



CATHOLIC POST

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A Little Nativity



Reception and Class 1 children at St Francis Catholic Primary School, Morley performed the Christmas play 'A Little Nativity'. It was an outstanding performance and the children participated throughout with confidence and enthusiasm. High praise was given by all that attended. As a school we feel that it is very important that the children understand the true meaning of Christmas. The Lady Mayoress of Morley, Judith Elliott, commended the children, parents and staff for their hard work in producing an enjoyable play.

Mary – Francesca Lambert; Joseph – Kieran Ryan; Donkey – Jack Mallinson; Angels – Charlotte Benson & Keira Pearce; Kings - Fintan Armour, Antionetta Sibanda-Ilimezekhe & Daniel Brown.

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The Post Says


By the time you read this, “Wherever You Are” by the Military Wives may be the best selling disk, download or whatever in this country. If not, you should buy a copy! If so, it will be richly deserved. Firstly, because it gives some credit to Gareth Malone, who must be the answer to every parish priest’s prayer: someone who can motivate the unwilling or uncaring to appreciate the wonder of singing, and especially singing together. Can you imagine enthusiastic singers at our masses, joining together to sing- or “pray twice over”, never uttering that ridiculous mantra “I can’t sing” and always reaching for their hymn book. Secondly, it reflects great credit on these “Military Wives”, a wonderful bunch of service wives, those who stand and wait, while their husbands serve in the forces, usually in Afghanistan. Their emotional performance and this release reminds us what is going on in a country far away, of which we do not know a great deal. These men are risking their lives, often on a daily basis so that our military objectives can be achieved- and if we do pause to ask what these objectives are, and seek reassurance, all well and good. The men do not ask such questions- they just do their duty for us. Every so often- too often- we hear of another fatal casualty in this war or see a badly injured soldier on TV. We need to think and pray for all of them, and to remember their families who they left behind, whose prayer this song has become. We may always not think of people like this who dread a knock on the door on a daily basis. For them this is a reminder to the rest of us, an act of solidarity together, from a group whom we may easily forget and who also need our prayers, especially in this season. “They also serve who only stand and wait.”

Prayer Week at St. John the Baptist Catholic Primary School, Normanton

by Sarah Wakefield (RE Co-ordinator)
 Mrs Lesley Darren (Headteacher)



Children at St. John the Baptist School in Normanton have started their Advent preparations by participating in a ‘Week of Prayer’ where children and staff have strengthened their relationship with Christ through a range of worship activities.



They have enjoyed activities such as liturgical dance, meditation through art and scripture, writing their own psalms, creating focal points for worship, singing favourite hymns, praying with parents and consolidating their knowledge of traditional Catholic prayers. Throughout this week we have created a retreat for our children and staff and given them time to come together to pray but also to provide individuals the time to become aware of themselves, their feelings and needs. The children have entered enthusiastically into all the activities and have shown reverence and a real enjoyment in the development of their spirituality.

Great Big God performance

Mre Daniels a parishioner and Teaching Assistant at St Francis School, Morley runs ‘The Great Big God Club’ after School on Mondays for our Key Stage One children. The children take part in activities based around the Sunday Mass readings. Activities include drama, Godly play, arts and craft and action songs. In Friday’s Praise Assembly the children performed ‘Our God is a Great Big God’, it was fabulous.



Sri Lanka twinning

St Francis, Morley have twinned with Smodel Primary School Denipitiya in Sri Lanka. We are sharing projects together. Our first shared project was ‘Our School’. On Wednesday 23rd November we received our first parcel containing work from the children of Denipitiya about their School. The children were very excited, the envelope contained an enormous amount of handwritten work about their School and Teachers. It was evident from the work that they were very proud of their School and had a great love of their teachers. All the children are forward to participating in our next shared project. The School in Denipitiya received our topic work this week.



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The Mirga Brothers play the Royal Albert Hall

Wednesday 9th November saw 44 pupils from St. Thomas a Becket Catholic College travel to London to watch Konrad, who finished Yr11 in 2011 and Adam Mirga, Yr 9, also known as The Mirga Brothers, play to an audience of 5000 as they opened the 3rd and final night of the Schools’ Prom 2011. The brothers played a short piece from the organ box, centre stage, to open the evening of music and then again as the concluding act with a piece they composed themselves called Amol Concert and a traditional Polish folk piece named Niesamowty, meaning ‘amazing’. The audience were wowed and amazed by the talent and skill shown by these young men and at certain points it was difficult to hear the music above the cheers from the audience! They followed their solo piece by joining The Spontaneous Folk Orchestra; a combination of musicians from across the country led by famous folk violinist Joe Broughton, who had visited St Thomas a Becket Catholic College to complete a workshop with the boys. They played a piece called We Meet Today and was an improvised piece highlighting the skills of many of the oyoung people who performed at the prom. Konnrad, 16 and Adam, 14, participated in the Music for Youth Festival regional heats earlier this year and received stunning feedback from the judges; their Polish Folk Music piece achieved them a rousing round of applause from all who were watching their performance of a piece from ‘The Godfather’ and saw them progress to the Regional final in Birmingham. Again, the judges were amazed by the skills Konrad displays on the violin and Adam on the accordion and were lost for words when sharing their judges’ comments, but there was no need to worry as the crowd of 30 pupils who made up the schools’ theatrical singing group ‘Pulse’ filled their stunned silence with cheers . Finally ‘The Mirga Brothers’ found themselves in Dressing Room No1 of the Royal Albert Hall ready to impress the 5000 strong crowd. Not a person in the Hall could fail to be impressed by the accomplishment of the boys and were even more impressed when the presenters informed everyone that neither boy can read music but learn all their pieces by ear; working with their grandfather to keep Polish traditions at the heart of the music they create. It was an amazing day and whilst The Mirga Brothers were doing a sound check rest of the pupils were visiting the Natural History Museum taking part in interactive video presentations and getting to grips with dinosaurs! It was an even better evening and no-one cheered louder than Becket’s pupils and staff who had gone along to support two of our own. Mr. Rooney, Head teacher of St. Thomas a Becket summed up the experience by saying “Incredible support in one incredible venue for two incredibly talented young men. I think we all returned to school the following day thinking ‘Did that really happen?’. Well it did and we were all extremely proud and privileged to have been there.”

WAKEFIELD MEETING DISCUSSES BUSES AND BUDGETS



It was standing room only in the hall at St Thomas a Becket High School on the evening of Tuesday 6th December as over 200 parents and parishioners from across the Wakefield district met to air their views on the local council's plan to end free transport to Catholic schools. As reported in October's 'Catholic Post', Wakefield council intends to withdraw free home to school transport from September 2013, a move which could affect over 750 Catholic pupils in the area and cost their parents nearly £300 pounds a year in each case.

The meeting was called so that people could make their views known in person to the Council's Cabinet member responsible for education, Councillor Olivia Rowley. After introductions and an opening prayer led by the local Dean, Fr Tim Swinglehurst, Cllr Rowley took to the microphone to explain her dilemma as a Catholic herself and as the chair of the governing bodies at both St Thomas a Becket's and St Austin's primary school, while at the same time promoting a policy that, if implemented, would have major repercussions for Catholic schools and families. She explained that the transport changes were designed to save

over £300,000 a year at a time when council departments were faced with having to make economies year on year running into millions of pounds.

For over an hour Cllr Rowley listened to the points made by members of the audience and was left in no doubt about the strength of feeling on the issue. She responded in turn to individual points but few were convinced of the Council's case or that it had really thought through the longer term consequences of its proposal, especially at a time when many families are themselves coming under financial pressure.

The meeting came just days before the formal public consultation period on the proposal ended on 9th December but it will be a few months yet before Cabinet members make a final decision in the spring of next year. At the end of the meeting it was agreed that Catholics in the Wakefield district should continue to make their views known to the local authority and particularly through contacts with their elected council representatives. Further developments on this issue in the New Year will be reported in the 'Catholic Post'.

Taize Schools Weeks- more visits now available

The Taizé Community, in Burgundy, south eastern France welcomes about 80,000 young people each year to participate in its international meetings. In 2012 two weeks have been designated as UK School Weeks: 1-8 and 8-15 July. For these weeks school and college groups including Year 10 - Year 13 students are especially invited to come and share the life of this community.

In preparation for these School Weeks, two volunteers from Taizé spent three weeks in November visiting UK schools, as reported in last month's Post. These two young men shared their own experiences, and talk about how they came to do a voluntary year working in the Taizé community. Visiting many schools from Yorkshire to Sussex, they met students in Years 10-13, to explain about the international youth meetings at Taizé, and the community life which everyone shares. Their visits were very well received-

Garry Swinton, Chaplain to Westminster City School and the Grey Coat Hospital, London, said: "They have been amazing at both my schools and the students have really taken to them. They were outstanding ambassadors for Taizé. My original intention was to bring about 20 students from my schools but I suspect after their visit we will be overwhelmed with students wanting to go."

Mary Stallard, chaplain at St. Joseph's Catholic and Anglican High School, Wrexham, said: "They went down brilliantly in school. The staff are very pleased and the

students really enthused. I cannot commend these two highly enough for their communication skills and friendliness – what great advocates for Taizé."

Sue Mayo, of the Chaplains in Schools Trust, Stockport, reported: "We had such a good time! I could have had them with me all week and was very sorry to put them on to the train yesterday. We had some very interested Year 10's in the schools we were in so I hope that interest translates into bookings."

Richard Edwards, chaplain at Steyning School in Sussex, said: "They have represented both Taizé and themselves with great panache and sincerity. My objective for the session was firstly to give all our Year 12s an impression of Taizé and an impression of an alternative look at life from their usual environment; and secondly to encourage some of them to consider whether they would benefit from a trip to Taizé itself. After this morning already three students have expressed an interest!"

There is information about the Taizé School Weeks at: www.taize.fr/schools including information for teachers and group leaders.

Demand for the school visits has been so great that a two more volunteers from Taizé will be visiting UK schools from 26 February to 17 March 2012. To request a school visit, contact UK Co-ordinator Jane Shields: jane@laloge.co.uk, or 01924 377921. For enquiries about Taizé School Weeks, contact one of the English brothers in the community: brpaolo@taize.fr



Two Charities For Christmas

The pupils of Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School entered a competition for St George's Crypt.

Three pupils were finalists and their poster designs were selected, with others, to be made into Christmas Cards to sell on behalf of the crypt. On Friday 9 December at 1pm, a

representative from the charity came to collect a cheque and to give a talk to the pupils.

While they were doing this worthwhile work – they were also as they are also buying Sylvia Wright Christmas cards so supporting two charities this Christmas.

WE NEED NEW BLOOD

The Leeds Diocesan Peru Commission is a team of helpers, which are a representation of several organisations in the Diocese, U.C.M., C.W.L., K.S.C. Halifax 3rd World Group, Priests who have served in Peru, Sisters of Mercy, and several representatives of various parishes and members of the Peru Crafts Group.

We meet approximately every 3 months, in different parts of the Diocese and our A.G.M. is always held at Hinsley Hall on the Saturday before Palm Sunday.

Many of our current members are in the 60 to over 70 age group. We need younger people to become involved. **HOW**

ABOUT YOU???? Can you spare approximately 2 hours every 3 months and of course help in any fund raising event.

Our main source of income is from the Annual Mandatory Collection on the 1st Sunday of Advent. It is imperative to keep the Commission involved and going for the support of our Priests and Sisters.

Contacts are: Peru Chairman, Fr. Dan Harrison; Secretary Mrs Shirley Poland; Treasurer, Mr Terry Bossons.

All their details can be found in the Diocesan Directory. **PLEASE HELP US TO CONTINUE THE GOOD WORK.**

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Female Fertility and Family Life



In David Lodge's 1960s comedy novel *How far can you go?* the main problem facing the Catholic married characters was how to be obedient to Church teaching in *Humanae Vitae* and at the same time enjoy rich and satisfying sex while avoiding having a baby every time they made love.

These days with one in six couples experiencing the opposite problem, natural family planning known then as the 'rhythm method' and the only recommended method in *Humanae Vitae*, still has something to offer. This time it is to couples who want to maximise their chances of having a baby.

The methods may have changed slightly since David Lodge's day but the truth of a woman's body remains the same and the science, and our understanding of it, has improved.

At a recent event on Fertility and Natural Family Planning, Dr Evleen Mann, the Diocesan NFP trainer, gave a fresh exposition of how a woman's cycle works, throughout the month and also throughout her lifetime. It seems that while we are all different, a woman is usually fertile for only about 4 decades of what is now likely to be an 8 or 9 decade life. During her fertile life she is only likely to be fertile for between 5-7 days every month. For some it may be much less and for others much more but this is a median average. The beauty of natural fertility is that each woman can accurately track her own fertility cycle.

It was generally agreed, in our all female session with Dr Mann, that this knowledge shared early enough could help girls to be more confident in their own bodies and selves and less

vulnerable to the lie our culture transmits that our sexuality is just another source of pleasure with little meaning and no emotional, physical or psychological consequences.

Because natural fertility does not protect either partner against sexually transmitted diseases a woman who wants to practice natural family planning needs a committed and supportive man who values her wholeness and respects her choices. It also requires a degree of restraint within the married relationship and that can be difficult for couples who have not worked out a more imaginative approach to their own sexuality.

Does it work? As a way of preventing pregnancy it works as well as it is used. As a way of increasing the chances of pregnancy it works as long as both are actually fertile. For more information contact Evleen at e.mann@dhfltd.com.



Some of the Parenting Facilitator Training students with Anne Pennock (front left) one of the training team.

Parenting Facilitator Training in Wakefield

By Breda Theakston

Wakefield Deanery has undertaken a remarkable new venture this year. For ten weeks of the autumn term nineteen volunteers from schools and parishes in the Deanery have been attending training in facilitation skills at St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School, Normanton.

This training has been made possible by the Celebrating Family Fund (www.celebratingfamily.org.uk/diocesanprojects/Leeds) of the Catholic Bishops' Conference.

The volunteers in the Wakefield Deanery are parents, parishioners, teaching assistants, governors, learning mentors and social workers who are working in parish/school teams of at least two. So, for instance, Bernadette Ahsan of St Joseph's Parish, Pontefract, is working with Mandy Dwyer of St Joseph's Parish school, Holy Family and St Michael's. In this way not only are home-school relationships fostered but also the important ideal of home-school-parish is

actualised.

The hospitality at St John's has been outstanding. Every week we use the Breakfast Room in the morning to deliver the training and in the afternoon the Board Room for tutorials, marking and planning. Pam, who listens to children read, brings a big bag full of the most delicious home made goodies for our coffee break. Iced cupcakes with hidden surprises (like a rolo) or decorated with a segment of chocolate orange, melt-in-the-mouth shortbreads, fruit cakes, marble cakes all sustain us and, while I would like to think it was the course and our engaging presentations, have ensured an almost 100% attendance throughout.

Now that the theoretical part of the course is almost complete, the students will go back to their schools and parishes and deliver a parenting programme from the Family Caring Trust (www.familycaring.co.uk). After a successful observed visit from the trainers and submission of two completed portfolios of work before Easter next year the work will be submitted for external validation with Open College Network (OCN).

Many thanks to Lesley Darren, Head Teacher, and all the staff at St John the Baptist's school, Pam, all the head teachers and parish priests who nominated the students and of course all the students themselves for making our Wednesdays so enjoyable.

Congratulations New Marriage Preparation Presenters

We start the new church year with ten new Marriage Preparation Presenters (MPPs) who will be serving three parishes and the Eritrean Community. The parishes that will benefit are: Our Lady of Kirkstall Leeds, Holy Redeemer Huddersfield and Mother of Unfailing Help Leeds which includes the Eritrean community which worships at Holy Rosary Church.

Each Monday evening for four weeks in November, the five married couples travelled to the Diocesan Pastoral Centre in Leeds where we went through the Diocesan Marriage Preparation Programme and considered all the key aspects of running a marriage preparation course from the practicalities to the course content including communication and conflict management skills, sexuality and family life and how this all makes sense in our understanding marriage as a sacrament.

On the final evening we closed with a liturgy and a party to celebrate the beginning of their new ministry. Many, many thanks to Kimberly

and Julian O'Rourke; Esperanza Arenas and Pedro Ballester; Alex and Peter Farrell; Susan and Michael Teggart and Eden Teklemariam and Meron Ghebremeskhele for accepting this important ministry and for engaging so positively with the material and the training. Congratulations all!

Thanks also to their parish priests for finding such capable and committed volunteers and to Jo Hill, for being there every week and, along with Rose McCarthy on Week 2, for sharing the training and your own experiences as Marriage Preparation Presenters.

Bishop Arthur will be celebrating Mass especially for all married couples with significant anniversaries and renewal of vows, at the Cathedral Saturday 4th February 2012 (see box).

Next Year's Presenter Training Dates: Tuesdays 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th November
Contact flm@flm.org.uk for details. More on Family Life Ministry at www.flm.org.uk



Bishop to celebrate Mass for Marriage

If you have a special wedding anniversary coming up or if you would like to renew your marriage vows then put Saturday 4th February in your diary now! At the 6pm Vigil Mass on that day at the Cathedral in Leeds Bishop Arthur will celebrate special Mass to honour and celebrate all married people and especially those who have a significant anniversary anytime next year.

Everybody's welcome, including all married couples and their families, engaged couples, couples thinking about marriage, Marriage Preparation Presenters and those in parishes and local communities who support married people in their daily lives, loves, hopes, disappointments and joys.

If you would like to renew your vows you are very welcome to join us and can just turn up on the day.

If you have an anniversary that you would like celebrated at that Mass please contact Breda at the Family Life Ministry Office by January 27th at the latest.

There will be a complementary celebratory table to share celebration food after the Mass so if you plan to stay for that please let Angela know how many to expect before the end of January Call 0113 261 8050 and leave a message or email her at admin@flm.org.uk

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Mass for Marriage

You are warmly invited to celebrate your marriage, especially if you have a significant anniversary, and to renew your vows

6pm Sat 4th February 2012
Leeds Cathedral
Celebrated by Bishop Arthur
Refreshments after – bring the family!

Details www.flm.org.uk or call 0113 261 8050

News From St John Fishers Harrogate

CHILDREN IN NEED

Sixth formers from St John Fisher Catholic High School organised a fantastic fund-raising day for Children in Need, with pantomimes, red and black games, cake bakes, leg waxing, hair dyeing and lots of dressing up for the whole school to join in. Students are still raising money through a variety of events, but the total so far is over £3,000!

WIZARD OF OZ

St John Fisher Catholic High School staged a magical production of the Wizard of Oz on 23, 24 and 25 November. Sound performances with good comedy moments, creative choreography, attention to detail and accomplished musical accompaniment led to a truly excellent interpretation of one of the world's best loved musicals. Ackrills reporter Maggie Gell reported on excellent performances from main characters (Robyn McIntyre as Dorothy, Joe Cahill as the scarecrow, Michael McGeough as the Tin Man, Ben McGettigan as the cowardly lion, Emily Nunns at the good witch, Louisa-Mai Kuster as the wicked witch, Connor Sheridan as Professor Marvel/The Wizard, Florence McCudden as as Aunt Em and Pat Sheerin as Uncle Henry) and praised the dramatic direction of Karl Hansen and musical direction of Rachel Brooks in an enjoyable night of entertainment that reflected a lot of hard work.

JAZZING IT UP

The St John Fisher Jazz Orchestra has experienced the high life in London with a magnificent performance at the Royal Albert Hall and an in-depth, backstage interview on Classic FM. The Jazz Orchestra was invited to perform at the Music For Youth Prom after winning an award for their outstanding performance at the Music For Youth National Finals in Birmingham in July.

Performing two pieces arranged and directed by Nigel Beetles, Head of Music at St John Fisher Catholic High School, musicians from the St Aidans and St John Fisher Associated Sixth Form participated in the School Prom, which was part of the London Jazz Festival.

St John Fisher Jazz Orchestra has been performing for 25 years. During the last 10 years, under the direction of Nigel Beetles, the orchestra has developed from a simple Swing Band to a full scale Big Band. As the current Harrogate Festival Jazz ensemble winner, the St John Fisher Jazz Orchestra regularly achieves national success and is in high demand for events across Yorkshire and beyond.

Nigel Beetles said, "Representing Harrogate at The Royal Albert Hall and featuring on national radio has been a real privilege for the school and the students. In fact, some of our ex-Sixth Form students joined us for the concert, taking time out from University to help us deliver an absolutely exceptional performance. Including

creative singing, sound imitation and musical excellence, the two pieces we performed were complex but well rehearsed and executed extremely well. We are delighted to have been rated as one of the best Jazz Orchestras in the UK. We are very proud of the the hard work and dedication of the students and the support of their parents, which continues to pay off."



SVP Welcomes Visitors From India

The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) in Leeds recently welcomed two members of the Society from India, Bro. Balaswamy, the National President, and Bro. Prakasham, the National Project Officer.

On the first evening, they met Society members in Harrogate and spoke about the charitable work of members in India and how the Society is growing, particularly in the northern states. The following day they visited the SVP shop in Middleton, Bro. Prakasham even buying Manchester United shirts (in Leeds!) for his son and nephew. Later they visited St Jude's Furniture Store in Holbeck, where they were entertained to lunch. They were very impressed by both the shop and the store. In the evening, after Mass, they had dinner at Hinsley Hall with members of the Leeds Central Council.

During the visit they stressed the importance of the Twinnage scheme, which links Conferences here with those in India. The scheme brings together members to share in prayer, letter-writing and financial support, so creating a world-wide family concerned with helping people in need - "Turning concern into action". The Brothers reported that there are now almost 70,000 members in 6,700 Conferences in India (10,000 in 1,100 in England and Wales). In the Leeds Diocese, there are 82 Twinnage links with India (plus 16 with Sudan and 4 with Romania.).

Before leaving for further meetings in London, Bros Balaswamy and Prakasham said how much they had enjoyed their visit to Yorkshire and thanked the members for their continuing prayers and support.

Further information on the SVP from your local Parish Conference.



Sidelines



Odd things send a shiver down your spine: one of these is the story of the hospital TV's. Many will remember the good old days when you could take your own little TV into hospital: nowadays few opportunities are missed to capitalise on a captive audience. Patients say that health minister Andrew Lansley now appears on bedside TV systems installed in NHS hospitals on a permanent loop welcoming them to hospital and extolling the virtues of the system.

The problem is that you have to register for TV & e-mail at a cost of at least £5 a day to turn him off. He is even subtitled so if you manage to reduce the volume a bit, the message remains. It can look like a bizarre scene in Curry's, with multiple Lansleys overlooking the sick.

As someone pointed out, you wonder where you heard of this before: in George Orwell's prophetic 1950's novel "1984" the then newly launched TV was foretold to be present in every room, extolling the virtues of the state- and you could not turn it off. What next?

We have talked about the effects of the St Paul's protests in London: now a group in the US called "Occupy Catholics!" wants to know where the Catholics are in all of this: "sitting on the sidelines" may be the answer. Are these protestors just the hot-headed or are they, in the US, the mirror of the right-wing nationalistic Tea-Party movement, a group which would probably regard a lot of the church's social teaching as pretty suspect? It's a balance over there that is much needed in an election year.

More odd things- a presumably tongue-in-cheek newspaper story comes from the Vatican's own newspaper "Osservatore Romano" which objects to one of Belgian author Herge's Tintin books- apparently republished in the wake of the new film- being sold here with a warning message about its 1930's portrayal of black Africans. Is it "an appropriate protection of the defenceless children of Her Majesty, or politically correct lunacy in the shadow of Big Ben" the columnist rails. "Can it really perturb young Britons of today, raised as they are on the internet, video games and fish and chips?", the last bit probably reflecting the fact that it may have been a while since the author ventured in this direction, the closure of Harry Ramsdens in Guiseley reflecting the fact that these same young people were equally likely to be raised on some good pasta. The author goes on to remark that if we are so politically correct, then we would ban Lord Baden Powell's scouts because of their founder's racial views. Here, his or her argument really seems built on sand: we have indeed moved forwards from any such attitudes in scouting and would not republish any book which expressed such attitudes: just as we have moved forwards from Herge's 1930's approach to these Congolese people and need to say so, too.

Anyway, that's a cue for our new year message: Never look back: following Christ means always moving forwards on the pilgrim way. Never look back...on your journey, let that be your....

Benchmark

Musical Notes by Tim Devereux



I must start with a confession and a spoiler-alert. The confession: I missed Mass recently! And the spoiler alert: this month, I'm mostly looking back, so more about endings than beginnings. But first, the notices! West Yorkshire Church Music network's next afternoon is on Sunday 5th February, and the topic is 'Lent and Easter music', venue: St Joseph's, Pudsey.

That Mass was on a Friday evening (so you can relax a little - I'm not such a brazen sinner as you might suppose), for the bereaved of St Joseph's parish, and prayers were said for all those who have died in the last year. I had hoped to go, to remember a housebound lady to whom I took Communion but unfortunately, I had a family occasion to attend. A fellow parishioner told me about the music - the new plain song Mass setting, a nice mix of traditional and modern hymns, and as bereaved individuals and families lit candles for their loved ones, the Pie Jesu from Fauré's Requiem was played on the organ:

'Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem' (which can be translated: "Sweet Lord Jesus, grant them rest")

The following week, I was singing in a choir at a World Aids Day event in Leeds, and one of the songs we sang was 'Famba naye', a Shona hymn. It was the stand-out song of our brief performance - the harmonies sounding really beautiful as the parts interwove. (There's a link below to a Bradford Girls choir singing it at Lourdes).


I didn't know then that it is often sung at funerals in Zimbabwe. I thought about the people at the event - raising money to help those suffering from Aids; and I thought about the funerals in Zimbabwe - many doubtless due to Aids, and its inadequate treatment in a country run by an elderly despot.

As well as the Shona words, we sang some lyrics in English too - you may recognise them:

'Keep you in peace until we all meet again
Keep you in peace until we meet once again'
And that seems an appropriate Christmas greeting to you, dear reader!

Links:

Tim Devereux tim.devereux@ssg.org.uk
If you'd like to add your name to the email list to receive information about WYCM Network events, I'd be happy to hear from you.
'Bradford Girls Choir': <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1luXUrZXhk>
WYCM Network: <http://www.westyorkshirechurchmusic.org.uk/>
National Network of Pastoral Musicians: <http://nnpm.org/>
Society of Saint Gregory: <http://www.ssg.org.uk/>

Deacons Diary


First, the next meeting for the Deacons of the Diocese is SATURDAY 3rd MARCH 2012- a day of recollection from 10-4. at Myddleton Grange Ilkley. Deacons in the diocese should have received an e-mail about this. If not, contact nick@laloge.co.uk. Another meeting took place recently at Hinsley Hall- the National Meeting for Deacon Directors and Deacon Delegates, which takes place in Leeds every year. It was the last meeting for Chairman Fr Ashley Beck as his tenure comes to an end. Much of the meeting was attended by Bishop Terry Draine. The first session was to be a presentation by Dr Anna Rowlands from the Margaret Beaufort Institute at the University of Cambridge on Asylum and Catholic Social Teaching. Fr Ashley found himself with a repeat of the problems which dogged him at the national Deacons' Conference: Dr Rowlands was ill but fortunately well organised, and her address and powerpoint was delivered on her behalf. This was a reminder to deacons of the service that they should deliver, not least to the refugee, whether political or economic. Further discussions ranged over Deacon training, and the introduction of the amended translation of the Roman Missal which produced a lively debate, together with the interestingly structured questionnaire on the diaconate recently circulated by the Congregation for the Clergy. Deacons are reminded about the New Diaconal Review, a publication with a strong family resemblance to the Pastoral Review which is one of the first journals of the diaconate. Finally, there was a discussion about the national Deacons' Conference itself at Strawberry Hill earlier in the year, and its highs and- even- lows (mainly confined to limitations in disabled access and accommodation, once you had become used to the methodology of student dining) Deacons had travelled to this "4D" conference from as far away as Somerset, and meeting and talking were, as so often, an important benefit. More dioceses have now developed structures for the diaconate in the two distinct areas outlined in the official Directory for Deacons- Deacons in Service and Deacons in Formation. It was also pointed out that our national Directory for the life and formation of Deacons is published, but only online. Go to <http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk/Catholic-Church/Publications> and then click on the right part of the table (the top) for a Word document that can be printed off. If there is sufficient demand, it will be officially printed!

Interfaith week

The week of 21st November saw national Interfaith Week.

To open the week the Interfaith Network for the UK gathered 50 senior religious figures, including national leaders at Central Hall Westminster.

The opening speakers were the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, Lord Sacks of Aldgate and the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr Rowan Williams. Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Rt Hon Eric Pickles also offered his reflections from a Government perspective.

The discussion explored aspects of how faith communities contribute to society; continue to develop strong patterns of inter faith understanding and practical cooperation; and engage with wider society for the common good.

Videos of the three opening presentations can be found on the Inter Faith Week website www.interfaithweek.org with further information <http://www.communities.gov.uk/newsstories/co-mmunities/2035473>

Looking in the other direction

One of the difficulties in interfaith dialogue is that we know of the shades and tones of our own community but tend to regard “The Other” as a monolith that can provide definitive answers to any questions that we pose.

Just for the exercise in the coming Christmas season, stop and take stock of the festival. How would you explain it, together with its rituals and family customs to a complete outsider?

It is Jesus' birthday. Well, it is and it isn't. It is the day on which we remember his birth but it is not an anniversary day as other religions sometimes keep the birthdays of their heroes as they do know the exact anniversary day. It is also the feast of incarnation, of God made Man. And if we are scrupulously honest we actually stole the mid-winter festival from the pagans and Christianised it by crow-barring Jesus in there.

Enough of the complicated theology! Do we know why we do what we do at Christmas? Do we all go to Midnight Mass? Do we open presents on Christmas morning? Before or after Mass? Do we all have a tree? What is the significance of the crib? Why do some people not put the Christ-child in the crib until Christmas morning? Are you allowed to put the bambino in the crib before Christmas Day? And don't even think about starting on when the Magi can be added!

To us, used to rolling out family rituals, all these questions are faintly ridiculous. But to someone who does not know, who does not understand they form the nuts and bolts of the feast. They are the physical characteristics that they need to grasp before they can move on to the belief that underpins “the outwards signs of inward grace”

Christian –Muslim Forum

Two further conferences on engagement with Islam & Muslims organised by the Christian – Muslim Forum

Engaging with Muslims
Birmingham, 10.00am to 4pm, 31 January 2012
A day event for Christians to explore why and how to engage with Muslims

- Why is it OK to engage with Muslims?
- What should we know about Birmingham Muslims?
- Christian Responses to Islam
- Mission and Dialogue

Conference for Christian and Muslim school staff “Creating a Faith-Friendly Learning Environment”
London, 9.15am to 5pm, February 4th
This conference aims to bring together Christian and Muslim school staff to get to know each other and share their experiences as people of faith in a school environment. There will be a number of activities and workshops designed to support teachers in their professional role and provide them with practical ideas that can be applied within a school and classroom context. Subsidies may be available to pairs or groups of Christians and Muslims who are in Near Neighbours locations, locally that means Bradford, Burnley, Oldham.

Further information and booking:
Christian Muslim Forum 0207 820 0444, info@christianmuslimforum.org

Is the school examination system “fit for purpose”?

On 29 November, Mr Robert Pritchard, Headteacher of St. Mary's Catholic High School, Menston gave evidence to the Education Select Committee at The House of Commons. The topic was the examination system and whether it is "fit for purpose". Mr Pritchard found this a great opportunity to contribute to the decision-making at a national level.

The exam system has grown massively complex over the last few years and many schools have seen a growth in cost and also a growth in mistakes, with young people being bombarded with external assessment and also controlled assessment within schools. The Government is looking to simplify the system and align the qualifications with a clear rationale. The three main exam boards came under fire from the four Headteachers who were asked to give evidence. Some of the mistakes are unforgivable, and also the quality of marking appears to have declined over the years. There was also a great deal of debate about modular exams and the retakes which seem to grow year on year. Mr Pritchard pointed out that the January exam series runs for nearly a month this year, with examinations every day. Time should be spent on teaching the students and not round after round of testing.

The Headteachers were thanked by the panel of MP's for their contribution and have been asked to submit further evidence in writing.

The Jewish tradition is very strong on handing details down to the next generation so that they know and can form their own children when the time comes. At the Passover meal it is the duty of the youngest child present to ask the ritual questions about the special items used and what is happening. And it is part of the ritual that the questions are answered. The tradition suggests that four different kinds of people will be present at the Seder Table.

The young infant who asks nothing because they are too young (or if they are older, too ignorant) to appreciate the specialness of the occasion.

The child who asks “What is this?” as he sees the Seder Table for the first time. He has no idea that these physical objects carry any religious significance, he just wonders what they are.

Then there are two adults

One who is there but only in body and asks. “What does this mean to you?” He knows that the objects carry religious significance but does not want to own it

Then there is the adult that we probably aspire to be who asks, “What does this mean to me?” We know that this is of significance, it is of God and it deepens our relationship with him.

So, as they arise examine the rituals that your family uses this Christmas. Most, if not all have a religious significance rooted partly in the Gospel and partly in custom & tradition: Candles, tinsel, evergreens, mince pies, the crib scene, Santa Claus.

Festivals in December and January

Wed 21st December Hanukkah (Jewish)
Hanukkah is the Festival of Lights and marks the restoration of the temple by the Maccabees in 164 BCE. Hanukkah is celebrated at roughly the same time as Christmas, but there is no connection at all between the festivals.

Thur January 5th Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh (Nanakshahi calendar) (Sikh)
Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) was the tenth and last of the Sikh Gurus. He instituted the Five Ks and established the Order of the Khalsa

Sat January 14th Makar Sankranti (Hindu)
Makar Sankranti is one of the most important festivals of the Hindu calendar and celebrates the sun's journey into the northern hemisphere
Makar Sankranti is one of the most important festivals of the Hindu calendar and celebrates the sun's journey into the northern hemisphere, a period which is considered to be highly auspicious.
There is a wide variation in the celebration of Makar Sankranti throughout India, in particular the name.

Sun January 15th Seijin Shiki (Adults' Day) (Shinto)
Japanese who have reached legal adulthood (20 in Japan) in the previous year attend a shrine to give thanks. 20 is the age of majority in Japan

Sat January 28th Vasant Panchami (Hindu)
Dedicated to Saraswati, the goddess of learning and Brahma's wife. The festival marks the beginning of Spring.

Tues January 31st Birthday of Guru Har Rai (Nanakshahi calendar) (Sikh)
Guru Har Rai (1630-1661) was the seventh of the Sikh Gurus.



Congolese Bishops call for calm during Democratic Republic of Congo elections

On 28th November millions of Congolese voted in their country's second elections in 40 years. A delegation of Catholic Congolese Bishops (CENCO) called on all candidates to keep the peace and when the result is known, to respect it, without turning to violence.

Archbishop Marcel Utembi of Kisangani said: "Our wish is that the winner will be a good leader; one who will respect the constitution, respect his duty to society, take office peacefully and give people the opportunity to work. Through this we can witness the development of our country."

A terrible legacy

Much is at stake as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) prepares for its second round of national elections. It is one of the world's most poverty-stricken nations, with its infrastructure barely functioning. A country the size of Western Europe, it has only 300 miles of tarmac road.

More than 3 million people died in the second Congo War of 1998-2003. Peace deals that were brokered between the warring parties in 2002, late 2007 and early 2008 have not put a stop to violence or human rights abuses, and rape and sexual violence are now an endemic problem. More than 1,000 people are dying daily from preventable diseases, poverty and sexual violence. An estimated 80 per cent of the population live on less than \$2 a day and life expectancy is just 47 years.

A pivotal time

The delegation of CENCO Bishops who visited the UK in October expressed their grave concern at the continued destabilisation of the country. Both Congolese and foreign armed



militia are linked to the illegal exploitation the country's natural resources, such as coltan (used in mobile phone manufacture), gold and diamonds. The Bishops described these militia groups as spreading "death and desolation" with "extraordinary cruelty".

Bishop John Arnold, Chair of CAFOD, who travelled to DR Congo in July, said:

"Now is a pivotal time for the future of the DRC. The country showed promise and made significant progress after the elections in 2006. However, much remains to be done. The international community will need to be generous in assisting whoever wins the coming election, to ensure that the Congolese people truly have the possibility to flourish. One of the most worrying issues that continues to undermine lasting development and progress is the continued conflict across the country. People live in fear and many communities are victims of attacks, rapes and murders by bandits and militia groups".

Please pray for the people of DRC at this crucial time.

Clean Water for All



CAFOD's Thirst for Change Campaign to launch in January

- Taps and toilets save lives. They're vital for good health, education, work – and human dignity
- The UN recognised this with Millennium Development Goal 7, as have the G8 and the UK in the past.
- Yet 884 million people lack access to safe water and 2.6 billion are without basic sanitation

This means that:

- One in eight people around the world can't access clean water.
- Every 20 seconds a child dies from preventable diseases caused by poor water and sanitation
- 1.7 million deaths each year are caused by poor water, sanitation and hygiene – more than from all forms of violence, including war.

As well as this many families have no choice but to walk for hours to fetch dirty water from the nearest river. Often this task is

undertaken by young people, who then of course cannot attend school.

CAFOD is already working hard to change this situation but in January we will launch a campaign to put even more energy into this vital work. As well as this during the whole of Lent 2012 we will be praying, raising awareness and fundraising to help communities gain access to clean water.

The great news is that for the Lent fundraising period only, as a one off grant, every pound we raise will be matched by DIFID! (The Department for International Development).

- We will be sending packs to every parish and school in January to ask for your help in making the most of this fantastic opportunity.
- We are also having a 'Walk for Water' on 2nd March World Water Day.

Watch this space for more news after Christmas!



Advent Hope

Advent Hope was the theme of a CAFOD Reflection Day for Religious given by Fr. Augusto Zampini and CAFOD.

Fr Augusto Zampini, (front row far right) a theologian from Argentina who is completing Doctoral Studies in London, offered an insightful approach to Advent that inspired all who were present. He explored Advent as a time that brings hope, but what is the nature of that hope?

Christ is Born today – always a new and renewing event.

Fr. Augusto urged us to think not in a circular way - that 'Christmas is coming round again' - but rather to think in a linear unfolding of God's plan, here and now. He wanted us to think of the Good News being announced first to a 'favoured woman' (Annunciation), then to a favoured family – Elizabeth and Zechariah (Visitation), then to a favoured people (Acclamation) and finally to a favoured creation (Birth of the Cosmic Christ).

Beginning with the Advent scriptures, he invited us to regard the Annunciation as God's call to each one of us, God's invitation to recognise anew our own unique calling. God comes to Mary, a 'favoured woman' because she is receptive and open.

Advent is a time for discernment, for interpreting dreams. Mary asks, 'How can this be?' What is God's dream for us?

References in the Advent Scriptures to the desert, especially in Isaiah and in the story of John the Baptist, call us to recognise the 'desert' as a place where we, too, can prepare for the way for the Lord. We can listen to God's dream for each one of us, we can begin the process of discernment. Can we find a place or the space to leave aside the distractions, the clutter in our lives, even for a short time, so that we, like Mary, can become more receptive and open? This. Fr. Augusto suggested, would be a life-giving way to prepare for the coming of the Lord.

Visitation

In exploring the scene when the pregnant Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, Fr. Augusto suggested that the child in Elizabeth's womb leaping for joy is a

symbol of a hope to be shared with all generations. Such hope is never for individuals alone but is always to be shared.

This special visit shows us what happens when a real encounter takes place – person to person. The outcome is overwhelming joy and compassion, something new happens for each person, a transformation. For Mary, her heart burst into the the exquisite song of praise the Magnificat.

During this Advent, the invitation is open to us to visit someone and make it a real person-to-person encounter, filling the 'valleys' of loneliness, where something transforming will happen.

Acclamation

The baby Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes, a mantle of justice and the good news of his birth was announced to lowly shepherds. The hope of a new beginning is acclaimed by the shepherds and God's new reign is announced. When Christ comes there is hope for inclusion, hope for all- even the poorest and the lowliest and so it is in our day too.

Jesus 'the first-born of all creation'

Advent is a time when we become more fully aware that we are awaiting 'new heavens' and 'new earth'. (2Pt 3:8-14). A Saviour has been born who dwells amongst us heralding an era when we will live in right relationship with each other and within creation. Amidst all the rampant consumerism is there the hope of living more simply, sustainably and in solidarity with people who are poor?

God's reign of peace and justice is upon us – straightening the winding ways of our confusions and complexities – but telling us, too, that the path Jesus took was one of service and love – a love that is not without pain but love given as gift.

Let us pray this Advent that we be open and receptive enough to recognise 'Emanuel~ God-with-us' in the midst, the messiness and the mystery of our every day, ordinary and extraordinary lives. That's the message of Christmas that brings true hope.

Margaret Siberry

Think Global Act Local – Young People Lead The Way

Thursday 1st December saw the launch of a unique resource for our diocese. Over recent years, the team at Myddelton Grange Retreat Centre, Ilkley and the students of the schools visiting them have campaigned to raise awareness about the effects of climate change on the world's poorest people and the impact our lifestyles have on the environment.

To help with the campaign, Francis McCrickard of the Myddelton Grange team and Shelagh Fawcett Coordinator of Leeds Diocese Justice and Peace Commission came up with the idea of a Climate Change Walk or 'Stations of the Environment' about the land surrounding the retreat centre.

The result is eleven 'stations' or stopping points, each with a beautifully designed board containing local and global information as well as spiritual reflections. The walk takes people not only on a journey through the extensive woodland and farmland of Myddelton but also on a much deeper journey. Each station gives information about its location but also makes connections with the global reality of climate change and invites a spiritual reflection.

Staff and students of St. Mary's School, Menston have assisted in the project and

CAFOD, the Catholic Church's aid agency has also supported with resources and advice. Commenting on the student involvement, Shelagh Fawcett said,

'It is great to see our young people so passionate about creating a more just world and to witness their creativity in encouraging us all to recognise what we can do to make a difference.'

Margaret Siberry, CAFOD Leeds Manager added,

'The fact that the launch of the 'Stations of the Environment' has been timed to coincide with the UN Summit on Climate Change in Durban is wonderful. It highlights the urgency of the need to agree an ambitious and fair deal for the world's poorest people, those who are affected most by climate change. The Climate Change Walk is a really creative way to put faith into action.'

The Myddelton Grange Climate Change Walk was officially opened by Kris Hopkins MP for Keighley and Mg Kieran Heskin, who also blessed the first 'station' and celebrated the launch with a liturgy. James Buchannan from CAFOD's Campaign team also spoke about the contribution the Myddelton Grange team is making towards Climate Justice.



Diocese of Leeds Vicariate for Evangelisation YOUTH & FAMILY LIFE MINISTRIES

The Diocesan Youth Service & Family Life Ministry offer a five week introductory course covering the following:

- **Context:** The realities of life for families and young people today. How can, or does, the church respond to their needs?
- **Message:** What does the Church have to proclaim to families and to young people?
- **Impact:** What does this mean for the way young people and families live their mission and make choices?
- **Practice:** Youth and Family Life Ministries aim to equip families and young people to live their mission
- **Pulling it all together:** How do we talk about Youth and Family Life Ministries? How do we embark upon those ministries ourselves?

**The course runs from 7.15 – 9.30 pm
on the following dates in 2012:**

Tuesday 10th January, Tuesday 17th January, Tuesday 24th January,
Tuesday 31st January, Tuesday 7th February

This is one of the specialist modules for the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) but can be taken as an individual course.

All sessions take place at Hinsley Hall and will be led by
Anna Cowell & Breda Theakston

Cost £50

For further information or to book please contact Janine Garnett on 0113 261 8040 or janine.garnett@dioceseofleeds.org.uk

Diocese of Leeds Vicariate for Evangelisation PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION – A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

The Vicariate for Evangelisation offers a five week introductory course covering the following:

- What can we know and how do we know it?
- An examination of the problems of speaking meaningfully about God. What does it mean to say that God is omnipotent, omniscient and eternal or everlasting?
- Introduction to the classic and contemporary arguments for and against the existence of God.
- Philosophical reflections on the problem of evil and suffering in the world

**The course runs from 7.15 – 9.30 pm
on the following dates in 2012:**

Tuesday 10th January, Tuesday 17th January, Tuesday 24th January,
Tuesday 31st January, Tuesday 7th February

This is one of the specialist modules for the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) but can be taken as an individual course.

All sessions take place at Hinsley Hall and will be led by
Fr Steven Billington

Cost £50

For further information or to book please contact Janine Garnett on 0113 261 8040 or janine.garnett@dioceseofleeds.org.uk



National Award for St. Mary's Work in South Africa

Fourteen students from St. Mary's Catholic High School, Menston; George Brabin, Georgina Byrne, Jamie Carter, Jessica Connolly, Eleanor English, Torquil Hall, Ciara Hanstock, Freya Kew, Harry Minchella, Robert Neesam, Brogan O'Connor, Gemma Pennock, Patrick Smith and Alessandra Valle-Metaxas have been presented with the Diana International Award at the prestigious British Council Schools Award ceremony at the HSBC Headquarters in Canary Wharf, London.

Students Torquil Hall and Brogan O'Connor collected the award on behalf of the group and gave a presentation on the school's work in South Africa; the Bambisanani Partnership.

Earlier in the year the fourteen students from St. Mary's had travelled to South Africa to develop the partnership. This involved mentoring twenty students from Mnyakanya High School in leadership skills. Together, students from both schools planned and delivered a Sports Festival and Leadership Festival to four Primary Schools in the Nkandla area. The students also coached sport and taught a range of other curricular areas. The group also worked at a Zulufadder orphanage near Eshowe.

Maggie Turner, Chief Executive of the Diana Award praised the work of the St. Mary's students describing it as "truly inspirational".

Brogan O'Connor from St. Mary's said:-

"It is a great honour to receive this award. I hope it inspires other schools to get involved in this kind of international work where everyone involved learns so much".

The St. Mary's students were accompanied to London by teacher Lucy Thornton and business sponsor Mick Russell from HSBC both of whom had travelled to South Africa with the students in the summer.

Praise for St. Mary's Catholic High School



St. Mary's Catholic High School pupils were recently involved in a special Stephen Lawrence assembly with Claire Lockwood from the Stephen Lawrence Education Standard, as guest speaker.

The standard aims to challenge prejudice and celebrate diversity in schools. Form group, 9 Clitherow were the recipients of the school's award for their work on a project completed during Refugee Week in June. The project involved working with different resources and external agencies including the Police, RETAS (Refugee Education and Advice Service) and the City of Sanctuary initiative to challenge misconceptions on asylum seekers and immigrants into Leeds.

St. Mary's also celebrated the work of the winners of an art and poetry competition, launched to promote the ideas and aims of the Stephen Lawrence Standard in school. The winning entries, both by Year 8 pupils, Eve Wilson and Molly Steele, will be displayed in all classrooms of the school and on the school's website. Claire Lockwood praised the work of the school, commenting that she was "utterly impressed with the work of the students and staff".



Professor Freda Bridge helps celebrate success at St. Mary's

The outstanding GCSE results of St. Mary's, Menston were this week celebrated at the annual Year 11 Achievement Evening Presentation Evening. This year the school recorded superb GCSE results with 86% of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grade A*- C, and 50% of students gaining three or more A*/A grades. The school also posted the best English Baccalaureate results in the City.

In addition to the presentation of GCSE certificates, Professor Freda Bridge, Principal of Leeds Trinity University College was guest of honour when Year 12 students received their Certificates and Subjects Awards. Professor Bridge celebrated both the year group's outstanding academic performance and also the strong links between St. Mary's and the University College for all aspects of teachers training. The evening was one of celebration, in which the community shared in the outstanding achievement of Erin Crotty who won the special prize for Design and Technology. There is to be an annual award in Erin's name for outstanding progress in this subject.

Music on the evening was provided by last year's GCSE music students Liam Brigg, Lizzie Albrow

Ben Labbett, Lauren Whiteley, Ciaran Miller and James Sutherland Headteacher Mr Pritchard said:-

"Events such as this provide opportunity to thank the school community; parents, students, staff and governors for the contribution they make to St. Mary's. I was

delighted to see so many students recognised for their splendid achievements spanning a wide range of school life."



St. Mary's young musicians hit the high notes!

Three young musicians from St. Mary's Catholic High School recently took part in the Aireborough Rotary Young Musician Competition, held at Benton Park School.

Mingzhe Feng, Year 8 and Liam Brigg, Year 12 both played the piano and Elizabeth Rogozinski, Year 11 the alto sax. All three students performed exceptionally well, this being the first competition they had entered of this nature.

Competing against students from three other local high schools, Mingzhe and Liam won their classes and were awarded £50 each! They are now through to the Yorkshire Rotary Club regional finals in York on Saturday, 25 February 2012 with the possibility of then proceeding to the District and National Finals.



Christmas Cheer at Our Lady of Lourdes Church

by Chrissie Moran Head of School Social Work and Community Service

The Annual Catholic Care carol concert was held on the 12th December 2011 at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Sheepridge, Huddersfield. The two schools hosting the concert this year were Our Lady of Lourdes primary, Sheepridge, and St Patrick's primary, Birkby, Huddersfield.

Harry Rowan, who is the Head Teacher of both Our Lady of Lourdes and St Patrick's primary schools, (and also a Deacon of the Deanery) opened the evening of festivities and gave a warm and welcoming address to all present; he was also Master of Ceremonies for the event.

The children from both schools, together with the Huddersfield Boys' and Girls' choir, under the skilled musical direction of Keith Roberts, Choral Director, Diocese of Leeds, performed a host of splendid traditional carols and festive songs including Away in a Manager, The Angel Gabriel, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, and many more. The church of Our Lady of Lourdes was filled to capacity and with standing room only; those attending the concert were treated to a

festive bonanza of musical talent! The nativity scene – entitled 'you will find a baby' was brilliantly and enthrallingly performed by the infant group of children from St Patrick's, Birkby.

The evening was an undoubted success and thoroughly enjoyed by all present. Roddy Minogue, who is the Coordinator of Catholic Care, Diocese of Leeds, gave the final address, by thanking all who had contributed to the tremendously successful event. Mr Minogue spoke about the adverse effects of the current global and national economic financial climate and of the great financial hardships being felt by families. He invited donations to the Special Christmas Fund which has been opened this year; its main aim is to help families in need.

At the conclusion of the evening, children, families and guests enjoyed a warm Christmas drink and a bite of festive fayre in the church hall. The gathering and event reflected the true sense of community and Christmas cheer and thanks are extended to all involved in its profound success.






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SING-LONG FOR PERU

by A Millington

What a way to kick off the Christmas season. On Friday 2nd December the Madrigal group from Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School helped to lead the annual Peru sing-a-long at St Peter's Church Hall, Belle Isle. With great Yorkshire classics such as 'On Ilkley Moore Bar T'at,' and mixture of songs like 'The Rhythm of Life' and 'You Raise Me Up,' the group sang to help raise money for the Diocesan Mission run by the Sisters of Mercy in Lima, Peru.

The money raised on the night through the entertainment provided and the raffle will help contribute to the wonderful work that the Sisters do in Peru and the generous donations were gratefully accepted. As well as the talented group of Songsters, who were directed by Sally Barnes and accompanied by Stuart Thompson, crafts from Peru were also sold on the night to help benefit the health and educational facilities that are required. The girl finished by singing festive Christmas Carols, and an amazing sing-a-long was enjoyed by all.

The Sisters would like to thank all those who have supported their Mission over all these years including Father Eamonn McGeough, the parish priest, who helped organise the eventful evening and the Madrigals who have contributed to the sing-a-long for over 20 years.



50 Years In Peru

Yes, it is 50yrs since Bishop Dwyer asked for volunteer Priests to work in Peru - hence the formation of the Diocesan Peru Commission in 1961. Following a visit to Peru by Bishop Wheeler in 1969 the Sisters of Mercy in the Diocese were also asked for volunteers, which has been on going since that date 42years ago.

12 Priests and 20 Sisters have spent some time in the missions; some of the Sisters were from other Dioceses in England.

On Saturday 19th November 2011, at the Bishops request we held a celebration of 50 years service in Peru at Leeds Trinity University College, although the Bishop himself, being indisposed, was unable to attend. Mgr. Paul Fisher opened the event, which included slides and a revue of Bishop Arthur's visit to our missions earlier in the year, along with Mgr. John Wilson, who accompanied the Bishop to Peru. Mgr John explained all the accompanying slides and the visits that were made to our Priests and Sisters.

Sister's Patricia Bell and Helen Furness, the leadership team of the Sisters of Mercy, visited Lima in October; they too spoke about the Sisters work in Lima, with a display of their slides and thoughts of the future for the Sisters in Peru.

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Civic honours for Governor and Life Fellow of Leeds Trinity

Leeds City Council has conferred civic honours upon two well-known former politicians closely associated with Leeds Trinity. Former MP John Battle, who is an Honorary Life Fellow of Leeds Trinity, and former city councillor Richard Harker, who serves on the Board of Governors, became Honorary Aldermen of the City of Leeds at a Civic Hall ceremony in November.

Richard was a Leeds City Councillor representing the Moortown Ward from July 2001 until May 2010. A retired teacher of History, he explains that it was his subject that first brought him into contact with Leeds Trinity, through the Schools Council History Project, the Leeds History Teachers Group and other projects.

Richard is in his ninth and final year as a governor at Leeds Trinity. He said, "These nine years have been momentous – university college status, the building programme and academic changes. I have enjoyed my time as a governor and will miss being so closely tied into the life of

the college."

"The City of Leeds has been very good to me over the last forty-six years. It has given me employment, an education and the opportunity to give back to the community through voluntary service and as a city councillor. Being made an Honorary Alderman is a very great honour."

John Battle, who was MP for Leeds West until the 2010 election as well as a former Leeds City Councillor, became an Honorary Life Fellow of Leeds Trinity on the occasion of the institution attaining University College status in 2009.

Alderman status was traditionally conferred on senior and long-serving members of local authorities. While it is no longer a statutory position councils can still create honorary aldermen to recognise service given by former members.

Richard is pictured wearing his insignia from the City of Leeds.



Trainee teacher helps Leeds Trinity choir hit the high notes

There is a new look to the choir at Leeds Trinity University College this Christmas, as trainee teacher Hayley Nolan takes up the baton.

The Leeds Trinity Choir comes together in October each year to start rehearsals for the annual Carol Service. Although the choir's members are drawn from staff and students, this is the first time for many years that a student has stepped into the conductor's role.

Hayley, from Keighley, gained her choral

experience with the Bradford Girls' Choir. She graduated from the ranks of the choir to start her conducting career under the guidance of its founding director Christopher McElroy, who recommended her to Leeds Trinity's Principal Professor Freda Bridge as a promising candidate for developing music on campus.

Since starting Leeds Trinity's BA in Primary Education in September, Hayley has teamed up with lecturer Jenny Stuart-Collins, an experienced pianist, to get the choir up and running in time for Christmas.

Jenny said, "The key thing about Hayley is her enthusiasm and engagement with other students, and it is a joy to see so many students joining the choir. Her musical

knowledge is excellent and she leads the choir with confidence."

The carol service was held on 8 December, and featured performances from visiting musicians including St Mary's Church Music Group, Horsforth Brass Band, the children from Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, and a madrigal group featuring another Leeds Trinity student Lauren Jackson.

The organist was Michael Walker, who plays regularly for Sunday worship at Leeds Trinity.

Hayley is pictured with Professor Bridge at the recent All Saints' Day celebrations at Leeds Trinity.

A visit from Claire Young does the business for students

Yorkshire businesswoman and former BBC Apprentice finalist Claire Young spent a busy day at Leeds Trinity University College last month as a mentor and speaker during the annual Employability and Enterprise Week.

The week is designed to help Leeds Trinity students kick start their careers, with a series of talks and workshops delivered by employers, graduates and entrepreneurs from all walks of life.

Claire (pictured) delivered the keynote presentation *How to impress Sir Alan Sugar and be a success in the workplace* during the course of a day in which she also put visiting students from three Bradford schools through their business paces in an Apprentice style challenge.

The students, all studying Business GCSE or BTEC, came from three Bradford schools - Laisterdyke Business and Enterprise College, Challenge College and Belle Vue Girls School.

Schools and Colleges Liaison Officer Lucy Wright organised the school event. She said "It was inspirational for the students to receive personal attention and help from such a high-profile businesswoman. They were so excited and they took that energy, as well as Claire's advice, and channelled it in to some really great ideas and presentations."

Karen Howden, Director of Careers and Employability at Leeds Trinity, said "Claire gave an inspirational talk to our students, passing on her top tips for success in the job market. Her passion and drive shone through as she explained the importance of presenting the right image to employers."

During Employability and Enterprise Week students heard from speakers offering an insight into a wide range of occupations, from media, marketing and sports development, to writing, nutrition, and teaching. There were also opportunities to meet with local employers and practise techniques for success in the graduate recruitment process.



Events at Leeds Trinity University College

For more information visit www.leadstrinity.ac.uk

Inaugural lecture programme

The inaugural lecture series showcasing the research of Leeds Trinity's new professors continues in 2012.

28 February at 7.15pm

Professor Kirsteen Kim on *World Christianity and the future of Theology: The Korean factor*

5 March at 7.15pm

Professor Paul Hardwick on *Conversations with remarkable foxes: Poetry, medievalism and other ornaments (in collaboration with the Austerity Project)*

22 March at 1.30pm

Professor Judy Donnelly on *Nutrition education: My consuming passion*

15 May at 6.30pm

Professor Maureen Meikle on *Spirited ladies? A reappraisal of women from northern England and the Anglo-Scottish borders 1580 to 1700*

Postgraduate Open Evening

Wednesday 8 February 5.00pm to 7.30pm

Studying for a postgraduate qualification can help you to improve your career prospects or simply learn more about something you love. Leeds Trinity offers courses in teacher training, education, journalism, business management, health and wellbeing and Victorian Studies. Find out more at our Open Evening - call 0113 2837150.

Vatican II 50 Years On: The New Evangelization 26 to 29 June 2012

In order to reflect on the impact of Council and deepen understanding of the New Evangelization, Leeds Trinity University College is hosting an international Catholic theological conference. The conference is organised in conjunction with the Centre for Catholic Studies at Durham University and is the first in a series to celebrate Catholic higher education in the UK.

For further information contact Kathy Stenton, by email to k.stenton@leadstrinity.ac.uk or call 0113 2837102.

Vocations

Increase in number of seminarians

A steady intake of seminarians over recent years means that there are now more than 200 English and Welsh students – the first time this ceiling has been breached in many years. This statistic was revealed at the annual meeting of vocations directors at the English College in Valladolid last month.

During the last five years, the numbers entering seminary across the country each year have remained steady at about 45, a modest increase on previous years. This upturn has been reflected in our own diocese: we currently have 14 students at four seminaries.

The vocations directors also discussed discernments groups, both those aimed at men considering the priesthood and those which are aimed at helping all young people choose a direction in life, training for spiritual directors of young people and safeguarding issues.



The excitement of Vatican II

Mgr Philip Holroyd recently recalled how as a new student in Rome in the 1960s he helped to compile copies of a just-translated Vatican II draft document for the bishops of England and Wales who were due to vote on it shortly afterwards. He and a number of other students had repeatedly to circle a large table at the English College placing numbered sheets of paper on one pile after another. The document was "The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World" ("Gaudium et Spes"), about which Mgr Holroyd was speaking at a meeting of the diocesan discernment group.

He described how this document broke new ground through the openness to developments in the world which it advocated. Previously Church documents had often been characterised by a spirit of condemnation. Mgr Holroyd (pictured with Middlesbrough Vocations Director, Fr William Masie) noted how "Gaudium et Spes" explored the dignity of the human person and the concept of the common good and he explained that these concepts remain pivotal to Catholic social teaching.

The talk by Mgr Holroyd, the Parish Priest of the Parish of Blessed John Henry Newman in Leeds, is the third in a series reflecting on the Second Vatican Council in preparation for its fiftieth anniversary next year. Earlier in the autumn Mgr John Wilson spoke on the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" and Mgr Paul Fisher spoke on the "Decree on Ecumenism." The next meeting is on Thursday 5th January when Fr Michael Hall will speak on the second half of "Gaudium et Spes", entitled "Some Urgent Problems."

The evenings, which take place at Leeds Trinity University College, begin at 6.30pm with a Holy Hour, during which confession is available, and conclude with a meal. They are open to all men who wish to explore the possibility of the priesthood.

The call to unity

Members of the Focolare Movement met members of the new diocesan Samuel Group last month and spoke about their foundress, Chiara Lubich and about their lives in community. They explained how the Movement was founded in 1944 in Trent in northern Italy whilst the city was being heavily bombarded. Chiara Lubich and several other young women realised that although earthly life is fragile and temporary, God's love is constant and eternal. They determined to put the gospel into action by fostering unity in all circumstances. The movement is well known for its ecumenical and interfaith work.



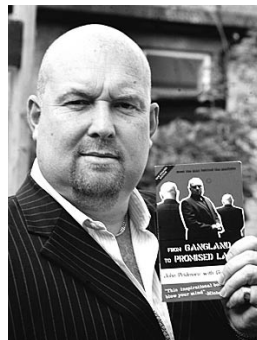
Celia, Anne and Sandra (who is Swiss), pictured with participants Trish and Lauren, live in Headingley in Leeds. The Focolare Movement has single and married members and a vibrant section for young people; it also has members among the clergy and the religious orders. (Further information: <http://focolare.org.uk>).

The Samuel Group is one of several which have been set up around the country in recent

times. These groups were the idea of Cardinal Carlo Martini who set one up in the 1980s in Milan where he was archbishop. Based on the words of the boy Samuel "Here I am Lord; you called me" (1 Samuel 3:4), the groups aim to help young men and women (aged 18 to 35) to discern their vocations in the church. Through lectio divina, listening to personal testimonies, prayer, Mass, fellowship over a meal, and regular spiritual direction, participants gain clarity concerning smaller decisions, such as changing jobs, and larger decisions, such as opting for marriage (if the opportunity arises), priesthood or religious life.

The meetings take place at Leeds Trinity University College, beginning at 4pm and concluding, after 6pm evening Mass, with a meal. The next meeting will be on 8th January and will focus on a prayerful reading of the above quoted passage from 1 Samuel.

Oscott discernment weekend



Renowned evangelist John Pridmore last month spoke to a packed crowd at St Mary's College, Oscott, Birmingham, which included a number of young men from the north of England, including one from Leeds Diocese, who were participating in a discernment weekend. Mr Pridmore, who used to be a gangster in London, making money from drugs and violence, spoke powerfully on the Friday evening of his conversion to Christianity at a Youth 2000 retreat.

Later that weekend, the enquirers joined members of the College in saying the Divine Office and at Sunday Mass in the chapel in which Blessed John Henry Newman preached his famous "second spring" homily, and in reciting the rosary whilst processing round the College's cloister. They also listened to talks about vocation and socialised with students and staff in the College's bar on the Saturday evening.

Telly sisters visit our schools

Fresh from the nationwide coverage they received in BBC One's "Young Nuns", the Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal are to accompany Vocations Director Fr Paul Grogan in some end-of-term school visits this month. The schools which have arranged assemblies and class visits are St Mary's, Menston, Holy Family, Keighley, Corpus Christi in Leeds and St John Fisher's in Dewsbury. The sisters live in the former presbytery next to Corpus Christi Church in Leeds.

This year for the first time the vocations service will be asking students to complete a brief anonymous questionnaire to ascertain what proportion of our young people have considered the priesthood or religious life. "My sense is that a good number of teenagers feel drawn to one of these vocations and we want to check that out," said Fr Grogan.

Journeying to Walsingham

Young people who are trying to decide what to do with their lives are invited to join Fr Grogan on a seven-day walk to the shrine at Walsingham during Holy Week next year. A group from the diocese will be joining in Student Cross (<http://www.studentcross.org.uk>) which has been organising the Easter pilgrimage to the shrine since 1948. It will leave on Friday 30th March and arrive in Walsingham in time for the Sacred Triduum. The pilgrimage is very cheap and pilgrims overnight in church halls and the like.



If you would like information about any of the events which are run by the Vocations Service please contact Miss Celia Blackden: celia.blackden@dioceseofleeds.org.uk .



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Leeds Diocesan Youth Service

'All who are thirsty, come!' (Rev 22:17)



Join the
**LEEDS DIOCESAN
YOUTH SERVICE**
Facebook group to receive
information about events.

The Ark

Willing Amateurs Built Noah's Ark, Professionals Built the Titanic!

The Ark is a Lent event for young people in Years 9 – 13, spaced over 4 Wednesday evenings, beginning 29th February 2012. It's an opportunity for young people to gather together to pray, ask questions about faith and get honest answers in return.

Noah boarded The Ark not knowing how his faith was going to be put to the test, but the Lord knew exactly what his faith needed and blessed Noah. The Lord has a plan for each of us, we don't know how He will increase your faith this coming Lent, but we do know that He want to pour out His blessings on you!

For five of your British Pounds you can sign up to this for week nautical adventure of faith! Each week will include lively speakers, inspiring testimonies, great music, quirky media gimmicks and plenty of laughs. Why wouldn't you want to sign up?! The spring rains aren't too far away, so sign up early to secure your place on board The Ark!

For more information or to book contact Anna Cowell:
abcleedsdiocese@hotmail.com / 0113 2618058.



Youth 2000 : Leeds



'refresh'

'refresh' is a Youth 2000 prayer group that takes place in Leeds Cathedral, every Tuesday 6.30 – 7.30pm.

The Youth 2000 prayer group has a simple format of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Lectio Divina, Rosary and hymns. There is always a priest available to hear confessions each week.

'love@leeds'

'love@leeds' is the Youth 2000 retreat which will take place at Notre Dame College, Leeds, on the weekend of 10th – 12th February 2012. Put the dates in the diary and keep an eye out in your parish and on the 'Leeds Diocesan Youth Service' Facebook for more information. It's ok if you can't make the whole weekend, you can just come along for part of it. You'd be silly to miss out on it, because it promises to be an amazing weekend!

Revelation November 2011

Dare to Believe: Firm in the Faith

Creation

'Who made you? God made me. Why did God make you? God made me to know him, love him and serve him in this world, and to be happy with him forever in the next.'

Continuing our monthly Diocesan Youth event, Revelation, held on 16th November, the study of the YOUCAT considered the question of Creation. Around forty young people from across the Diocese met at Wheeler Hall to hear Fr Sebastian – a recently ordained priest and Franciscan Friar of the Renewal - answer questions on: is the story of Creation literally true? Are natural disasters caused by God? Do aliens exist? Are there angels and demons? and many more besides!

After a time of prayer and worship, Fr

Sebastian spoke, with a very engaging style, of the purpose of God's Creation and why God created human beings – out of love and for love. After Fr Sebastian had lead those present through the relevant sections of the YOUCAT (nos. 42-57, 161-162), the young people from School years 9-13, divided into small groups to look in more detail at the questions and discuss the issues raised in the presentation.

The evening concluded in the usual way by a period of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral. During this time of prayer before the Lord intercessions were made for different groups of people based on the days of the Creation story from the Book of Genesis.

On December 14th the next Revelation takes place from 7-9pm in Wheeler Hall. The theme will be 'Relationships and Sexuality' following on from was heard in November that we were created by God out of love and for love. Come along and find out more!

YOUTH MINISTRY TRAINING in 2012

Foundations in Faith : Youth & Family Life Ministries Module

This course takes place over five evenings beginning on Tuesday 10th January 2012. Presented by Anna Cowell (Diocesan Youth Officer) and Breda Theakston (Family Life Ministry) and held at Hinsley Hall, Leeds. The course looks at the basic principles of both ministries and how to practically put them into place in the environment in which you find yourself. The course uses the teaching of the Church as the basis for the input, but the presenters are keen to show how the amazing riches of the Church can be relayed to young people and families in today's society.

Participants can also opt to submit an essay based on the material learnt over the 5 weeks and (subject to passing the essay), attendance on this course will gain you credits for one module of the Foundations in

Faith (CCRS) course.

Youth Ministry Training Day

On Saturday 10th March 2012 there will be a diocesan Youth Ministry Training Day. The event (organised by the Vicariate for Evangelisation) will be held at Myddelton Grange Youth Retreat Centre and is open to anyone who works with young people in Church, including parish catechists, youth ministry coordinators, parish volunteers, school chaplains, school ethos staff, RE staff and clergy.

The keynote address will be given by Neil and Beccy Roseman. They are currently based in the Diocese of Northampton and have had wide experience of youth ministry and a great gift of communicating in a lively and effective way.

As well as the keynote address, the day includes the celebration of Mass, prayer and reflection, a variety of workshops and some freebie resources!

The cost is £33 per person (this includes lunch and refreshments), however, if you can get a group together from your school or parish you can book four places and get a fifth for £16!

For further information or to book on either of these training events, please contact:

Mrs Janine Garnett,
janine.garnett@dioceseofleeds.org.uk / 0113 2618044.

Alternatively you can book online at:
www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk/evangelisation.



Leeds Diocesan Youth Service Calendar

For more information about how to register for Leeds Diocesan Youth Service events, check out: www.leedsyouth.org.uk, contact Anna at the Youth Office: 0113 261 8058 / abcleedsdiocese@hotmail.com or join the "Leeds Diocesan Youth Service" Facebook group.

Every Tuesday

(The prayer group will break after 13th December & will start again on 10th January)
Refresh: Youth 2000 Prayer Group 6.30-7.30pm Leeds Cathedral

14th December

REVELATION 7-9pm Cathedral Hall, Leeds

5 Tuesdays from 10th January

Youth & Family Life Ministries Module: Foundations in Faith 7.15-9.30pm Hinsley Hall

Thursday 19th January

World Youth Day , Rio 2013 Launch Event TBC Hinsley Hall

Thursday 9th February

Youth Ministry Holy Hour 2.30-3.30pm Hinsley Hall

10th-12th February

Youth 2000 Retreat, Love@Leeds, 2.30-3.30pm Notre Dame College, Leeds

4 Wednesdays from 29th February

The Ark, LDYS Lent Event for young people in years 9 - 13, 7-9pm, Cathedral Hall, Leeds

Saturday 10th March

Youth Ministry, Training Day 9.30am-4pm Myddelton Grange

Sunday 18th March

Youth Ministry Holy Hour 3-4pm Myddelton Grange

Saturday 24th March

FLAME CONGRESS 3-4pm Wembley Arena

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Famous Five Go To Awards

Corpus Christi former pupils enjoyed a spectacular Awards Evening with not one "Guest of Honour" presenting the Awards but five.

The five Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal, now based in the former Corpus Christi Presbytery, made a tremendous impact as they celebrated the awards and gave real meaning to life choices as each told their own remarkable story of how they were called to serve the Lord; first in the Bronx and now in East Leeds.

In formally welcoming the Sisters to the neighbourhood, Headteacher Mike Woods, adapted the words of a hymn "How lovely in the Community is the sight of them who bring Good News, announcing peace, proclaiming news of happiness. Our God Reigns!"

The Sisters distributed Achievement Awards and Exam Certificates to Year 11 and sporting, music and Ethos Awards to Lower and Upper School pupils. They celebrated with the school record exam results with over 75% of pupils achieving at least five top grades and over 60% of pupils achieving Grade C or above in English and in Mathematics.

12 of our former Year 11 pupils are planning to visit our link school in Issenye, Tanzania in 2013 and are busy fund raising through Notre Dame Sixth Form College to raise their fares. They will be teaching and engaging with Issenye pupils during their visit.

Four of the top achievers pictured below had between them 50 A/A* Grades: Evan Araia, Katherine Hainsworth, Levi Broderick and Hayley Kenny.



St. Mary's Catholic High School, Menston Listed as Finalists for the Church School Awards 2012

St. Mary's Catholic High School, Menston have been listed as finalists for the Church School Awards 2012. Head of RE, Mrs Cath Collard, along with the rest of her department, are delighted at the announcement.

The competition is open to all Church Schools and the Awards are designed to promote the fantastic and vital work done in the areas of community cohesion and global citizenship; the BIG SOCIETY in action! The Awards are an opportunity for everyone involved in Christian education to celebrate the unique and vital work that students, teachers, governors and staff do for their local communities, for their country and throughout the world.

Mr Robert Pritchard, Headteacher said:- "This is recognition for the work we do here at St. Mary's bringing our Christian values to life. I am pleased for the students and staff and we are all looking forward to the next stage of the competition".

The winners of each region are invited to give a presentation at a gala event in London in March 2012. The Awards have

only been running for a few years, but interest is high as schools want to celebrate their success.



On Tuesday 29th November Mrs Hilary Norman the cook at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Tadcaster was presented with a long service award by Management at North Yorkshire County Catering. Mrs Norman has been serving meals to children at St Joseph's for 21 years.

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John Battle ksg

RESISTING ‘HARDNESS OF HEART’



Every day the morning Prayer of the Church opens with Psalm 94 (95) ; “O that today you would listen his voice “Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, as on that day as on that day at Massa in the desert when your fathers put me to the test, when they tried me though they saw my work”. The references to Meribah and Massah (words which actually mean “dispute” and “temptation” respectively) connect back to the accounts in the Book Of Exodus and Numbers, places where the people following Moses across the desert angered God, and Moses struck a rock for water. It was about the time of regular rebellions against Moses’ leadership, doubting they will ever reach the “promised land” and regretting they had left behind the “land of milk and honey” - Egypt. Of course as the looked back, Egypt was forgotten as a place of their oppression. There had been a particular arguments (related in Numbers) about the priestly role of Aaron as the people did not see the need for a priesthood to represent them at the altar so God set a test to determine which tribe should assume the priesthood by telling Moses to collect twelve almond branches and write the names of the tribes on them. They are left in the ‘tent of meeting’ overnight and the one which sprouts by the next day is the chosen tribe. That way God wanted to settle the complaints about Aaron’s role. The next day it is the rod with Aaron’s name on that blossoms with ripe almonds. Then there were complaints about food and water supplies. Already as the journeyed into the Sinai desert, Yahweh had to sweeten the “waters of Marah”. There was a miraculous rain of bread from the sky “manna from heaven” (based on the tamarisk bush)Then short of water and amidst complaining again, Moses conducts the miracle of water from the rock at Massah and Meribah. The people following Moses and Aaron have lost belief that they will ever get to the Promised Land. They keep giving up on believing God will deliver them through their hardships. Rather they start to believe that they and their children and cattle have been brought out of Egypt to be condemned to die of thirst. Their “hardness of heart” is a loss of faith in God, and Moses but resulting in conflicts among themselves as their distrust turns inwards. Their lack of faith and hope turned them against each other. It was the recently published survey on social attitudes that prompted me to look back at this source of the phrase “hardness of heart” not least because it indicated a real swing away from compassion for the poor in our society. The British Social Attitudes Survey published the first week in December found that 54% now believe that unemployment benefit is far too generous and prevents people taking up a job compared with 35% who believed this in 1983. The facts show that as a percentage of the average wage the individual unemployment benefit of £67.0 a week is today only 12% of the average wage twenty years ago it was 17.5% of the average wage, so proportionately its value has dropped. Furthermore for unemployment benefit to be seen as an incentive to stay at home significantly in the recent budget it is those in low paid work who will be losing their tax benefit top ups (including for families cuts in the child tax top up) introduced by Gordon Brown to tackle family poverty that will be hardest hit and priced out of low paid work and back into low benefits. In other words the incomes of the lowest paid and unemployed are being driven down hard at the present time. Yet it is now that there is emerging a tendency to blame those in need for their plight. When the survey went live members of the public who claimed to support it when challenged on how much an unemployed person received from the benefit they agreed was too high either did not know what the weekly rate was or suggested it was in the hundreds of pounds. While acknowledging that child poverty was an issue the government must tackle 63% of those 3,297 surveyed believed that parents who didn’t want to work was the main reason children were in poverty, yet mainly young mothers actively seeking work now face cuts in child care provision (including the closure of free Sure Start projects in their neighbourhoods)that make it possible to take up a job and look after a family at the same time. What the survey really revealed was a hardening of attitudes towards the poor in our society. There is a mrked shift to an emphasis on personal responsibility but a rejection of “common interest” and public solutions to social challenges. Almost half of those surveyed while recognising the national shortage of housing (there are over twenty thousand individuals an families on the Leeds council waiting list alone) 45% said they would actively oppose building any new homes particularly in areas of greatest need. Similarly there is a shift in attitude against state provided healthcare and education with support for investing taxes in the public services of health and education dropping from 63% ten years ago to 31% today. Nor is it simply the classic double demand wanting free services but refusing to pay for them the mood has shifted to an insistence that people should provide for themselves or go without. In America, which does not have our national health service free cover, a national chat show recently mocked a man who was allowed to die because he did not have sufficient private health insurance as a “poor fool” who didn’t deserve to live. It seems our reported changing attitudes are taking us there by default. At the same time people who would want to make personal sacrifices to save the environment has dropped from 31% to 22%. Significantly the survey also revealed a fall in the number claiming to be religious in our society.50% no longer affiliate to any religion and those who do seldom attend a religious society. Faith commitment is also falling fast. What needs spelling out is the essential connections between our attitudes to God, our brothers and sisters and our environment imply that we have to share a sense of solidarity and the “common good” in theory and practice if we are to survive. Meanwhile, to tackle “hardness of heart” we have a clue in the old monastic “Rule of St Benedict” which guided the monks of Kirkstall Abbey among others. The opening words are “ Listen, child of God to the guidance of your teacher. Attend to the message you hear and make sure that it pierces to your heart, so that you may accept with willing freedom, and fulfil by the way you live, the directions that come from your loving Father”.

Leeds Rosary Rally

Val Ward Features Editor The Catholic Mother Newspaper

On 1st October I travelled with UCM members from Liverpool (complete with packed lunch and candle) to join in the sixth annual Rosary Rally, which was held in the beautiful Cathedral of Leeds.

On the way we saw a beautiful 'white feather' in the clouds - surely a sign the angels were with us. Diocesan President Aileen Queenan greeted us and made us feel most welcome and after a cup of tea we gathered in the Cathedral for Mass at noon. It was the feast day of St Terese of Liseaux and by chance I had brought the candle I had purchased in Liverpool Cathedral when I had gone there to venerate the relics of St Terese and it was two years exactly since the relics had been in Leeds Cathedral. A most poignant moment.

Following Mass we adjourned to the meeting room for our picnic lunch and had the opportunity to catch up on news with our fellow friends and members. Guests included members from Liverpool, Shrewsbury, Salford, Hallam, Middlesbrough, and Lancaster and National Officers, Maureen Mayers (International), Maureen Hurst (Public Service), Shirley Brooks (Welfare) and Veronica Lynch (Vice President); also present were past National and Diocesan Officers.

We assembled back in the Cathedral at 2pm for the Rosary, which began with a short meditation, and our written intentions were taken forward and placed in a box on the altar. The Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary were led by individual Officers, Mary Hallas(Past National Secretary), Mary Gilmartin (Past Diocesan President), Carol McKenny (Past Diocesan Treasurer), Shirley Brooks and Veronica Lynch, and we processed around the Cathedral carrying our



lighted candles in a most prayerful and meaningful Rosary. After the final decade the candles were placed upon the altar steps and remained there until the end of the service.

Leeds Diocesan President Aileen Queenan gave an inspiring talk on St Terese and St Maximilian Colby who had both said 'Yes' to God. Benediction followed led by Mgr. Philip Moger, Dean of the Cathedral; Basil Walsh from Bradford played the organ and the soloist was Maureen Thompson. Aileen would like to thank you all for your help and support of this, now annual, event.

We returned to the meeting room for a final drink and piece of cake before departing for home. I would like to thank Leeds Diocese for a wonderful spiritually uplifting day. I have heard next years event is all arranged! Please can I come again?



Outstanding Success

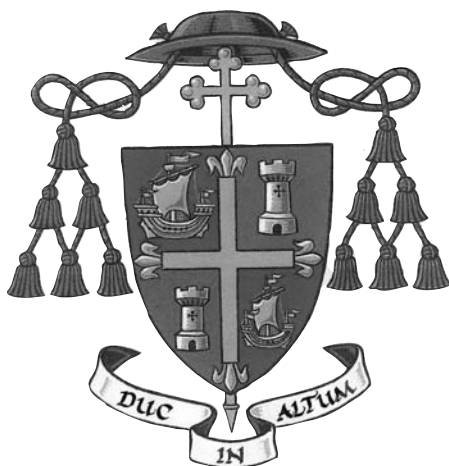
On Friday 2nd December Prof. Freda Bridge, principal of Trinity and All Saints University College, attended St. Nicholas to present deputy head teacher Mrs. Josie Bates, with the Trinity Award for Outstanding contribution to Catholic education over many years. Headteacher Mr. Paul Lawson said "When I saw the outline to the award I immediately thought that we had the ideal candidate to receive it in Josie. She has done tremendous work for many children and their families throughout her career and it is richly deserved".

The photograph shows left to right Tony Britton (Chair of Governors), Josie Bates and Prof Freda Bridge.

Thank you
Mrs. M. Wright
St. Nicholas Catholic Primary School.

WISHING YOU ALL
THE PEACE AND BLESSINGS
OF CHRISTMAS
AND JOY FOR THE NEW YEAR
FROM ALL AT THE CATHOLIC POST

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT 2011 DIOCESAN PERU COLLECTION



As this is the 50th year of our involvement as a diocese with the Peru missions, I went to visit our missionaries, Gerry, Jonathan and the Mercy Sisters and the Passionist Sisters in Lima and Iquitos. I was very much taken aback by the challenges that they all face but, at the same time, was full of admiration for what they are all doing there. I found it very humbling.

There isn't time or space for me to recount all that I witnessed there, but I want to share with you one small yet deeply impressive part of that visit. While in Lima, I had the great fortune of meeting Sister Millie of the Sisters of Mercy. She is Irish and was trained as a nurse and a midwife in Leeds many years ago. Above all, she is a giant of a Christian with an enormously generous soul who never turns anyone away. She lives and works in one of the most shockingly poor and deprived areas I have ever seen. The all too evident squalor is unrelenting and yet, despite the extreme poverty, the people there have the most endearing and gentle smiles I have ever seen. They have hardly anything material to boast of and what they do have is scraped out of the most surprising enterprises – sorting through the mountains of rubbish, recycling materials etc. Hardly anyone pays them any attention, sees to their welfare or gives them a helping hand excepting Sister Millie who, seemingly from nothing, has begged from all and sundry to provide a much needed 24 hour medical service in a rudimentary hospital run by the good will of young doctors, from wherever she can get hold of them, and dedicated nurses. The hospital has medical equipment that most of us have only seen pictured in history journals, like a dentist's drill that

operates from a bicycle mechanism; and drugs are begged for which, generally elsewhere are considered outdated, but are nonetheless effective. She has also built a refuge for those who are physically and mentally challenged – and there are many in these categories. In this centre which radiates such joy, she has started some basic therapy and counselling and established some craft work which bring in a little cash, but not much, but gives their handicapped artisans great cheer, with a sense of being useful, together with improved dexterity and mobility.

Sister Millie wrote to me only a few days ago to say how desperately she is in need of money to keep these most basic yet necessary services going. As she can't speak for herself, I want to be her beggar and a beggar for Jonathan and Gerry and ask you on this First Sunday of Advent, on which we take our only mandated diocesan collection, to request our people to respond generously to this appeal in this, the 50th Anniversary of the diocese's association with the missionary Church of Peru. Above all, she and her co-workers need our prayers. They share and live in the poverty and deprivation of the areas in which they work, but engender such infectious joy and laughter that you know instinctively that this is, without doubt, the Lord's work.

With my very best wishes,
Your fraternally,

+ Arthur Roche
Bishop of Leeds

Philippa M Hitchen

Our Rome Correspondent



Standing in the centre of St Peter's Square throughout Advent season is a carefully guarded secret, shielded from public view by huge sack cloth drapes that will only be removed on the afternoon of Christmas Eve: the larger-than-life Nativity scene which has been in the planning stages since the end of the summer. Standing about 25 metres wide and 7 metres high, it will be seen and admired by hundreds of thousands of visitors to the Vatican throughout the Christmas season. It was Pope John Paul II who, in 1982, first asked for a Christmas crib scene to be put up in the piazza – a tradition which is carried on in streets and squares around Italy and indeed in almost every house or flat I've ever visited at this time of year. St Francis of Assisi is credited with creating the first 'real life' nativity scene in a cave outside the small town of Greccio in 1223 and the art of carving ornate crib figures was well developed by the end of the 13th century. The first scene set up outside St Peter's Basilica was a simple stable scene, built by workers from the Vatican's Technical Services department, using papier maché statues first used by St Vincent Palotti in the nearby Rome church of St Andrea della Valle. Over the past 30 years, the architects and designers have become more ambitious, incorporating other biblical scenes and different themes or symbols into this simple nativity setting. This year the scene is dedicated to Mary, the Mother of God, in honour of John Paul II, whose devotion to Our Lady was well known and whose beatification took place this past June. Alongside the central nativity tableau, the scene will feature other biblical episodes where Mary is at the heart of the action: the Annunciation, the meeting between Mary and her cousin Elisabeth, and the Presentation in the Temple, where the elderly Simeon recognises Jesus as the Saviour of the world and tells Mary that 'a sword will pierce your heart'.

Work on this giant Nativity scene started at the end of the summer when a team of Vatican architects, designers and craftsmen, led by Giuseppe Facchini and Barbara Bellano, began elaborating on the theme and drawing up some detailed plans. This year Barbara told me she was inspired by the connections between the Italian word for Christmas, 'Natale', meaning birth and the words 'Dies Natalis', the day of one's death or 'birth into the heavens'. Those connections between birth, death and spiritual rebirth are part of the traditional symbolism of the Christmas crib scene, with the wooden manger looking forward to the wood of the Cross, while the depiction of Mary cradling her newborn baby echoes images of the Virgin holding her crucified son in her arms. Barbara confessed to me the whole team is very nervous as the unveiling ceremony draws near, wondering what the public reaction will be. "My hope," she said, "is that I have been able to adequately express my ideas, that people will understand its meaning." She spends most mornings in November and December out in the square supervising the carpenters, painters, electricians and gardeners as the crib scene takes shape. Situated in front of the obelisk and beside the brightly decorated Christmas tree, a gift this year from the people of Ukraine, the scene is constructed largely of styrofoam and recycled wood, layered over metal scaffolding to hold it firmly in place. A novelty feature this year is a large window in the back, allowing visitors to view the scene from many different angles. Large wooden steps wind around the back of the cave, creating a further sense of space and distance between one scene and another.

The site is kept under wraps partly for safety reasons and partly to keep people in eager anticipation – as befits the Advent season. After the unveiling ceremony on Christmas Eve, one of the workers will come back down at midnight to place the baby Jesus in the manger, between the ancient figures of Mary, Joseph or the shepherds and some modern Mexican angels that were added just a few years ago. A cast of other characters representing village life and livelihood in Palestine will also be part of the scene, reminding us that the Christ Child was born into our earthly, everyday lives. One week later, on New Year's Eve, the Pope will come down to the square and spend a few minutes in silent prayer in front of the Holy Family. After that he will greet and thank the assembled group of about 25 people who've been part of the project – another important moment, says Barbara, for this team who've been working together with extraordinary dedication and passion.

RECOGNITION FOR LONG-SERVING KNIGHTS OF ST COLUMBA

During the month of November the Knights of St Columba in Yorkshire attended their annual Memorial Mass at Leeds Cathedral, celebrated by the Dean, Mgr Philip Moger. At the end of the Mass Brother John Smith, the Provincial Grand Knight, stepped forward and presented Brother Tony Britten from Leeds with the order's Meritorious Medal to mark his many years of membership and service to the Knights, including two terms as Supreme Knight, and in particular his chairmanship of the board of trustees at St John's Hostel in Leeds, which the Knights founded over sixty years ago. The same award was presented to two well-known Knights from the Bradford area during a Mass in memory of the deceased members of Council 83 at St Francis' Church, Eccleshill. On this occasion Grand Knight, Bro. Dennis Bristow presented Meritorious Medals to Brothers Basil Walsh and Edward Bolland.



Diary

**First Friday of the Month**

SINGLE CATHOLICS (appeals mostly to over 35s) meet for mass at 7.30pm at Our Lady of Lourdes church, 130 Cardigan Rd, Headingley, Leeds LS6 3BJ, and a social afterwards. Events held during the month include walks, meals, cinema, theatre etc. For further details tel Sean (Chair) 07811 468939.

Leeds Cathedral 20-35 Group

Young people (20-35 years old) who attend St. Anne's Cathedral in Leeds meet regularly every Thursday for spiritual, social and charitable activities. For further details search Facebook for "Leeds Cathedral 20-35 Group", phone 07816 891872 or 07759 591233 or email leeds cathedral20-35@hotmail.co.uk

Crusade Mass

The crusade Mass and Rosary of Mary Immaculate is held at St Patrick's Church, Bradford, on the first Saturday of the Month after 12.15pm Mass, Second Sunday of Month 2pm Meeting of Bradford Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order at St. Anthony's Convent, Clayton, Bradford.

'Third Sunday of Month 2.30pm Meeting of Leeds Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order at the Cathedral.

Ampleforth Renewal Community

Ampleforth Abbey, meet 1st Sunday each month, at Ampleforth. 11.30am Praise, Speaker, Sharing Groups, Reconciliation, Exposition, Finishing with Mass and Healing at 4.00pm. All enquiries: Seamus McEneaney 01429 426181

Monthly Vocations Mass

Mount St Joseph's Chapel 11am First Wednesday of Month.

Calix:

An organisation for those recovering from addiction and working the 12 Step Programme of AA so that they can develop and deepen their relationship with Jesus as their Higher Power. Meets on the First Sunday of every month at Corpus Christi Church, Neville Rd. Osmondthorpe. Leeds. Mass at 4.30pm followed by meeting.

Contact: Fr. Michael on 01977 510266

Helpers of Gods precious infants, prayer vigils, regular weekly prayer vigils at Marie Stopes Abortuary, 7 Barrack Road, LS7 4AB, next to Jaguar car showrooms. Fridays 12-30 to 1-30, and Saturdays 9am-11am. Monthly all night vigil of reparation in St Marys Horsforth 12th of every month, 9-30pm to 6am. Other times variable. Further details Pat 0113 2582745. Rosary rally Sat Oct 9th 2010 12-30pm Leeds cenotaph, outside art gallery, Headrow. Contact 07747698553/ or 0113 2582745

Leeds Schola Gregoriana The Schola meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month (except August), at 2.00 p.m., for rehearsal, followed by sung Latin (Vigil) Mass in the Ordinary Form, fulfilling the Sunday Obligation.

An opportunity to learn and sing Gregorian Chant on a regular basis. Contact Michael Murphy (Director) on 07810 808 530, or Peter Lawley (01423 884274), or Rev. G.M. Parfitt (01756 793794).

Be Still



A few moments for thought and prayer

Jesus, son of the Virgin Mary, at Christmas you offer us the joyful message of your Gospel. All who listen, all who welcome the gifts of the Holy Spirit, by day as well as in the vigils of the night, discover that with very little faith, with almost nothing, they have everything.

Taize

Your Cath Post



Deadline: For receipt of material for next edition: **February 3rd 2012**

Parishes receive their copies:

February 20th 2012

Send articles, reports & pictures:

Mr John Grady, Hinsley Hall, 62 Headingley Lane, Leeds LS6 2BX.

Send text as word doc, pictures as jpeg, e-mail to:

john.grady@dioceseofleeds.org.uk

Tel: 0113 261 8022.

Advertising Deadline February 13th

Please note All paid-for advertising is dealt with by: **Louise Ward**

Leeds Diocesan Curia, Hinsley Hall, 62 Headingley Lane, Leeds LS6 2BX

Telephone: 0113 261 8028

Email: louise.ward@dioceseofleeds.org.uk

Samaritan's Purse filled at Holy Family



The staff & students of the lower school at The Holy Family have been filling show boxes with Christmas goodies for disadvantaged children of Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia

Ellen Curran, Pastoral Assistant with Year 7, said, "The students have been very enthusiastic and very generous. The boxes contain a mixture of toiletries, toys, pencils etc and clothing such as gloves or hat together with £2.50 to cover the costs of shipping the boxes. The students have mainly provided the goodies while the staff chipped in with cash."

Tracey Coppen, Pastoral Assistant with Year 8 added, "The boxes are intended to cover, keeping clean, keeping warm, playing and possibly learning. The operation arises very year about this time under the banner Operation Christmas Child and is masterminded by Samaritan's Purse, an international relief organisation.



A chain gang of students gathered the boxes from their various storage places around school ready for collection

Dionne Brammah, Pastoral Assistant with Year 9, commented, "We knew that we had a lot of boxes ready because we ran out of them and have been pleading with everyone to bring in redundant boxes they have at home but it is only when we get all the boxes into one place that you realise just how much the students have done. We have 95 boxes complete and ready for collection with more items coming in"

The shoeboxes from Holy Family will be going out to Belarus to benefit children still suffering after-effects of Chernobyl. Some children are, even now, in hospital, other live on the rubbish dumps and make their meagre livelihood selling scrap and recyclables

Festival Success

St. Stephens Catholic School Skipton have been improving their skills and performance at Sports Festivals this term, with some fantastic success.

Year 5 / 6 and Year 3/4 reached the Craven Schools Finals and WON !!

They played at Sandylands on November 8th and were against schools from Ingleton, Threshfield, and Hellfield.



Leeds – Regular Masses in the Extraordinary Form 1962 Missal

Every Sunday

3.00 p.m. St. Joseph's, Pontefract Road, Castleford.

Every Saturday (Vigil)

6.00 p.m. St. Mary's, Gibbet Street, Halifax.

Every first Sunday

11.30 a.m. Sacred Heart, Broughton Hall, nr Skipton (Sung)

4.00p.m. Holy Spirit, Bath Road, Heckmondwike.

Every second Sunday

3.00 p.m. St. Peter's, Leeds Road, Laisterdyke, Bradford. (Sung)

Every third Sunday

4.00p.m. Holy Spirit, Bath Road, Heckmondwike.

5.00p.m. St. Augustine's, Harehills Road, Harehills, Leeds.

Every Monday

9.30 a.m. Sacred Heart, Broughton Hall, nr Skipton

Every Wednesday

9.30 a.m. Sacred Heart, Broughton, nr Skipton

Every Friday

9.30 a.m. Sacred Heart, Broughton Hall, nr Skipton.

Every Saturday

9.30 a.m. Sacred Heart, Broughton Hall, nr Skipton.

Every first Saturday

11.30a.m. Holy Spirit, Bath Road, Heckmondwike

Every fifth Saturday (Vigil)

4.00 p.m. Notre Dame, Leeds University Chaplaincy, St. Mark's Avenue, Leeds

For further information please see the Latin Mass Leeds Blogsite

– www.lmsleeds.blogspot.com

Bishops Engagements – January 2012

**Sunday 8 January**

1pm Eritrean Rite Christmas Mass, Holy Rosary, Leeds

Wednesday 11 January

3pm Meeting with Diocesan Finance Board & Trustee Directors, Hinsley Hall

Thursday 12 January

0.30am VGs' Meeting, Bishop's House

Thursday 19 January

10.30am VGs' Meeting, Bishop's House

Tuesday 24 - 25 Wednesday January

CBCEW Standing Committee Meeting, London

Thursday 26 January

10.30am VGs' Meeting, Bishop's House

Friday 27 - Sunday 29 January

650th Anniversary of the English Hospice in Rome, Venerable English College, Rome

Tuesday 31 January

Clergy Deanery Days, Hinsley Hall

Pastoral Letter

First Sunday of Advent 2011



Today's gospel presents us with a sobering thought: **Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. Some of you listening to these words today will be acutely aware of their reality through the death of someone close to you: a relative or friend, a child or young person, a soldier, an admired acquaintance. Sometimes, it is true, people know when their hour is likely to come, but this is not always the case.**

You might well ask why God would keep hidden something so important as the hour of his coming which, for each of us, coincides with the hour of our death. I suspect the real reason is that God knows how frail we are as human beings. He also knows how important it is for us to learn lessons from the reality of our daily lives rather than what might be; of living life rather than skipping aimlessly across its surface. The daily reality that lies before each of us is an important pathway to something greater. Our lives hold the key to so many possibilities if we take time to pause and reflect, to evaluate and to choose. Each moment brings with it an opportunity and behind the opportunity there is a gift.

Cardinal Basil Hume was faced with knowing when his time had come. Just days before his death, he was decorated with the Sovereign's highest personal award, the Order of Merit. On that occasion, the Queen asked him what his experience of dying was like. His answer was significant and came from a deeply lived faith. He said: 'It's like being sat in a dimly lit theatre, facing the curtains,

waiting for them to open and the performance to begin. When you look closely you begin to see some sense in the darkness that surrounds you. You cannot see what is on the other side of the curtains, but you know that He is there waiting for you.' His faith had helped him not only to live the reality of his daily life, but to face that reality knowing that there was more to this life than meets the eye.

You may think it strange that, at the beginning of the Church's year, we are presented with the certainty of death. What the Church is doing, in fact, is inviting us to reflect upon the meaning of life: to stop and consider where we came from, why we are here, and to where we are heading.

In a few weeks time, we shall celebrate the feast of Christmas, which comes in the midst of winter and at the darkest time of the year. Despite the harshness of the season, the birth of Jesus is a bright light in the darkness. It encourages us to reflect upon the beauty of human life and the dignity that has been given to us because of the Incarnation. In the scene of the lowly crib we see a remarkable mystery full of potential despite the fact that we know babies are so fragile – a frailty which as adults we know only too well. This Christ Child has come to give meaning and direction to our human existence. The prayer of Christmas Day expresses this beautifully:

*O God, who wonderfully created the dignity of human nature
and still more wonderfully restored it,
grant, we pray,
that we may share in the divinity of Christ,*

who humbled himself to share in our humanity.

The mystery of life is endowed with such dignity and beauty. The tinsel, the noise, the constant round of pleasure-seeking pursuits at this time of year can sometimes saturate our senses to such an extent that it is hard for us to perceive and experience the mysterious, wondrous, beauty that is hidden within every human being. How amazing it is to see something of this mystery in the natural world around us. To realise, for example, that the delicate kernel of an acorn holds the hidden force to produce a giant oak whose wood is amongst the most enduring. If that is true of an acorn, how much more wonderful must be the potential in the mystery of human life enriched as it is with the divine touch. Life is not a given right, but a gift and one that leads to greatness. And that is what the Church wishes to share with us today. As Blessed John Henry Newman said, we were not created for nought. The glory of God is most visible in human life and activity, not least when we express our love for God and for our neighbour. That greatness does not depend on personal health or circumstance, but in grasping the gift and living it to the full in all the situations in which we find ourselves – even the most challenging.

During Advent, the Church invites us to reflect upon the wonder and the mystery that we are as human beings precisely because God shared our humanity in order to share with us his divinity. Pope Saint Leo the Great said in one of his Christmas sermons: O

Christian, be aware of your nobility - it is God's own nature that you share. Despite all the natural shortcomings of our human nature we are called, beckoned by God, to a rich fulfilment of our lives, only part of which is lived upon this earth. It is true, we sometimes falter, but we should never lose sight of the dignity that is given us, of where we came from and to where one day we shall return. We are, in the words of the prophet Isaiah, the work of God's own hands.

The mystery of the Incarnation – of God-made-man – is the mystery about God's reality for us; about the real and precious gift he gives us in life and in his call to enjoy with him its fullness in heaven. Life is not a given right, it is a gift – a gift to be chosen for greatness.

Cardinal Hume once wrote: The mystery of things and their purpose, he said, is in part now hidden, but shall in the end become clear. The choice is between the Mystery and the absurd. To embrace the Mystery is to discover the real. It is to walk towards the light, to glimpse the morning star, to catch sight from time to time of what is truly real. Amen!

With the assurance of my prayers for each of you,

Devotedly yours in Christ,

+Arthur Roche
Bishop of Leeds



St Vincent de Paul Society (England & Wales)

The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) is a Catholic charity that tackles poverty and disadvantage in England & Wales, by helping people in need. We help those who are often ignored or forgotten.

"I loved my holiday with my sisters"

Abigail and her sisters went on an SVP children's holiday, while Rita (a single mother, with no wider family support) recovered from an operation in hospital. Rita was extremely grateful and said she would have been lost without the help of the SVP.

You are invited to become an SVP Friend for just £2.00 per month*

* £24 p/yr is the suggested minimum contribution

The SVP needs your support

From just **£2 per month*** you can become a **Friend** to the ignored and forgotten. Your support will help the SVP carry on its vital work, and reach out to more people in need.

In return you will get regular updates on our work and an opportunity to attend some of our fundraising events as a special guest.

- The SVP visit and befriend those who need support
- We provide food parcels for the hungry
- We offer UK holidays to those who need a break from daily struggles.
- Our Support Centres offer debt advice, counselling and life skills training
- We distribute clothes, furniture and white goods to the deprived.
- Our hostels house those who are homeless
- Our disaster relief projects support people overseas

To become an SVP Friend please contact:
info@svp.org.uk 020 7407 4644

Will you become an SVP FRIEND and turn your concern into action?

Jim's story

“Thank you. You made me feel like I have a family again.”

Jim's health deteriorated and made it difficult for him to leave the house. The SVP now help with shopping, cleaning the house and taking Jim to Church and bingo every week. Jim is grateful to the SVP for bringing him genuine friends after so many years alone.



Registered Charity : 1053992.

Catholic Charismatic Renewal

Afternoon of Renewal

Praise, prayer, teaching and free refreshments

Sunday 22nd January 2012

2pm to 5pm at Holy Rosary Catholic Church
Leeds LS7 4BZ

(Junction of Chapeltown Road and Louis Street)
Buses 2,3,3A and 36 run to and from the Church
Open to all.

For further information contact
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LEEDS DIOCESAN TRUST

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2011

Dear Friends,
I am pleased to provide for you once again a summary of our diocesan accounts. I am grateful to our Finance Office for preparing these in a user friendly format. You may wish to consult a fuller edition, however, which can be found on the diocesan website www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk/report.php or by speaking to your parish priest.
First of all, I wish to express my indebtedness to those of you who help with financial matters throughout the diocese: our parish clergy with their finance committees, the Sunday collectors, the counters and the bankers, those who organise offertory envelopes and look after GADs, and those who keep the accounts in order. Above all, I am most grateful to all of you who support the Church week by week through Offertory giving. We are completely dependent on this for the many services that we provide as a diocese.

In Lent 2010, I wrote to you about the Plea for Realistic Giving. I expressed my concern that for quite some time our expenditure as a diocese has been greater than our income. I explained to you that in the past we had been able to rely (for almost 30 years) on diocesan investments to shore up the expenditure both in our parishes and schools as well as providing for the central services that are needed to support our parishes. You will see in this report that despite the economic difficulties being faced in our country and this region in particular your response has been magnificent. Even though numbers attending Mass fluctuate the actual offertory giving has increased by over £500,000.
I was pleased to receive very positive reports from the Regional Finance Evenings that have taken place recently in Bradford, Leeds and Wakefield. It is encouraging to hear that these events continue

to prove helpful to all who attended them, not excluding diocesan officers, and it is my hope that these regular meetings with frank exchange will create a greater openness, cooperation and trust between our parishes and the central services.
Finally, I want to express my sincere thanks to each and every one of you for all that you give by way of your time, talents and treasure so that the work of the Church can continue in our diocese. Be assured that the Lord will bless you for your generosity in supporting His work and in helping to build up His Kingdom.

With my gratitude, best wishes and the assurance of my prayers

Yours sincerely in the Lord

+ Arthur Roche, Bishop of Leeds

SUMMARY TRUSTEE'S REPORT

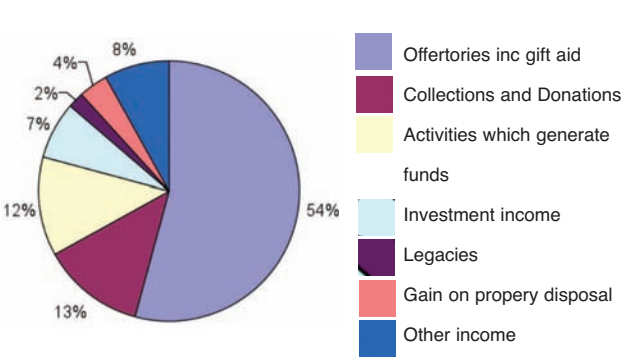
The Trustee presents this summary report for the year ended 31 March 2011. This summary is extracted from the Annual Report of the Leeds Diocesan Trust for the year ended 31 March 2011. For further information the Annual Report, which consists of the full annual accounts, the auditors' report on the accounts and the annual report of the Trustee should be referred to. Copies can be obtained from the Secretary to the Trustee, Diocese of Leeds, Hinsley Hall, 62, Headingley Lane, Leeds LS6 2BX or via the website www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk/report.php
The Trustee approved the full accounts on 28 October 2011 and the Annual Report was submitted to the Charity Commission thereafter. The report of the Auditors, Kingston Smith LLP on the full accounts for the year ended 31 March 2011, was unqualified. The Auditors have intimated their willingness to continue in office.

By Order of the Trustee
Rt Rev Arthur Roche

Bishop of Leeds, Chairman, December 2011

Key Points of the Report

- a) Weekly Offertory Income
In 2009/10 £2.44 per head on a Mass
Attendance of 34,400
In 2010/11 £2.84 per head on a Mass
Attendance of 32,900
Mass attendance down 4.4% ▼
Average Offertory per head up ▲3.0% on last year
b) Weekly Parish Running Costs
In 2009/10 £3.47 per head
In 2010/11 £3.72 per head
In the Diocese there are:
• 94 parishes in West Yorkshire and parts of North Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, East Riding of Yorkshire and Lancashire.
• 82 Primary Schools
• 16 High Schools
• 1 Sixth Form College



DIOCESAN INCOME BY CATEGORY

Total income £10.5m (Last year £10.0m)

Offertories including Gift Aid 54% - £5,692,000 (Last year - £4,997,000)
Offertory income received in parishes plus the tax recovered via the gift aid scheme was 54% of the charity's total income and is clearly the most significant of all the income sources. Income from this source rose by almost 14% almost entirely the result of the Plea for Realistic Giving which was launched in lent 2010. All parishes reported an increase in giving with 12 recording increases of over 20% which is a tremendous effort. Numbers attending Mass were 32,900 compared to 34,400 resulting in an average per capita giving of £ 2.84 (£3.33 if gift aid is included).

Collections and Donations 13 % £1,336,000 (Last year - £1,626,000)
These are the sums of money received via general donations given to parishes or the Diocese plus the "second" collections made in parishes for specific purposes; either diocesan or external agencies, e.g. Cafod and Missions. Income from these second collections is shown in the accounts as restricted meaning that it cannot be used for any other purpose, parish or diocesan, than the original intention.

Legacies 2% £190,000 (Last year - £254,000)
Legacies continue to be a vital source of income for the Diocese but the sums received last year were lower than each of the previous two years. A number of parishes benefited from this source along with the Peru Mission Fund.

This area of income highlights the importance of parishioners making wills and remembering their church.

THANK YOU

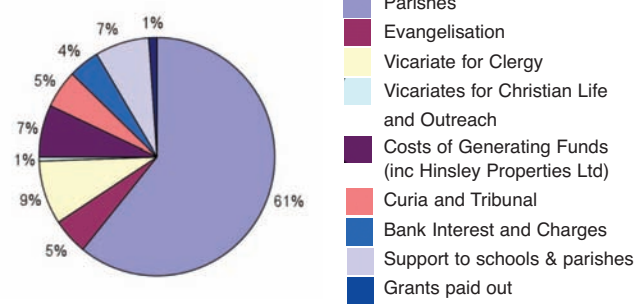
Activities which generate funds 12 % £1,288,000 (Last year - £1,397,000)
This heading includes income received through Hinsley Properties Ltd, mainly Hinsley Hall, and from the use of parish social clubs. In both cases income fell slightly and represents nearly 12% of total income.

Investment Income 7% £758,000 (Last year - £842,000)
This source of income is made up of monies received from the rental of investment properties as well as that received from the Diocesan investment funds. Income from properties increased slightly in the year but the main reason for the decrease is a reduction in the dividends from investment funds.

Income gain from property disposal 4% £372,000 (Last year – nil)
The pastoral review has resulted in some parish property becoming surplus to requirements. This figure represents the "profit" realized once a building is sold.

Other Income 8% £851,000 (£848,000)

In parishes this source of funds includes monies raised for parish building projects (including grants from third parties e.g. English Heritage). Non parish sources include cemetery fees, charges and commissions raised by Diocesan departments.



DIOCESAN EXPENDITURE BY CATEGORY
TOTAL £11.4m (Last year £10.8m)

TOTAL EXPENDITURE
£11,387,000 (£10,793,000)

All % in the charts represent a share of Total Expenditure (Gross).

In Parishes £6,920,000 (£6,215,000)

Parish Running Costs 66% £6,920,000 (£6,215,000)
Parish running costs were £6.9m, including £665,000 of second collections paid over to either a Diocesan Restricted fund (e.g. Priests Training, Retired Clergy etc) or third parties e.g. CAFOD. This took up 66% of the entire income of the charity. Of the parish total over £ 2.9m was spent maintaining the parish property and estate which is slightly higher than in 2010.

Non Parish Costs £4,467,000 (£4,578,000)
The figures shown in the following part of the report are the gross costs (i.e. excluding income) for the relevant central department or other area of non parish activity i.e. Bank Interest. Costs are shown gross to tie in with the statutory accounting requirements. Some cost centres are able to generate income which of necessity is included with other income in the analysis earlier in this report.

Vicariate for Evangelisation £573,000 (£702,000)
This area includes not only the central evangelisation team but

also the work undertaken by the youth office, Myddelton Grange; the schools support office and the Chaplains to the Universities of Leeds, Bradford and Huddersfield.

Vicariate for Clergy £992,000 (£ 954,000)
With increasing numbers of our priests reaching retirement age of 75, the cost continues to rise. Grants to 50 retired priests (43 in 2010) and payments for nursing/ residential care totalled £307,000 of which £240,000 was taken from the Priests' Retirement Fund established for this purpose. This vicariate also includes the fees and costs of priests in seminary, ongoing clergy formation and those who are sick and needy.

Other Vicariates, Curia and Tribunal £687,000 (£642,000)
The other Vicariates are Christian Life and Outreach. The Curia and Tribunal heading includes the following areas of activity Curia Administration, Marriage Tribunal and Chancery , Archives, Media office, Justice and Peace commission, support to the Bishop.

Support to Schools and parishes £834,000 (£855,000)
Includes a variety of areas including the Music department, Child Protection office, Finance and Property departments, Killingbeck Cemetery and some parish costs for exceptional circumstances

Costs of generating Funds £767,000 (£847,000)
Principally the costs of the trading subsidiary Hinsley Properties (including Hinsley Hall) but also charges made by the investment manager for managing our portfolio..

Bank Interest and Charges £482,000 (£499,000)
The offset overdraft with HSBC was virtually identical to the previous year and an additional long term loan facility was taken with the COOP to finance the underlying deficit and meet capital spending. The new longer term loan with the COOP replaced a short term loan with the AIB at beneficial interest rates. The other change in this area was a reduction in central bank charges.

SUMMARY AND BALANCE SHEET
The underlying "operating position" was a deficit of (£0.9m) compared to £0.8m in the previous year but was lower than the two years before (£1.0m in 2009 and £1.3m in 2008). Total income increased as a result of the Plea for Realistic. Some of the income gains were offset by higher spending in parishes (mainly school related building costs) which are shown as a parish expense.
There were fixed asset additions in parishes notably Huddersfield Holy Redeemer along with urgent capital works at Bradford St Patrick and Bradford St Williams. The relatively small amount of capital spending is an indication of the effort being made by the Trustee to minimize unnecessary expenditure.
Properties held for sale increased slightly although the figures reflect the inclusion of new properties this year replacing properties sold during the year.
Net borrowings increased from £7.9m to £9.05m. This additional funding was needed to finance in year cash flow from ongoing activities, some capital works and spending on school projects where income had been received in an earlier year. It is hoped to reduce this figure by improving the "operating" position and the sale of surplus properties some of which has been held up by the economic downturn.

LOOKING FORWARD
Although last year's results were more encouraging than others recently the Directors are very mindful of the need to bring expenditure in line with ordinary income. As Bishop Roche says in his opening remarks this will be achieved by reducing central costs where possible and maintaining the good work on offertory income achieved by the "Plea"

Directors of Diocese of Leeds Trustee and Members of Diocesan Finance Board
Rt Rev Arthur Roche, Bishop of Leeds Mr. Peter Lomas
Mgr M McQuinn VG Miss Ann O'Brien
Mgr Kieran Heskin, VG Mr. Robin A Smith
Mgr Donal Lucey
Mr. Terry Forbes
Mrs. Trina Hagerty

COMPANY SECRETARY: Mr David R Herd

REGISTERED OFFICE: Hinsley Hall, 62, Headingley Lane, LEEDS LS6 2BX