



## Bishop's Column

**Liturgically, the Feast of the Presentation (Friday February 2) is the end or completion of the Christmas Cycle or Season.**

We move from the expectation of the coming of the Messiah, through the Incarnation, the Feast of the Holy Family to the visit of the three Wise Men at Epiphany, and then on 2nd February we celebrate the entry into the Temple of Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Mary. So much to take in through a few short months. But that is not the end of the story as we well know. In less than a fortnight this year, we begin the Season of Lent on Ash Wednesday, the 14th of February (in many people's calendar St Valentine's Day). Lent begins quite early this year, so it's good to take note of the date so that it doesn't catch us unawares. If we are not forewarned it could be almost over before we realise.

Over the last months and weeks some people have been preparing themselves to be received into the Church and/or begin the journey into the Sacraments of Initiation – Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. On the First Sunday of Lent, February 18, these will be presented at the Cathedral at the Rite of Election. The Elect, as these candidates are known, are a very special focus for our attention, thoughts and prayers during our Lenten Journey. We need to accompany them as they learn to walk with the family of the Church towards the great feasts of Holy Week and the Triduum.

We also need them to remind us of what a privilege we have to be able to enter into the life of the Church, the sacramental celebrations and especially the Holy Eucharist. As we experience something of their "new-found" faith and devotion, we might recognise that our faith and devotion have become a little tepid. So, in praying for them, we pray for ourselves that some of their zeal and enthusiasm might inspire us anew as we enter into the Lenten Journey which will lead us all through events of Holy Week to celebrate the Resurrection together.

*Father, through your holy prophets you proclaimed to all who draw near to you, 'Wash and be cleansed,' and through Christ you have granted us rebirth in the Spirit. Bless these your servants (the catechumens) as they earnestly prepare for Baptism. Fulfil your promise: sanctify them in preparation for your gifts, that they may come to be reborn as your children and join us in praising your name. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen*

In blessed hope,

+ Long

## What's Inside

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Tudor Croft**  
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**Northern Saints book  
is 'glimpse of divine'**  
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# Special day as Steven is finally ordained as deacon

**Steven Leightell was ordained to the sacred order of the diaconate at Our Lady and St Peter's Church, Bridlington, during Advent as he continues on the path to his priestly ordination.**

The church was full to bursting and the parishioners rallied together as a community to make the event special.

Bishop Terry has journeyed with Steven through his discernment process, which has taken "many, many, many years" (17 to be exact), as he said in his homily.

"The love of Christ and his people will be your goal, your strength, your sustenance, your joy and consolation. It will lift you up when you fall down," Bishop Terry added.

"Give your life, give your heart to Christ today and the day after that for the rest of your life, so that you can live and serve in freedom with an undivided heart."

Steven said: "For me, that is what has always called me back again and again to discern a vocation to the priesthood – the love of Christ and people.

"It is the people of the parish and the people in your life, as well as the inner stirrings of your heart, that point towards a vocation. The people you help and serve are the best indication of any call to ministry. They're the best formators."

Steven is from Spennymoor, in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. However, he began to discern a vocation during his time as a

parishioner of St Margaret Clitherow Parish in Haxby while working as an RE teacher.

He studied for the priesthood at Oscott and the English College in Rome. He had several periods in seminary, between which he returned to teaching in several secondary schools.

Steven is ministering as a deacon in the

parishes of Our Lady Star of the Sea, incorporating Our Lady and St Peter's, Bridlington, St Mary's, Filey, and St George's, Eastfield. God willing, he will be ordained priest in the summer at St Mary's Cathedral.

He would like to thank the parish for making the day so memorable and for such a special celebration.



Bishop Terry and Steven during the ordination service – Photo by Aldwin Sayo

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NEWS

# Ushaw scoops major historic houses award

**Ushaw, the former Catholic seminary in County Durham, has won the Historic Houses Collection Award after adapting during the pandemic to use technology to continue making its exhibits accessible.**

The award was introduced last year to honour owners and curators who preserve, augment and restore beautiful and significant objects on show inside historic houses up and down the country, enabling the public to understand and enjoy them and the stories that they tell.

Ushaw, which has been operated by a charitable trust as a heritage attraction since 2014, has a collection of fine art, religious and secular objects and books that reflects its two centuries as an educational foundation on the site.

The complex was created by scholars from the English College at Douai in northern France, who were fleeing the consequences of the French Revolution.

Douai was also a product of exile, designed to train Englishmen as Catholic priests during the ban on the public practice of their faith in post-Reformation England.

In summer 2022, Ushaw launched an outdoor digital trail app. Free to download and use, the app contains animation, text, video, sound and elements of augmented reality. The aim of the trail was to introduce visitors to their heritage and collection objects in a unique and engaging fashion.

It was set up during the pandemic, when Ushaw's buildings were closed. They constructed display boards in their grounds and made displays showing reproductions of collection items.

The team also began working on a digital app that takes users on a treasure hunt through Ushaw's gardens.

The treasure hunt has echoes of the house's history. During the French Revolution, students at Ushaw's predecessor college at Douai hid the institution's collection of early 18th-century silver to safeguard it from the revolutionary forces.



Ushaw has operated as a heritage attraction since 2014

In the mid-19th century, with permission from Napoleon III, Ushaw students returned to the by then derelict college site to recover the silver and bring it to England.

Augmented reality elements of the trail include the appearance of a mid-17th century atlas through the library window. The atlas swoops down to the user and provides a helpful hint to the next location.

Other items highlighted include an orrery from 1794, the 15th-century Westminster Vestment, and a 1732 bronze sundial spinning in mid-air before pointing the way to the trail's final location. Here, the Douai Silver erupts from the ground in a spectacular finale to the trail's quest.

Andrew Heard, visitor programmes manager at Ushaw, said: "We are delighted to have won the Historic Houses 2023 Collections Award for our outdoor digital art trail.

"The trail was designed to introduce Ushaw's history and collections to new audiences and encourage visitors to our gardens and outdoor spaces to discover more about what is inside our buildings.

"We find it particularly gratifying that the efforts we are making to introduce people to Ushaw and the treasures it contains have been recognised in this way."

# Come and join us to celebrate SVP's Yarm centenary

**St Mary and St Romuald St Vincent de Paul (SVP) Conference is celebrating over 100 years since the parish's aggregation.**

To mark the occasion, they would like people to join them and Bishop Terry for an event to celebrate our founders and volunteers throughout the years, as well as their Vincentian spirituality.

The event takes place in the church on the town's High Street

on Saturday February 10 and will begin at 10am with a welcome and refreshments.

At 10.30am Middlesbrough Central Council president Pat Nobbs will present Lighting the Flame, a vibrant session on Vincentian spirituality.

In small groups, those attending will be invited to reflect on the work of Vincentians, discuss how to keep our flame of

spirituality alive and share what it means to be a Vincentian in the course of our daily lives as SVP members.

Mass will be celebrated at noon and a light lunch will be provided afterwards.

Please let Margaret Clark know you would like to join them by emailing [margaretclark123@gmail.com](mailto:margaretclark123@gmail.com) or calling 07710 280652 or 01642782111 by Saturday February 2.

# Young people gather to turn faith into action



The SVP celebration at St Mary's Cathedral

**More than 450 children and young people from schools across the diocese gathered as part the SVP family for a day of activities and the celebration of Mass with Bishop Terry.**

The younger SVP members were joined and inspired by the adult members who told them about the Vinnie Packs they give to people who are street homeless and about visiting elderly and lonely people in the own homes.

The purpose of the day together was to share what it means to be a Vincentian (a member of the SVP) and to celebrate the work done to support people in their communities by both the younger and older members.

"It was a fun and inspiring day when everyone was encouraged to think about how we can support people in our communities," said Sarah Barber, director of Young Vincentians and Youth Services.

"Bishop Terry said he was delighted to see so many Mini Vinnies and Youth SVP members gathering together, as he has seen the way they put their faith into action when he visits their schools."

It is hoped everyone who attended will take even more opportunities to serve others as a result of the day.

The SVP is looking for more volunteers

to support its work in schools. If you might be interested, email [youngvincentians@svp.org.uk](mailto:youngvincentians@svp.org.uk).

Volunteers support teachers or youth leaders wishing to start an SVP primary school Mini Vinnies group in their school or parish.

They talk to children about how they can make a difference to those living in poverty and share resources to support the group.

The role is flexible, but you must have some availability during school hours (at least two mornings or afternoons

per month) and be willing to travel within the diocese. All costs are covered.

You don't have to have previous experience of working with children, as all training will be given.

The next initial training day is on Tuesday February 27.

If you are passionate about helping children discover how they can make a difference in their communities, email Sarah on [youngvincentians@svp.org.uk](mailto:youngvincentians@svp.org.uk) for more information.



Vinnie Bear poses with pupils from St Augustine's in Coulby Newham



# Cathedral audience promised stunning music – and plenty of craic!

**Classical singing group The Priests hope their concert at St Mary's Cathedral in June will be an enjoyable evening filled with beautiful music and their unique brand of Irish banter.**

Father Martin O'Hagan, who formed the group along with his brother, Eugene, and school friend Father David Delargy, says they can't wait to come to Middlesbrough this summer for their first ever visit to the town.

And he believes coming in the 50th anniversary year of their first musical performance together as schoolboys at St MacNissi's College, County Antrim, will make it even more special.

Speaking of their experiences since being snapped up by record giant Sony in 2008, Father Martin said: "It's been a whirlwind, there's no doubt about it. It all began when we were contacted by a scout representing Sony, and after making a demo recording for them, we were given a contract to make three albums.

"We had already sung together for more than 30 years at that stage, and the blend and the chemistry was intriguing.

"David was a classmate of mine, and Eugene is my older brother, so there's a dynamic and a chemistry there that works very well.

"And so we began the journey, and I tell you it's been and continues to be amazing. We're so grateful to God and to all those who have

supported us."

The Priests' self-titled debut album became the fastest-selling debut album for a classical act in the UK when it was released in 2008 and went gold and platinum throughout Europe, as well as topping the classical Billboard chart in the United States.

Their first three albums were all nominated as Classical Album of the Year in the Classical Brit Awards.

The three men have sung together since 1974 in various ways, including in the "Holy Shows", helping raise funds for parishes, and as founding members of a choir that sings liturgical music.

The choir is still going strong and was in Father Martin's parish recently singing the Mass for Four Voices by William Byrd on this 400th anniversary of the composer's death.

The vast majority of The Priests' music income goes into a charitable trust that has helped build schools in Cambodia, Uganda and Thailand, as well as looking after retired priests and homeless people.

The three men, who were awarded MBEs in the Queen's New Year Honours in 2020, continue to serve as full-time priests in the Diocese of Down and Connor.

Father Martin said: "We've had lots of travelling to do to perform live and promote our albums, but the record label honoured our commitment to our parishes, and as full-time parish priests that was very important.

"We have to plan way in advance for any concerts we're going to do and I think parishioners are quietly pleased we're able to bring the music into that context.

"We endeavour to do all we can, with the support of some of our local clergy to cover for us when we're away.

"We've had some wonderful opportunities and have met Pope Francis, and Pope



Despite their successful musical careers, the three singers are still full-time parish priests in Northern Ireland

Benedict as well, God rest him.

"We also sang for the late Queen and Prince Philip and for King Charles and Queen Camilla. But it's also been lovely to bring the music into hospital wards and the school classroom."

The Middlesbrough concert is their only planned mainland date and Father Martin hopes it will be a memorable one.

"I don't think I have ever been to Middlesbrough, but we're very much looking forward to the opportunity.

"Canon Paul has been very proactive in getting in touch with us and we're delighted the wheels are in motion for the concert.

"There's a very profound Irish connection in the history of Middlesbrough, so we'll be tapping into that on the evening!

"I hope and pray there will be plenty who will come to enjoy the evening. There will be a mixture of music, both sacred and secular –

with a little Irish section, of course!

"This is a wonderful opportunity, particularly as we reflect on 50 years of singing together, and the privilege we've had as God has helped bring this music to so many people.

"In a frenetic world, music can be an opportunity to slow us down, help us reflect and to step out of the busyness of life and to be uplifted and reassured.

"I think it will be good for ourselves, the parish and the wider community, so I hope people will come and have a very enjoyable evening with lots of banter and connection with the audience."

The event takes place on Friday June 28 and will also feature the Cathedral Choir and Cantabile.

Tickets range from £22.50 to £27.50. To book, call the cathedral on 01642 597750 or email [cathedralevents@rcdmidd.org.uk](mailto:cathedralevents@rcdmidd.org.uk).

**BISHOP TERRY'S  
FEBRUARY  
ENGAGEMENTS**

1

School Visitation to St George's Primary School, York 9am

3-4

Parish Visitation to St George's, York

6

Attends Trustee Board Meeting, Middlesbrough 10.30am

7

School Visitation to St Pius X Primary School, Middlesbrough 9am

8

School Visitation to St Joseph's Primary School, Loftus 9am

13

Attends Bishop's Council Meeting, Middlesbrough 10.30am

14

Mass of Ash Wednesday, St Mary's Cathedral, Coulby Newham 7pm

15

Attends Friends of the Lady Chapel Meeting, Middlesbrough 11am

17

Ordination of Brother David Chadwick to Diaconate, St Wilfrid's, York Noon

18

Rite of Election, St Mary's Cathedral, Coulby Newham 3pm

20

Attends Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust AGM All day

21

Attends meeting of the Northern Province, Bishop's House, Leeds 10.30am

Attends the Newman Circle, St Mary's Cathedral, Coulby Newham 7.30pm

22

Attends Council of Priests Meeting, Middlesbrough 1.30pm

27

Attends St Cuthbert's AGM All day

28

School Visitation to St Mary's Primary School, Middlesbrough 9am

29

School Visitation to St Margaret Clitherow Primary School, Middlesbrough 9am

# See more than 300 snowdrop varieties in a magical setting

**There's a garden in Guisborough many of you will be familiar with, which holds one of the largest collections of snowdrops in the region in a beautiful setting.**

Tudor Croft is an amazing place to visit and will be open on Saturday February 10 and Sunday 11 and again on Saturday February 17 and Sunday 18, from 11am until 3pm each day, for everyone to see the snowdrops.

The garden was built in the Arts and Crafts style over ten years in the 1930s. The Heagney family has lived there since 1952.

It was skilfully laid out over a large five-acre site and Mike Heagney has filled the garden with trees, shrubs and flowers from all over the world, all labelled and catalogued.

In addition to some 340 varieties of snowdrop – many rare and some discovered by Mike – there are more than 3,000 other special plants which flower at different times throughout the year.

Parking is free and will be signposted. There will be home-made soup, cakes, tea and other refreshments. Admission is £10, with children free.

There will also be special snowdrops and other spring bulbs for sale. The garden, which is on Stokesley Road, Guisborough, TS14 8DL, will also be open for charity in the summer.

Don't miss it!



Mike Heagney in the gardens at Tudor Croft



## SCHOOLS

# Glowing reports for four SCRCAT primary schools

**St Cuthbert's RC Academy Trust (SCRCAT) schools have received glowing reports after visits from both diocesan and Ofsted inspectors.**

Ofsted rated **St John of Beverley Roman Catholic** good after an inspection in the summer term.

Headteacher Angela Nicholl said: "We were delighted to hear the inspection team talk about the special family feel of the school, the positive behaviour of the pupils and the way everyone looks after and cares for each other."

"They were extremely complimentary about the pupils and could see how happy they are. They talked about the 'buzz of learning' created by teachers and staff across the school and the 'positive attitudes' on display."

The report said: "Leaders at all levels are passionate about their school. There are high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. Leaders pride themselves on developing positive, supportive relationships with pupils, staff and parents and carers. Pupils are happy, friendly and enjoy coming to school. They behave well and are respectful to others."

Pupils, staff and families at **St George's Catholic Primary** in Scarborough were delighted after Ofsted graded them good in all areas.

Inspectors said: "This is a school where pupils are happy. Staff make everyone feel welcome. Pupils feel safe because of the care

they receive. Staff understand pupils' individual needs and how to support them. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

"Respectful relationships between pupils and staff help pupils to feel valued. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils to achieve well. They have designed a curriculum to include exciting learning experiences."

**St Mary's VC Academy in Market Weighton** went through two inspections and got goods all round.

The Catholic Inspectorate said: "St Mary's is a very welcoming and highly inclusive community with a strong Catholic ethos and mission at its centre. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils in supervised and unsupervised activities is excellent. Pupils frequently show acts of spontaneous kindness towards each other."

Ofsted added: "Pupils speak knowledgeably about modern Britain and its values. They make positive contributions to school life. For example, school councillors help with charity work and some older pupils help newcomers settle into school."

"Subject leaders have organised the curriculum in mathematics and history in a logical way. They have comprehensive plans for teaching mixed-age classes."

"Teachers have a very clear understanding of what they want pupils to know. They explain work clearly so that pupils understand what they have to do."

**St Mary and St Joseph's VC Academy in**

**Pocklington** was declared a good school after an Ofsted visit in October. The report said the school has high expectations of their students and there are positive relationships right across the school community.

"Pupils are happy, feel safe and achieve well," it said, adding: "Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school."

Executive head Julie Sutherland said: "It was recognised that our pupils behave well, show

respect for everyone and develop good character.

"We look forward to welcoming many more children and families into our school. I am so proud to be the headteacher of this school community."

SCRCAT runs 15 Catholic schools in the south and east of the diocese, including those in Hull and Scarborough.



Ofsted said leaders at St John of Beverley were passionate about their school



St George's is a school where pupils are happy and staff make everyone welcome



Both Ofsted and diocesan inspectors rated St Mary's good



St Mary and St Joseph's executive head Julie Sutherland said she was 'so proud' of the school community

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SCHOOLS

# Head Anna’s pledge after outstanding Ofsted report

**The headteacher of a Middlesbrough school judged by Ofsted to be outstanding in all areas has pledged to continue striving to ensure its children benefit from an education as good as anywhere else in the country.**

Inspectors say St Mary’s Catholic Primary in Grangetown is “a beacon of aspiration in the community,” adding: “The school’s ethos of love underpins everything it does.”

Delighted executive headteacher Anna McClurey says the school’s success is a team effort and thanked pupils, families, staff, governors and Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust (NPCAT).

“We couldn’t have achieved this amazing recognition without our parents, carers and families,” Mrs McClurey said.

“We would like to thank them and their fantastic children for the unrelenting support they have shown to St Mary’s and the changes we have embraced.

“We are extremely proud of everything we have been able to achieve at St Mary’s and with their help we look forward to going from strength to strength.

“I would like to give enormous thanks to our team of dedicated staff and leaders, who work tirelessly to give the very best to the children in our care.

“It’s also important to acknowledge the skill and commitment of our governors and support of the trust, who do so much to support everything we’re trying to do here.”

In its glowing report for the 218-pupil school, Ofsted said: “Pupils have consistently positive attitudes towards their learning. They are polite and respectful learners. Pupils participate in lessons with enthusiasm.

“Pupils’ behaviour is exemplary. There are clear and high expectations of behaviour in place. Pupils know, understand and abide by the school’s behaviour routines.”

Mrs McClurey, who is also executive headteacher of St Pius X Catholic Primary in Park End, said pupils were a credit to the school, their families and to the Grangetown community throughout the inspection.

“We are incredibly proud of our inclusive and vibrant school, where all children thrive,” she said.

And she promised: “Even though the report identifies no areas for improvement, we will never stop trying to get better.

“We aim to ensure the children of

Grangetown benefit from a quality of education that’s every bit as good as that on offer anywhere in the country.

“We pledge to continue helping all our pupils fulfil their potential, to drive forward standards and to ensure the best for our pupils every day of their school lives.”

One of the country’s largest Catholic multi-academy trusts, NPCAT is made up of 38 schools throughout Teesside and North Yorkshire, including the city of York.

Trust CEO Mr Hegarty praised Mrs McClurey

and the St Mary’s staff for what he said was “a magnificent achievement”.

“I would particularly reflect on the climate for learning which has been developed under her leadership at the school and embraced by all staff and is so valued by every pupil.

“This is so difficult to achieve and apply consistently, whereby every pupil is acknowledged as an individual made in the image and likeness of God and has ambition and a deep sense of their ability to achieve.”



St Mary’s in Grangetown has been judged to be outstanding in all areas – Photo by Sally Thurrell

# School where pupils and staff are proud and happy

**St Augustine’s Secondary School in Scarborough has been recognised for not only prioritising academic excellence but also placing the wellbeing and growth of its pupils at the heart of its work.**

Giving the school a rating of good, Ofsted inspectors praised its positive culture, highly effective teaching and collaborative relationships.

“Every pupil is treated as an individual at St Augustine’s School,” the inspectors said.

“They are safe and cared for well. They want to meet the school’s high academic expectations.

“Teachers have deep subject knowledge. They provide clear and effective explanations to pupils. Pupils’ commitment to their learning is a strength of the school. The school places a high priority on reading.”

Parents and carers expressed appreciation for the way St Augustine’s supports and nurtures their children.

The school’s staff are praised for working tirelessly to provide a wealth of learning opportunity and experience for the pupils.

“Staff are proud to work at St Augustine’s Catholic School and are happy in their work,” the report says.

Head of school Aishling Robinson was delighted with the report.

“Our pupils and staff are our greatest asset, and it is a testament to their hard work and community ethos that the Ofsted team recognised this as the core of our school ethos,” she said.

“The high-quality learning that occurs in



Pupils and staff at St Augustine’s in Scarborough

every classroom every day is something we are very proud of, as it means all our children receive the very best education to enable

them to live their best life.

“We will continue to strive forward as a school community to build on our

achievements.”

St Augustine’s is part of the St Cuthbert’s Roman Catholic Academy Trust.



NEWS

# Former environment secretary to give Ampleforth lecture

**Lord Deben, former chair of the UK's independent Climate Change Committee, will deliver a flagship lecture at Ampleforth College.**

The lecture is a joint initiative between the Catholic Union, the Ampleforth Society and Ampleforth College, the independent Catholic school in North Yorkshire.

Lord Deben has been a Conservative peer since 2010. He served as environment secretary under John Major and until June 2023 was chair of the Climate Change Committee.

He will use his lecture to talk about the gospel imperative for climate action.

Lord Deben previously addressed members of the Catholic Union in a webinar during the pandemic, but this event will give people the opportunity to hear from him in person.

It will bring together a wide section of the Catholic community with a passion for saving the planet, as highlighted in Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* encyclical on caring for our common home.

Ampleforth head Peter Roberts said: "We are delighted Lord Deben will be addressing the Ampleforth community. His wealth of experience and insight into arguably the most important issue facing this, and future generations, will be of interest to all. "Stewardship is a core tenet of our

Benedictine ethos at Ampleforth College, where our staff and students are inspired by the Holy Father's call to act.

"The importance of stewardship of the natural beauty around us is something that unites the generations across the Ampleforth family. We look forward to the event and welcoming guests."

Catholic Union director Nigel Parker added: "The Catholic Union is dedicated to the defence of Catholic values in parliament and public life, as well as the promotion of the common good. We could not want for a better speaker at this joint event in the splendour of Ampleforth."

Lord Stafford, chair of trustees of the Ampleforth Society, comments: "As a global community of Old Amplefordians, parents and friends of Ampleforth, we have all been inspired by the beauty of the natural environment at Ampleforth and many members of the Ampleforth Society are advocates for sustainability and preservation of the environment.

"To hear such a respected speaker address this important issue will be of great interest for our members and guests."

The event will take place at the college on Friday March 1 and will also be live-streamed. To book tickets visit [society.ampleforthcollege.org.uk](http://society.ampleforthcollege.org.uk).



Lord Deben will give a lecture at Ampleforth College on climate change and the scriptures

# Choir prepares for year's first concert, at St Clare's

**The Apollo Male Voice Choir's first concert of the year will held at St Clare of Assisi Church in Brookfield, Middlesbrough.**

Formed in the town in 1887, the choir has been raising funds for deserving causes ever since. It also provides a social function for members, who gather most Monday evenings to practise singing together.

One of its most recent concerts was in the Holy Name of Mary Church in Middlesbrough just before Christmas.

"Singing is well established as being beneficial to physical and mental health and the extra layer of camaraderie of being part of our supportive choir just seems to make life better," said the choir's vice chairman

Peter McTiernan. "We are very inclusive and always welcome new talent to swell our ranks. No experience is necessary – if you can sing you will learn as you go." The choir usually has a summer social outing each year to perform at a prestigious venue such as Beamish Museum, where members and their partners, families and friends all enjoy a relaxing get together. Tickets for the St Clare's concert, which takes place on Friday February 23 at 7pm, are £10 and include interval refreshments. They are available from the church on 01642 591009 and from the choir on 01642 821866.



The Apollo Male Voice Choir performing at the Holy Name of Mary Church in Middlesbrough just before Christmas

An advertisement for the Catholic Directory mobile app. It features a smartphone displaying the app's interface, which includes a search bar, a map, and various icons for finding mass, churches, and other Catholic resources. The background is a bright blue sky with a sunburst effect and a field of white daisies at the bottom. The text "www.catholicdirectory.org" is at the top, and "Mobile Version" is in large white letters. At the bottom, it says "Find Mass or a Church on the go!" and lists various features like "Nearest Church", "Nearest Mass", "Map", "Search", "Schools", "Religious Orders", "Charities", "Adoration", "Confessions", and "Prayers".



# Get ready for CAFOD’s Lenten Family Fast Day

**Lent begins early this year with Ash Wednesday falling on February 14 and CAFOD’s Family Fast day is on Friday February 23.**

Our focus story is on a young man called James Pyne, a fisherman in Liberia. His father taught him how to fish when he was 12. James said: “I didn’t want to fish but my father told me that when you are a man, you can’t depend on one thing. You have to learn many things because you do not know where you will find yourself tomorrow.”

“Fishing means a lot to me. Sending my children to school is because of fishing. Everything that I do, that I live on is fishing. God first, then fishing is my life.”

In 2005, James rowed 200 kilometres from his home in River Cess to start a new life in New Kru Town. He spent five years establishing himself before his family came to join him, but despite all his work, life was difficult. He said: “Before I joined the CAFOD project I was using my traditional methods in my fishing activities. I was not going too far. If I went further, I would not be able to see the shore and I could lose my way back home.”

“It wasn’t through choice that we were fishing around the shore side but based on the equipment we used. It wouldn’t allow us to go to a far distance. So it was difficult but we had to do it because it was all that we could afford to do.”

“Sometimes I got no catch at all because I was not going far out. That was one of the reasons why I had to send my children home, out of school.”

“Sometimes there would be no food for that day. I would tell them, bear with Daddy,

things will get better and we are going to hold on together. It was very difficult.”

James was risking everything to put food on his family’s table. Five fishermen a month in James’ community were losing their lives at sea, people James called brothers.

CAFOD funded on-land and at-sea safety training for fishermen in James’ community and provided equipment to help them navigate and stay safe.

He told us: “The CAFOD project introduced many things in our village. We were able to get life jackets, we have a signal mirror and we were able to get the fish finder with the GPS.”

“The CAFOD training made me braver at sea and I’m not using the traditional methods like before.”

When he was in the paddle canoe, he could only go six or seven nautical miles, but with the GPS he can now go above 70 nautical miles and using the fish finder he can catch more fish because he can travel at sea any time he chooses, even at night.

James says: “I got more food. I feel good because I used to buy rice by the cup but now I can buy it in 25 kilogram bags. And when I go fishing, I’ve got my fridge, I’ve got fresh fish.”

James used the money he made from catching more fish to buy a bigger boat with an engine. He now hires and trains young fishermen, passing on his knowledge to the next generation.

“It is my prayer that I want the project to continue and the fishermen with the GPS will go further and bring more fish and the community will be developed.”



James, Cynthia and their son Messi on the beach at New Kru Town, Liberia – Photo courtesy of Carielle Doe, Caritas and Development Office, Monrovia

Your donations this Fast Day will help hardworking people like James to get the tools they need to feed their families. Please give what you can and remember to pray for our work. For whatever you can do, thank you!

## An appeal for your help

**Since the pandemic, many of our dedicated volunteers in parishes around the diocese have stepped back from their activities.**

Those volunteers were our lifeblood. They helped to share our work in our parish and school communities.

We recognise their value and appreciate their dedication and generosity, and without them we simply cannot function.

I am very aware our churches rely on people getting involved, too. Our parishes, our communities, our world needs you!

Could you get more involved in the life of your church and help us at the same time?

We are looking for people to give some time and join us in our mission of building up the

church and working to bring about a better world for everyone.

Could you help in your parish, inspiring our church to help build a better world or by visiting our local schools?

Or raise a voice and campaign for justice or perhaps speak for CAFOD throughout the area? Could you support local volunteers or share your admin or people skills to help CAFOD keep costs low? Training and support is provided. See [cafod.org.uk/Volunteer](http://cafod.org.uk/Volunteer) for more information about how you can help, or get in touch with me by emailing [middlesbrough@cafod.org.uk](mailto:middlesbrough@cafod.org.uk).

Carol Cross  
Community Participation Coordinator

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## Symphony of Prayer and Praise

### A Prayer for this Year of Prayer

*God of blessings, in this year ahead, give us a spirit of listening,  
of openness to your word and longing for your kingdom.  
As we journey toward the Jubilee, a time of new beginnings,  
we pray for help and strength, to heal our relationships with each other and all creation.  
Sing your song of love over us, renewing our faith and courage,  
so we may join our voices together, discovering new harmonies of hope, new melodies of reconciliation.  
Attentive to the Spirit,  
and awake to the needs of the world, may we seek your life-giving presence,  
as we join as one global family, in a great symphony of prayer and praise.  
Amen*

Linda Jones/CAFOD





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**Maria Stead, Head of School**

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NEWS

What can your parish community achieve in 2024?

As we are now one month into 2024, I wonder if it's worth us asking ourselves the question, "What do I hope 2024 will bring to our parish community?"

What would your immediate answer be? More vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life? More young people returning to Mass? More parishioners actively involved in parish life? More Holy Hours? A pastoral parish council? The list is probably endless.

These are all important questions but are primarily "inward looking". Yet one question that has arisen repeatedly during the synodal discussions in our own diocese is, "If our church closed tomorrow, who would know, other than those of us who worship there?"

When reflecting upon this question, it springs to my mind that there is a struggle felt at parish level over how we make the Church relevant to those who may have been baptised Catholic, received First Holy Communion, Confirmation and later in life the sacrament of marriage and even now are raising their own families, yet no longer come to church or take part in the parish community.

Our response may be that people don't have the time to come to Mass or get involved. Attending Mass on Sunday is not the priority it once was. People still have the faith, but it is different to when I was young, and so on.

These all have some validity. However, we must be careful not to over-generalise. Church attendance is not in decline everywhere!

There also remains a great hunger among people for the faith. This is not to ignore the fact that many people continue to leave the Catholic Church for all kinds of reasons, many being highlighted in our Diocesan Synod Synthesis in 2022.

So what can we do to make our parish more relevant to the wider community? Some parishes have found creative ways, such as supporting a food bank with donations and volunteers, visiting the elderly and the sick at home and in care settings and outreach to those struggling against poverty or loneliness.

Other have supported projects aiding refugees and asylum seekers, providing soup and warm rooms in church halls once a week during winter and spring, volunteering in charity shops or providing play activities for young people during school holidays.

There are also the many catechetical programmes that reach those who want their children to receive the sacraments.



Our Synod Day at St Mary's Cathedral last November – Photo by Johan Bergström-Allen

It's so easy to overlook the valuable contributions many of our parishes make, often while struggling themselves to keep their own heads above water.

So what's the answer? For me, it's all about love! And it's about our calling to share the Good News of God's love and forgiveness made possible by Jesus' death and resurrection.

So where do we begin? Today's world looks very different from what it did in the years of Vatican II, in the 1970s, 80s, 90s and 2000s. The Church has provided several vital resources to help us proclaim the Good News anew:

- The body of social doctrine of the Catholic Church, such as *Laudate Si'* and *Laudate Deum*
- The Synod on Synodality, which above all speaks of what it means to be a synodal church and the missionary dynamic it involves.
- 2025, Pilgrims of Hope – Jubilee Year, with 2024 being a year of prayer in preparation.

If the key word is love, then the next word for us must be evangelisation. This seems to have gone out of use in recent years. Pope Francis has raised its profile, particularly through the synodal process.

We know from our very own experiences as people of faith that evangelisation is a lifelong process. In fact, we could say it's the lifeblood of the parish. God's Word doesn't

change, but our ability to hear it changes, depending on our age and circumstances.

This is a kind of signpost to help us understand how others hear the Word and accept it.

The process of Evangelisation takes on the synodal dimension of listening more readily and openly to one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit through the Word, Tradition and Magisterium of the Church as the things that help us plot the right course for ourselves, parish communities and the wider Church.

These should help us live out our mission of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ in a way that enables us to be more outward looking and optimistic about the future and ensuring our relevance to our modern world.

It's now common for political parties to produce a pledge card listing priorities on which they will act. For us Christians, we have our own pledge card – the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12). What solid ground on which for us to begin 2024.

So, why not...

- Re-engage with the synodal process or engage with it if you haven't already? Our Diocesan Synthesis is available, as is the synthesis of the General Assembly of October 2023 (free online at vatican.va).
- Find out more about the Jubilee year (2025) and think about what your parish can do to

prepare? Information is available at [cbcew.org.uk](http://cbcew.org.uk).

- Pick up *Laudate Si'* or *Laudate Deum* and give some serious thought and prayer to what you and your parish could do during the year to care for our common home? It's free at [vatican.va](http://vatican.va).
- With your parish priest, think about the needs of your parish and wider community in the coming year and what can be done to address some or all of them?
- Establish a pastoral parish council.

A final thought: "Rather than saying that the Church has a mission, we affirm that the Church 'is' mission, 'As the Father has sent me, so I send you'." (John 20:21 – from the Synthesis Report of XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops).

And please remember the Rite of Election with Bishop Terry is at St Mary's Cathedral at 3pm on Sunday February 18.

Please keep in your prayers all those planning to be received into the Church and who will be present at the Rite of Election. Why not come and support them with your presence?

There's plenty to do. Good luck!

Deacon David Cross,  
Adult Formation Coordinator

A Letter From Madonna House - Finding solace in surrender to Christ



As I write this article, I am coming out of the Christmas season a bit overwhelmed. During the Christmas and Easter seasons at Madonna House, on top of other festive additions to our daily life, we tend to celebrate with bigger liturgies.

In our singing of the Office of Lauds (morning prayers) and Vespers (evening prayers or evensong) we use special tones and music for the psalms and canticles.

Our Masses, too, tend to become more elaborate, adding candles and incense and sung parts. When this is combined with long festive seasons (like this past Christmas) we might feel a little over-stimulated and eager for the simplicity of Ordinary Time.

It was after a particularly festive Mass one day that I mentioned to Father Michael, my brother in the community, that I was feeling overwhelmed by the Liturgy – I was also a little sleep deprived and overloaded with sugar.

He related that he too could be overwhelmed at times with liturgy, but he then said something that helped shift my perspective. He said the Mass/Liturgy could "carry us" through if we let ourselves surrender to Christ in that moment.

I am discovering this could be true not only in liturgical overload (a phenomenon that fewer readers might identify with) but also in other areas of our lives when things become "just too much right now", such as when one more thing gets added to our growing list of things to do, or when one more person steps into our life right when we are craving "alone time". When life seems determined to throw more at us than we can manage (mentally, emotionally or otherwise) we can always try to find our rest in Christ spiritually by surrendering our situation to him in prayer before taking the concrete steps necessary to address the particulars of our situation.

This act of surrender would hopefully help us to find our life in Christ and avoid futile

or even harmful actions that in vain seek to find peace and rest outside of God, like when we go to social media, YouTube or online games to escape, or when we direct our anger and frustration towards another person or thing.

The circumstances might be out of our control, but our reactions can be grounded in a peace and strength beyond ourselves.

A prayer I have found helpful in such times is the Serenity Prayer, originated in the 1930s by Reinhold Niebuhr, a Protestant theologian, and that many have found useful in their spiritual journeys:

God, grant me Serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

Courage to change the things I can and Wisdom to know the difference

As we begin our journey towards Lent, I hope many of you might find God's peace in times of overwhelming stress and his rest where all else fails.

Mathieu Dacquay



NEWS

Hamper collection is all for a good CAUSE

Like many parishes, St Paulinus in Guisborough once again collected Christmas hampers in response to the annual CAUSE appeal.

This year, Guisborough's volunteers and parishioners collected 40 bags of goods of foods and presents.

Many were displayed on the altar as Canon Michael Bayldon came out of retirement to say Mass, along with Deacon Len Collings.

After Mass, parish CAUSE organiser Maureen McLean thanked all the volunteers who had worked to collect, wrap and bag all the donations.

Brian Gleeson



Canon Michael Bayldon, centre, and Deacon Len Collings with altar servers and some of the hampers collected in Guisborough for the CAUSE Christmas hamper campaign

Please remember in your prayers the following clergy from our diocese whose anniversaries are this month. We list here them along with their final resting place.

1	1919	Rt Rev Mgr Canon Gerald Shanahan	Thornaby
1	1937	Rev Edward H Bryan	Pickering
1	1973	Rev Michael Barry	Market Weighton
2	1920	Rt Rev Mgr Provost Charles Dawson	York
2	1982	Rev Francis Gresham OP	York
2	1989	Rt Rev Mgr J Liam Carson	Teesville
3	1912	Very Rev Canon Joseph Dodds	Leyburn
3	1981	Canon Gerard T Rickaby	Guisborough
3	1999	Rev Thomas Burke	Scarborough
3	2018	Rev Thomas Ryan	Caherconlish
5	1978	Very Rev Canon W Hughes	Hull
5	1979	Rev Dan Breen	Scarborough
7	1985	Mgr T Alban Nolan	Billingham
7	1988	Very Rev Canon Robert Carson	Redcar
8	1991	Rev John Shanahan	Knocklong
9	1975	Rev Joseph Bickerstaffe	Connah's Quay
9	2011	Rev Sean O'Donnell	Falcarragh
10	1933	Rev Richard Lewis	York
10	1970	Rev Leonard Cornwall	Hull
12	1947	Rev Thomas Reilly	Skirlaugh
12	1965	Rev Gerard Culkin	Ushaw
14	1897	Very Rev Canon George Brunner	Wycliffe
15	1931	Rev William Kirkham	Ulshaw Bridge
16	1999	Rev John Joseph Ryan	Scorton
17	2003	Rev Francis Daly	Middlesbrough
18	1995	Rev Desmond Cush	Richmond
18	1938	Rev George Kiernan	Thornaby
18	1942	Rev Bernard Wilson	Staithes
23	2015	Very Rev Canon Gerald Cox	Hull
23	2018	Rev Patrick Grant	Thurles
27	1963	Rev Joseph Blake	Hull
27	1900	Rev James Atkinson	Middlesbrough
27	1981	Rev James O'Brien	Staithes
28	1988	Rev John MacDonnell	Middlesbrough

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## NEWS

# Out & About

**2 Friday**  
Events, articles and photographs for the March edition of the *Voice* are due by this day.

**5 Monday**  
**9.45-10.25am** Beverley Christian Meditation Group meets online. Further information from christianmeditation.beverley@gmail.com. This takes place every Monday.

**6 Tuesday**  
**10am** Christian Meditation Group meet online. Further information from terry-doyle@live.co.uk. This takes place every Tuesday.  
**7pm** Mass for Knights of St Columba Council 29 at St Mary's Cathedral, Middlesbrough, followed by meeting.

**7 Wednesday**  
**5.30pm** Exposition and Sung Evening Prayer, St Mary's Cathedral, Middlesbrough.

**8 Thursday**  
**7.45pm** Middlesbrough Catenians meet at Middlesbrough Cricket Club, Green Lane, Middlesbrough TS5 7SL. Call Peter Carey on 01642 317772 or Chris Rhodes 01642 319161.

**11 Sunday**  
**10am** Mass for the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, St Mary's Cathedral, with tea and coffee in the hall afterwards.

**3pm** Mass for LGBT+ community, family, and friends at the Chapel of the Bar Convent. Doors open from 2.30pm.

**12 Monday**  
**2pm** Music for the Mind at St Mary's Cathedral for people who enjoy singing and connecting memories. There is no charge, and everyone is welcome. Tea, cake, and biscuits followed by fun. For details call 01642 710179. You can also join in on the Diocese of Middlesbrough YouTube page.

**13 Tuesday**  
**12.45 pm** The Catholic Women's Luncheon Club meets every second Tuesday of the month at the Kingston Theatre Hotel, Kingston Square, Hull. Lunch at 1pm. All ladies in the Hull and East Riding area are most welcome. Call 01482 446565 or email jayne.wilson24@gmail.com.

**14 Wednesday**  
**7pm** The Hull Circle of the Catenian Association meet at the Lazaat Hotel, Cottingham, followed by a Mass and a buffet. Email Charles Cseh at hullcirclesecretary@gmail.com.

**17 Saturday**  
The Eddie White Sacred Heart Parish Dance with Sean Kelly. All dances take place at the Erimus Club on Cumberland Road, Middlesbrough TS5 6JB. £5 on the door. For details contact John Brown on 07871958412.

**18 Sunday**  
**3pm** Rite of Election at St Mary's Cathedral.  
**3pm** Fellowship Mass at the Holy Name Church, The Avenue, Middlesbrough TS5 6QT.

**21 Wednesday**  
**5.30pm** Exposition and Sung Evening Prayer, St Mary's Cathedral, Middlesbrough.  
**7.45pm** Newman Association Cleveland Circle, A Short Journey through St Luke's Gospel with music in Taizé style, St Mary's Cathedral Hall, Middlesbrough. Light refreshments available.

**24 Saturday**  
Lourdes Race Night, St Francis Social Club, Acklam Road, Middlesbrough. Tickets £5 including pie and peas. For more information and tickets, email john.brown160@ntlworld.com or text 07871 958412.  
**Noon** LGBT+ social gathering in the café at the Bar Convent, York. All welcome.

**28 Wednesday**  
**7pm** Divine Renovation holds a free online event called Health or Burnout: Where are your leaders going? with Sister Miriam James Heidland and Will van der Hart. Register at catholicparishsummit.com/webinars.  
**5.30pm** Exposition and Sung Evening Prayer, St Mary's Cathedral, Middlesbrough.  
If you have any events that you would like including in the Out and About section, email heidi.cummins@rcdmidd.org.uk.

# Sharing joyful festival of Hanukkah with York's first rabbi for 800 years

York's small but growing Liberal Jewish Community appointed its first full-time rabbi for 800 years last summer.

Rabbi Elisheva Salamo has a longing for unity and reconciliation and on the fourth day of the festival of Hanukkah he visited English Martyrs' Parish, where he was welcomed by Sister Patricia Harriss CJ and a congregation that included members of other Christian churches and York's interfaith group.

Sister Patricia spoke of the symbolism of light in many faiths and pointed out that Jesus is greeted as the light of the world. She then lit two candles on the Advent wreath.

Rabbi Elisheva told us Hanukkah is a joyful feast celebrating the rededication of the temple after the successful Maccabean revolt (Books of Maccabees) and the one-day supply of oil for the temple lamps, which miraculously stayed alight for the eight days of the festival.

She then lit four candles for the fourth day of

Hanukkah and everyone moved into the parish house for refreshments.

Thursday evening was the last day of Hanukkah, and the Jews and many other friends gathered in the underground car park on Jewbury.

At least 150 Jews were interred on this site after the tragic deaths in Clifford's Tower, where they had taken refuge from a mob and were burnt to death in 1190 AD.

The rabbi reminded us that non-Jews must have buried the bodies, and all must be grateful for help from believers of other faiths.

One hundred and fifty tealights were lit and Rabbi Elisheva led the official prayers for the dead, which, as far as we know, had never been said for these people.

Then the Hanukkah prayers were said and sung, and everyone helped to light the menorah (candelabra), which each Jewish family had brought.



**Rabbi Elisheva Salamo (right) presiding at the lighting of the Hanukkah menorahs**

The Archbishop of York gave an address, recalling Shadrach, Meshach and Abednigo in the fiery furnace, joined by an angel in their hour of need.

All faiths should work together, urged Rabbi Elisheva, in the service of the one, supreme creator, in this time of crises in our world.

**F Mary Callan**

# Copy Deadline

Copy and photographs for inclusion in the *Catholic Voice* should be sent to: The Editor, Middlesbrough Diocesan Catholic Voice, Curial Offices, 50a The Avenue, Linthorpe, Middlesbrough, TS5 6QT.

Tel (01642) 850505, email catholicvoice@rcdmidd.org.uk

Deadline Friday February 2 for our March edition.

Where possible please send articles in Word and photographs as jpegs. Please confirm when you send in your photographs that those who appear in them have given their permission for publication.



# Rita's new art book offers 'glimpse of the divine'

**A gifted Middlesbrough artist has seen her stunning religious images published in a book, 70 years after she first took up painting as a little girl.**

Rita Readman, from Teesville, was given a set of oil paints for her birthday when she was ten and enrolled on a foundation course at Middlesbrough College of Art after leaving school at 15 back in 1958.

Now her talents have been showcased in a hardback publication featuring her paintings of the men and women who first brought Christianity to the North-East.

The idea for the book – Northern Saints – sprang from an online Community of Prayer run by Durham Cathedral to bring people together during the pandemic.

Rita gained great comfort from joining others around the world for regular online gatherings and was delighted to be asked to paint saints including Wilfrid, Hilda, Cuthbert and Bede.

"I started watching the live-streamed Durham services and I was hooked," said Rita. "I joined the wonderful Community of Prayer and met such lovely people, many of whom are good friends now. Such a wonderful blessing."

"It was both a privilege and a great joy to be asked to paint the northern saints. It was a great deal of work, but so very interesting and fulfilling."

Rita married Donald and they had three children together. With no childcare available for working mums, she stayed at home to bring up the family, while Don worked as a draughtsman at British Steel.

But when the children were older she began teaching calligraphy, drawing and painting in further education, continuing for more than 30 years.

"Durham was a favourite place to visit for my husband and me and we always joined in for Evensong before we travelled home," says Rita.

"After my husband died in 2015, I consoled myself with artwork and painted almost every day. It's a great gift to have in such times, although at times life was very lonely."

"There were very few toys available when I was young, but I was always happy with pencil and paper to draw or scribble with."

"From an early age I loved drawing and at about the age of ten I was given a set of oil paints for Christmas, all in a beautiful wooden box lovingly made by my dad. I still have that box, but I use much larger tubes of paint now."

Canon chancellor of Durham Cathedral Charlie Allen was the instigator of the Community of Prayer, which brought people together from as far afield as Canada, Abu Dhabi and Sweden.

"It was a community journeying together, learning together and praying together and inspired by the character of the northern saints," she says.

"In our midst was an artist who captured our imaginations and warmed our hearts with her colourful depictions of these saints and the narratives of their lives. Her gift awakened within us the faith of those who shaped this ancient landscape – the same faith that shapes our lives today."



Artist Rita Readman with her book, Northern Saints

"This book draws together many of Rita's works alongside reflections from other members of this Community of Prayer. It is a joy to delve into and to rejoice in. Thank you, Rita, for brightening our lives with a glimpse

of the divine."

Northern Saints is published by McGeary Media in a limited edition signed hardback book priced £20 plus P&P. For more information email [mcgearymedia@gmail.com](mailto:mcgearymedia@gmail.com).

## Charity launches urgent appeal as demand for emergency accommodation escalates

**Youth homelessness charity Depaul UK has warned of extraordinary risks to young people facing homelessness this winter.**

Depaul UK experienced a 30 per cent increase in referrals to its emergency accommodation service, Nightstop, in the first six months of last year.

The charity said the combined impact of increased debt, spiralling bills and low incomes could lead to conflict in households, which exacerbates family and relationship breakdowns, one of the key causes behind the increase of young people vulnerable to homelessness. It has launched an urgent appeal to help young people reach a safe place tonight.

It's estimated that around 129,000 16- to 25-year-olds are homeless or at risk of homelessness, but Depaul UK warns the figures could be much higher, as homelessness is often hidden.

Charlie (name changed to protect his identity) is 18 and lives in the North-East. He became homeless at 16 years old.

He said: "I was kicked out of home and couldn't afford a hotel, so I ended up staying in a late-night café and the bus station."

"On a weekend the bus stop wasn't filled with the best people, but it was the only place that had cameras, so if anything happened at least there was CCTV. I was always on high alert and never got any sleep."

"I found out about Nightstop from Google and they sorted me out with somewhere to stay on the same day."

"I ended up using the service for a couple of weeks until social services found me somewhere else to stay more permanently, which meant I could keep studying and working part-time in a restaurant."

"I have a lot to thank Nightstop for. The couple I stayed with were so welcoming and friendly. I felt safe and relaxed, and I was able to sleep properly for the first time in ages. If I hadn't gone through Nightstop, I don't think I would have got the help I needed."

Nicola Harwood, Depaul UK's executive director of operations, said: "We know many young people who have nowhere to go, often because of family conflict, may accept an offer to stay with someone they've just met, or they'll ride buses throughout the night or seek 24-hour bars, only to find themselves among much older and sometimes predatory people."

"Living like this poses extraordinary risks. Exhausted, uncertain, and with few options, young people can become easy targets for abuse and exploitation. Anything may seem better than sleeping rough – especially in winter."

"Nightstop provides emergency accommodation and offers a lifeline to many young homeless people in crisis. We help those sleeping on the streets tonight and ensure others who have run out of options never have to sleep in unsafe places."

"It's vital that young people know that they're not alone, that this is temporary, and that they have their whole lives ahead of them."

Last year, Depaul UK worked with more than 2,000 young people, supporting them to find accommodation, stability and employment opportunities. It operates services in several regions, including the North-East.

For more information about youth homelessness, become a volunteer or to support Depaul UK's winter appeal, visit [depaul.org.uk/appeal](http://depaul.org.uk/appeal).

## Follow the Diocese of Middlesbrough on social media



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**The Diocese of Middlesbrough would like to point out that while every care is taken with advertisements placed in the Catholic Voice, publication does not suggest an endorsement of any views expressed.**



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

# Christians ‘caught in’ crossfire between Israel and Hezbollah

Up to 90 per cent of the population of southern Lebanon’s Christian villages have left their homes seeking safety from daily rocket fire exchanged on the Israel-Lebanon border.

Since the beginning of the military operation in Gaza, tensions have been rising between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

More than 130 people have died in Lebanon because of violence in the border region, including 17 civilians, according to media reports.

While Israel has directed its strikes at Hezbollah targets, mostly in Shi’a areas, several Christian villages also suffered collateral damage.

In Alma Al-Shaab, the worst-affected village, missiles destroyed 15 homes, according to data obtained by Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN). Religious leaders told ACN another war would be a major threat to the historic Christian presence in the area.

ACN has helped relieve the suffering, providing food packages, medical help and access to online education for Catholic pupils.



Displaced Christians in Beirut – Photo courtesy of ACN

# Sectarian massacre in Nigeria’s Middle Belt

Church leaders confirmed the killing of more than 160 people in Nigeria’s Middle Belt over Christmas in the “deliberate targeting” of Christians.

The killing spree began on December 23 and continued for four days, with 26 villages in Plateau State coming under fire.

Father Andrew Dewan, director of communications of Pankshin Diocese, where the attacks took place, described how “people were summarily shot and killed”, with churches, clinics and grain stores torched.

Regina Lynch, ACN’s international executive president, said: “We call on the government to finally confront this problem and provide safety to its citizens and urge our friends and benefactors to keep praying for Nigeria, just as we pledge to continue helping in whatever way we can.”



The aftermath of the Christmas attacks in Nigeria – Photo courtesy of ACN

# Protecting the Amazon in the spirit of St Francis

Franciscan friars are contributing to the preservation of the Amazon rainforest in north-west Brazil by helping indigenous people stay on their native land.

The Capuchin friars are supporting the Ticuna tribe spiritually so they can remain on their land and guard the Amazon from destruction.

Sônia Pinheiro, vice chief of the Ticuna people’s Enepü village, told Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) the friars are the only outsiders coming to visit who are not armed or looking to cut down trees.

The community are feeding the resident friars with the food they hunt and gather, and ACN has provided everything else they need for their pastoral and evangelisation work, including boats and a new house.

The Capuchins have lived in the

region since 1910 despite the isolation and long boat journeys. They brought the gospel to the Ticuna people, helped save them from slavery in the 19th century and are now protecting their culture and lands.



Ticuna children with the Capuchin Brothers – Photo courtesy of ACN

# Environment Corner – The mysticism within Holy Father’s letter to us all



Everything is a caress of God – Photo by Barbara Hungin

**Underpinning all *Laudato Si’* and *Laudate Deum*, the challenges, the hard facts, the need for drastic change is the profound view of the mystery of nature itself revealing the Divine God.**

Pope Francis affirms a sense of wonder, awe, reverence and love for nature in all its aspects and invites us to partake in a journey that will give us the strength to dedicate ourselves to care for our Common Home.

Once you get caught up in the deeper mode of seeing the reality that is around you, things are illuminated and become sacred.

Your experiences of nature become spiritual experiences, your encounters with others, and especially the poor, become charged with new meaning.

To quote Thomas Merton: “Every moment and every event in every person’s life plants something in their soul. For just as the wind carries thousands of winged seeds, so each moment brings with it germs of spiritual vitality that come to rest imperceptibly in people’s minds and wills.”

The mysticism of nature is a gift for everyone. As we contemplate nature, we are invited to grow in wonder and in awareness that every bit of creation is singing a song to us and is inviting us to catch on to its melody. Every garden can be a divine schoolroom.

The entire universe speaks of God’s love. God’s boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains – everything is a caress of God.

Behind these two documents – which are letters to all of us – is the most profound encouragement to us to STOP, SLOW DOWN and GAZE.

As Pope Francis writes: “Alongside revelation contained in sacred Scripture, there is a divine manifestation in the blaze of the sun and the fall of night.”

Beautiful sunsets are a good place to start. God is constantly trying to get our attention!

One of my profound experiences was contemplating the raindrops on the leaves of a plant on our patio. Every drop was different and beautiful and reflected the leaf on which it had fallen.

The Spirit of God fills the universe with possibilities, and therefore from the heart of things, something new can always emerge.

Pope Francis always encourages a sense of hope. In the final words of *Laudate Deum* he writes: “I ask everyone to accompany this pilgrimage of reconciliation with the world that is our home and to help make it more beautiful, because that commitment has to do with our personal dignity and highest values.” (LD 69)

May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope.

Barbara Hungin



## NEWS

## Gifts flood in for seafarers

Deacon Peter Barrigan, of Stella Maris, came to collect a mountain of gifts for those who work on the high seas donated by parishioners of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Middlesbrough.

The parish – which comprises the churches of St Gabriel's, Ormesby, and Corpus Christi,

Thorntree – is one of many throughout the diocese that contribute generously to this annual appeal for those who work so hard to bring us the things we use every day. For more information about their work visit [stellamaris.org.uk](http://stellamaris.org.uk).



Father James Benfield, Deacon Peter Barrigan and parishioners with gifts donated for seafarers

## Witness historic event at UK's oldest living convent

The three priest vestments designed and worn for the opening illegal mass in the UK's oldest living convent will go on display together for the first time since 1769 as part of the York Georgian Festival this summer.

The Bar Convent, York, was established in 1686 when Catholicism was illegal. The chapel was built in complete secrecy and took 20 years to complete. The first Mass was on April 29 1769 and the vestments were only worn together in the chapel on that occasion.

Since then, one vestment has been on display in the Bar Convent's exhibition, but the remaining two have been in the possession of different churches – until now.

Dr Hannah Thomas said: "Historically, these three vestments have been lent to different churches in the city, and it has taken some time to arrange for their return to their

original home.

"These incredibly significant vestments were designed and made as a set specifically for the opening of this very special chapel and we are both thrilled and moved to be able to share this historic reunion with the public.

"The vestments will be displayed behind the altar in the chapel where they were first worn together more than 250 years ago, at great risk to the priests and all those who attended.

"Not only have these Georgian vestments survived a time in which Catholic material was regularly seized and destroyed, but the fact the chapel and the convent have also survived against all the odds is an incredible story we will highlight as part of the inaugural York Georgian Festival 2023."

The display takes place from August 3 to 5.

## Musical afternoon raises funds for Malawi charity

St Aelred's, York, enjoyed a special event hosted by the choir and music group to raise funds for Open Arms Malawi, a charity that provides care for orphaned and abandoned children in Malawi.

The parish centre was filled with parishioners of all ages. Hot mulled wine was served, and carols were sung.

Parishioners were then treated to cakes and other finger food along with hot drinks.

Afterwards, the music group and youth choir led us in a wonderful singalong of carols and festive songs. The afternoon raised £550 for the charity.

Kath Stubbs

## LOURDES

## Join our Hospitalité team for this year's pilgrimage

**Could you offer your services as part of our Hospitalité team in Lourdes this year?**

Your help is needed for our 71st Lourdes pilgrimage, which takes place from Sunday May 26 to Saturday June 1 2024.

Our dedicated team includes doctors and nurses and our unskilled male and female workers (brancardiers and handmaids).

We are also always keen to hear from musicians and singers who would like to join our music group and choir.

If you're interested in finding out more about coming to Lourdes, please let us know using the following emails...

**Doctors:**

[egarcia@btinternet.com](mailto:egarcia@btinternet.com)

**Nurses:**

[maureenpiggott@hotmail.com](mailto:maureenpiggott@hotmail.com)

**Brancardiers:**

[headbrancardier@rcdmidd.org.uk](mailto:headbrancardier@rcdmidd.org.uk)

**Handmaids:**

[heather.garcia@btinternet.com](mailto:heather.garcia@btinternet.com)

**Musicians and singers:**

[thelombards@hotmail.com](mailto:thelombards@hotmail.com)

Helping in Lourdes is an extremely rewarding experience and many of our doctors, nurses, brancardiers, and handmaids – who all pay their own travel and accommodation costs – return every year.

We would ask anyone planning to join our Hospitalité team for the first time to get in touch by Friday February 23 at the latest.

All helpers must have DBS safeguarding clearance and attend one of our two mandatory Formation Training Days.

These sessions take place at Trinity Catholic College in Middlesbrough on Saturday March 2 from 9am to 4pm, with an evening session on Tuesday May 7 from 6pm to 10.30pm.

## Book now for Lourdes

**Because of a clash of dates with the Worldwide Military Pilgrimage, we have altered our normal week and we will be in Lourdes from Sunday to Saturday.**

Joe Walsh Tours is our official travel agent and pilgrims will travel in two direct chartered flights from Teesside Airport to Tarbes Airport, Lourdes.

Prices for the flight, transfers and six nights' accommodation with full board range from £845 to £895, depending on your choice of hotel. Single rooms are available for an additional charge.

A flight-only option is available for £575, while there is a charge of £50 for infants under two years on the date of return.

The price for supported pilgrims staying in

the hospital, the Accueil de Notre Dame, is £825.

Travel insurance for pilgrims up to 79 years on the date of return is £49, with an additional £49 charge for those aged 80 or over on the date of return.

As usual, there will be a full programme of services and a guided walking tour of Lourdes, visiting places associated with St Bernadette, guided visits to the sanctuaries, Grotto, baths and basilicas.

You can book now at [joewalshstours.co.uk](http://joewalshstours.co.uk).

Application forms for supported pilgrims are available from Lourdes secretary Pat Ling by calling 01642 760105 or emailing [lourdessecretary@rcdmidd.org.uk](mailto:lourdessecretary@rcdmidd.org.uk).



Some of our supported pilgrims enjoying a meal out during last year's pilgrimage – Photo by Michael McGeary

## Dates for your diary

**Sunday February 11:** Mass for the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, St Mary's Cathedral, 10am, with tea and coffee in the hall afterwards.

**Saturday February 24:** Lourdes Race Night, St Francis Social Club, Acklam Road, Middlesbrough. Tickets £5 including pie and peas.

**Saturday March 2:** Lourdes Formation Day at Trinity College, Middlesbrough. Details to follow.

For more information and tickets, email [john.brown160@ntlworld.com](mailto:john.brown160@ntlworld.com) or text 07871 958412.



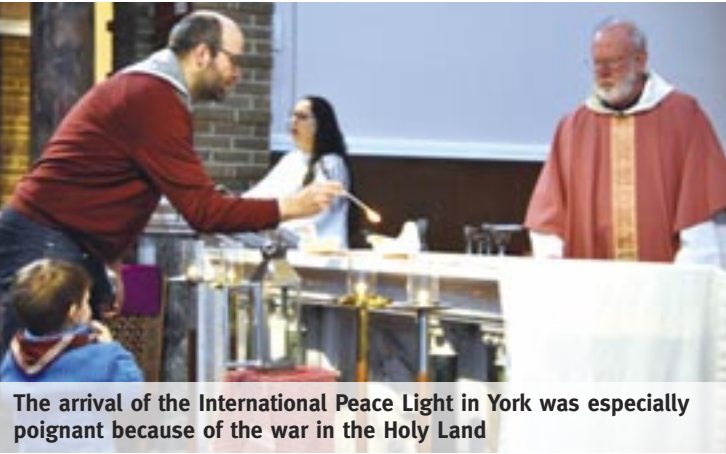
NEWS

# International Peace Light shines at Our Lady's

Every December since 1986, a light has been lit at the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem. The light is taken to Austria, from where it is distributed by the European Scout Movement. It is then passed on to countries as far as the Americas, where people of different faiths receive it as a symbol of peace and unity. During Advent, 2nd Acomb Scout Group brought the International Peace Light to Our Lady's Church

in York. It was a particularly poignant moment, taking place against the backdrop of war in the Holy Land. A much-loved tradition at Our Lady's is the Children's Nativity Mass on Christmas Eve. As usual, children of all ages acted out the story of Jesus' birth, with a baby playing the starring role. The church is always packed for this beautiful, fun and poignant liturgy.

Johan Bergström-Allen



The arrival of the International Peace Light in York was especially poignant because of the war in the Holy Land



Young people take part in the nativity at Our Lady's, York – Photo by Johan Bergström-Allen

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