new. £25. 0191 565 7144.

**OLD COUNTRY ROSES.** 6 Dinner Plates 26cm diameter, excellent condition. £60. Durham 0191 3832165

**M A S O N S IRONSTONE.** Green Chartreuse Jug. Excellent Condition £10. Durham 0191 3832165

**M A S O N S IRONSTONE.** Mandalay Red oval dish. Excellent condition £10. Durham 0191 3832165

**VINTAGE UKULELE,** green with cover. Excellent condition, cost £35 will accept £25. Tel Hartlepool 01429 273876

**TECHNICS GN3** organ spares or repair, £75 – Blackhall 0191 5863970

**LARGE JUICER** never been used, £10 – Blackhall 0191 5863970

**FISH KNIVES** and forks in a gift box. £10 Sunderland 0191 5657144

**ORGAN:** Technics EN4 manual organ. Excellent condition. £195. Collection only, Peterlee 0191 5866250

**COFFEE TABLE.** G plan coffee table, 4ft6in with glass top. £40, collection only, Peterlee 01915866250

**SINGLE DIVAN** with teak headboard. £45, collection only, Peterlee 0191 5866250

**FILING CABINET,** 4 drawer metal grey. £60, collection only, Peterlee 0191 5866250

**LAMPS:** Standing lamp and 2 matching table lamps, brass stands with cream and pinkfringe. Excellent condition. £70.00, collection only, Peterlee 0191 5866250

**CLOCK RADIO/** ipod/iphone dock system. Excellent condition from John Lewis £20. Consett 01207502950

**COPPER** Indirect Cylinder water tank, 117ltrs. Nearly New £100. Collection Only. Esh 0191 3730699

**KIRBY CLEANER** full set of tools, including The handy butler set, the spray unit etc. Brand New, still boxed, never used Free for collection. Blackhall 0191 5863970.

**EDWARDIAN SETTEE,** drop end settee in need of upholstery. £100, collection only. 07530 755659.

**BOOKSHELVES.** Polished solid wood bookshelves, 46" x 12" x 11/4" Now down to £10. Blackhall 07788456740

**DINNER SERVICE,** Tea & Breakfast with serving dishes. Over 40 pieces some still boxed. New condition. £25. Blackhall 0191 5871552

**SLIDING MIRROR DOORS** x3. Size 90" x 30" wide. £80. Hetton 01915269774

**CLARKE TOOLS,** Bandsaw, drillstand, bench grinder, woodwork vice, angle grinder stand £70. 01207 290297

**ROCKING HORSE,** full size £500. 01207 290297

**PINE DRESSING TABLE** 6 drawers. £60. Stockton 07930471519

**CANE** conservatory suite. Light coloured cane two seater settee and two chairs.

Lovely cream upholstery, very good condition £100. Newcastle 0191 2651980

**BUTLERS LIVES OF THE SAINTS** Vol. 1-6. FREE. Must collect. Shildon 01388 775237

**BABY SWING:** as new, £10 ono, Hartlepool 01429-280392

**BAG:** Nike shoulder-bag, black, suitable for student, unwanted gift, half price £10 – Chapel Park 0191-267 1061

**BOOKS** on film stars and television personalities. 50 hardback books in dust covers and in very good condition, All different biographies. £10. Boldon – 0191 5361746

**CHILD'S BED:** light wood bed for a small child, purchased at Ikea, includes mattress, £35 – Jarrow 0191-421 5261

**COMMUNION-1:** full length dresses, white with delicate detail on both, sizes age 7 and 10. Purchase price £130 each will accept £50 each – Rothbury 01669-622903

**COMMUNION-2:** first Holy Communion dress, worn twice, also head dress and veil, excellent condition, cost over £100, will accept £50 – New Silksworth 0191-523 5847

**CYCLE PARTS:** large box of assorted cycle parts, £25. Stanley. 0770- 897 1757

**DECORATING LADDERS** £35 - 01207 231566

**DINING ROOM:** mahogany suite, six chairs, good condition. £25 – Gateshead. 0191-492 2833 or 0798-327 9086

**ELECTRIC WOK:** new £17 01388-815271

**EXERCISE BIKE:** racing cycle type, assembled, excellent condition, never used. Complete with instructions. £80. Gosforth. – 0191-213 2065 or 0795-667 4928.

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**FRAME-TENT:** four-berth, including inner tent, good quality £95 – Sunderland 0191-528 6675

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**ORGAN:** Yamaha Portatone PSR-340 with floppy disc, excellent condition £90 – Newcastle 0191-273 1600

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□ Sign of our times – a woman wearing protective gloves lights a candle at Westminster Cathedral, above. Photo: Mazur/cbcw.org.uk  
Christ healing the sick – a detail from the 5th century mosaic in the Church of Saint Apollinare Nuovo, in Ravenna, right. Photo: Fr Lawrence Lew O.P.



# We should turn to scripture for enlightenment and encouragement

by Halina Holman

**I HAVE written many encouragements – and I hope too that I have encouraged many through the Grace of God – but now I find I need encouragement myself.**

Yet I must write what is in my heart, because if we write only when the sun is shining, how will we cope when the sun is dimmed and diminished?

We are in a time of increasing struggle. All over the world people are dealing with either poverty, wars, domination or conflict.

People are being killed all over the globe with little redress – and yes, we have another danger: coronavirus.

We are told that its effects are mild for most, save those who are older and/or have underlying health conditions. We are told it will pass – eventually. Yet country after country is either closing its borders or making emergency provision to combat this threat.

Fear has been growing and there is a general feeling of both apprehension and of being overwhelmed. Stockpiling abounds, while generosity still exists, but there is much self-interest being manifested.

Of course there are real difficulties and dangers, but there are other forms of illness infinitely more dangerous for us.

On an early morning television newscast a doctor gave advice on how to sustain people for a few months of isolation or short-term illness.

He said that as well as our bodies we must take care of our minds and hearts.

He had some practical tips, but the interviewer said, actually unexpectedly, “and our souls...there is help there”.

In these times words from the Lord come from unexpected sources.

Today the unthinkable was announced.

No services in churches...yes, unthinkable, yet it is happening.

Many years ago I received a word from the Lord which was: “What will you do when the churches are closed and the tabernacles empty?”

It was meant as a forewarning and a challenge.

Others have had similar words.

Over the years I have received many such messages and always found another way to explain them – shortages of priests, a loss of faith...but never did I imagine it would be a virus and a need to protect that would have the faithful deprived of the eucharist and Mass.

I also could not envisage that the leaders of the Church would comply with such a request, seemingly to protect us from a virus.

The words that come to me now are: “And what does it gain a man if he gains the whole world but suffers the loss of his own soul?” (Mark 8: 35-37).

I have found it difficult enough to comply with the already imposed restrictions – no handshakes, isolation, no receiving the Precious Blood from the chalice, and the manner of receiving Holy Communion – but never would I have believed that Mass for the people would be stopped.

Many have died over the centuries in order to maintain faith – martyrs, of this and other lands.

We know that once people leave the fold, for whatever reason, it is hard to bring them back. Many have already left and others are leaving in fear, leaving a remnant.

Jesus came to heal. (Matt.15: 29-31). The gospel abounds with histories of healing – of miracles of grace, of healing of minds and hearts as well as bodies.

He showed that He can heal either sin or illness or failure and bring about transformation.

We are now in Lent, leading to the celebration of a rising, a conquering of death and a rising to new life.

Surely this is a time when hope must be the hallmark of any faithful Christian.

**Today the unthinkable was announced. No services in churches...yes, unthinkable, yet it is happening.**

**Many years ago I received a word from the Lord which was: “What will you do when the churches are closed and the tabernacles empty?”**

**Over the years I have received many such messages and always found another way to explain them – shortages of priests, a loss of faith...but never did I imagine it would be a virus and a need to protect that would have the faithful deprived of the eucharist and Mass.**

We either believe that the Lord is a redeemer or that He is not.

We either believe that He can heal us and the nation or that He can't.

We either believe in the resurrection and eternal life – or we do not.

For those who do not believe, they have made their choice. But surely, for those who profess to believe and have not yet affirmed this in their hearts, this is a time of choice and commitment.

As we approach the deepening of this darkness we must depend on the Word of the Lord. This is the Year of the Word – The God who speaks. We must listen to those precious words and let them sink into our hearts and spirits to give us fresh hope.

We must not let the forces of the world defeat us with fear and gloom. It is in moments such as these that our faith is tested and grace abounds.

Let us look at some of these words which we must live out, and proclaim to others who feel alone and lost.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled” Matt 11: 28-30.

“They cried to the Lord and He saved them from their distress and sent out His word and healed them. He rescued them from the grave. Let them give thanks to the Lord for His

unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for mankind”. Psalm 107: 19-21.

This is a time not for hiding but for prayer and supplication. It is a time for us to be able to pray together...if necessary, six feet apart and smiling.

It is a time to proclaim that the Lord will release us from our misery.

Our shepherds, too, need our prayers so that they may continue to witness to God's love for us and our love of Him.

We must pray that they have the courage to lead us and not bow merely to temporal needs.

Isn't it strange how we admire those who have made a sacrifice for others yet somehow do not think it ever applies to us? We are the lights in a broken world, or we should be. A martyr is no more than a witness to the truth.

Not only must we witness, but we must trust that we will defeat the sources of darkness and despair.

In all that is happening in the world around us we must remember charity and joy.

We can all do something for our neighbour in whatever way – practically or spiritually.

“I assure you that anyone who gives you a drink of water because you belong to me will certainly receive his

reward.” Mark 9:41.

Let us give others real water, the water of life. I recall too, the words of St Pio: “Pray, pray, pray – hope and do not worry.”

As we approach Easter and we suffer the loss of communality, which we take for granted, maybe the Lord's Prayer will come to our rescue.

We must remember the loving heart of Our Mother who will intercede for us if we but allow her to do so with our trust in her maternal protection. She was, after all, at the foot of the cross and held her beloved son in her arms.

I conclude with a psalm many of us know, as it is deeply consoling:

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want

He makes me down to lie  
In pastures green.  
He leadeth me the quiet waters by.  
My soul He doth restore again  
And me to walk doth make  
Within the paths of righteousness  
E'en for His own name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,

Yet will I fear no ill.  
For thou art with me,  
And thy rod and staff me comfort still.

My table thou hast furnished  
In presence of my foes,  
My head Thou dost with oil anoint,  
And my cup overflows  
Goodness and Mercy all of my life,  
Shall surely follow me,  
And in God's house for evermore,  
My dwelling place shall be.

● Halina Holman is a member of The Host Apostolate, an association of lay faithful led by married and single people who wish to lead a life of prayer, evangelisation and formation in the pursuit of a life of holiness, faithful to the Gospel and teaching of the Church.

You can find out more about the association at thehostapostolate.org.



## Cross Su Doku

FOR Su Doku, each grid can be solved from the number clues in the grids.

Once you have got a logical sequence going, it gets easier.

But there are various tips to get you going.

To complete the puzzle grid, you need to fit every digit from 1 to 9 – in any order – in each row (reading

left to right) and in each column (top-to-bottom) and in each box of nine squares.

Start by concentrating on the boxes, after that try to work out what is missing in each row or column. Look for pairs of numbers which might point you to a third.

For strategies, hints and tips, visit [sudokuwiki.org](http://sudokuwiki.org).

Solution on page 7.

8					4			6
	2	7		6		8		
		5	1		2			
6				4				3
		2				1		
	4			1				5
			4		7	6		
		4		3		5	7	
3			5					1

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## Northern Cross-Word

## Northern Cross-word 448

YOU are invited to complete the Northern Cross-Word number 448 for the chance of a cash prize for an all-correct entry.

The £10 prize will be awarded to the sender of the first all-correct entry opened after the post delivery on Friday, April 24, 2020.

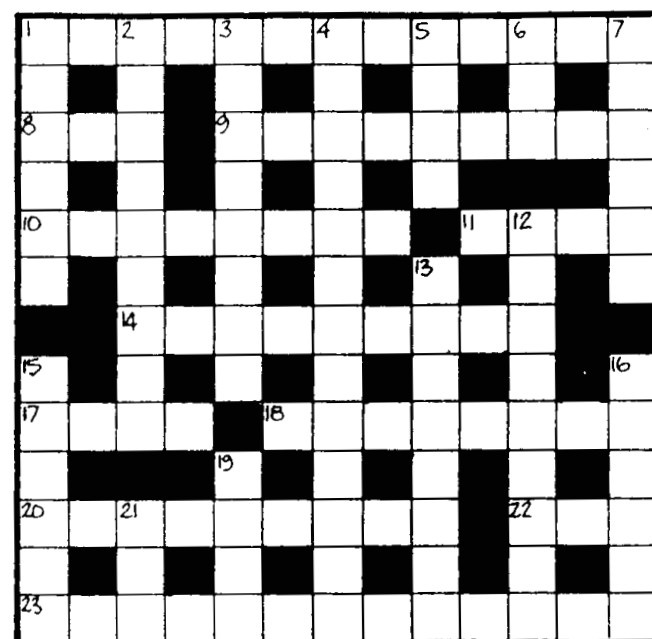
Prize Cross-Word entries should be clearly marked Northern Cross-Word 448 and sent to: Northern Cross, St Anne's Presbytery, 43 Welbeck Avenue, Darlington, DL1 2 DR.

## ACROSS

1. Contraction I'd offer as denial (13)
8. Encountered in prime time viewing (3)
9. Unsupported last press statement (9)
10. Strange beasts made me chairs (8)
11. Beast from tall ionic feature (4)
14. Invert Tor drawn by loner (9)
17. Quantities sent out (4)
18. Discuss the other way (8)
20. Get shirt and tie right in the drier (9)
22. Bow of the old boat they say (3)
23. Spectacular touch magnifiers (7,6)

## DOWN:

1. Issues about clowns (6)
2. I turn into recipe for food (9)
3. Honours with new sceptres (8)
4. Dream about tool drift and spot expert (13)
5. Put up with vestment (4)
6. That is about a century of chill (3)
7. Seeking out negative chant (6)
12. Times for forging tin salver (9)
13. Be awkward with each poem (8)
15. Still noise (6)
16. Responds regarding laws (6)
19. Two articles is about this area (4)
21. Pub is in winner's guide (3)



Name .....

Address .....

Postcode .....

The crossword is compiled by Peter Bew of Elwick

## Cross-Word solution number 447

THE £10 prize for the first correct solution goes to Katie Talbot of Prudhoe. Well done, your prize is on its way.

## ANSWERS

ACROSS: 4. Accused. 8. Around. 9. Install. 10. Tender. 12. Kiss. 13. Accomplice. 17. Enthusiasm. 18. Flex. 19. Erases. 21. Fantail. 22. Flagon. 23. Rending. DOWN: 1. Partial. 2. Cornice. 3. Knee. 5. Contribute. 6. Uptake. 7. Enlist. 11. Reputation. 14. Passage. 15. Amusing. 16. Cleave. 17. Exited. 20. Role.

## Children's Club

This month's Children's Club is a little different. Because our paper is online, not printed, you will have to print out our picture so you can colour it in. While you're doing that, think about and discuss which part of the Easter story it's showing. You might also think about why Jesus died on the cross, what it means for you in your life and even what the symbolism is behind the eggs which have become a tradition associated with Easter.

