



## Bishop's Column

On May 25 and 26 the first World Children's Day takes place at St Peter's. For the first time ever, the Pope has invited thousands of children from across the world to come to Rome to get to know one another, to play and to pray together.

As you can read in the main story on this page, the idea for this special day came from a nine-year-old boy called Alessandro. Alessandro sent a message to Pope Francis, saying how good it would be if children from different countries could come together as sisters and brothers. A World Children's Day would remind us that we all belong to God's family and encourage us to pray and work together for peace.

The Pope has invited children from around the world, from different religions and cultures, and also children who live in war zones, so that everyone can learn from each other and grow in friendship. Pope Francis doesn't want only the children who can travel to Rome to be part of World Children's Day. He wants all children everywhere to pray and celebrate together too. So, let's keep this day in our prayers and thoughts, and encourage our schools to take the idea forward.

Several of our priests are celebrating important milestones in their priesthood, 40 years (ruby jubilee) and 50 years (golden jubilee). I am sure we all join together in congratulating them on so many years of blessed and fruitful ministry among us – golden jubilees: Rev Timothy Bywater, Very Rev Canon Jeremiah Twomey, Rt Rev Mgr Canon David Hogan, Rev Vincent Docherty, and ruby jubilee: Very Rev Canon John Loughlin.

As we reflect on their journey, we can also remember in our prayers those who are just at the beginning of discerning God's call for them in ministry – Chris Carling is finishing his foundational year at the Royal English College Valladolid in Spain; Nicholas Trott and Oliver Sanderson will begin their journey of discernment similarly in September.

Also two new candidates for the permanent diaconate will begin their training likewise in September – Mark Good and Mark Dias. Please keep in your prayers the three other candidates for the permanent diaconate beginning their third year of training – James Nevison, Tom Rolfe and Rob Colombari. And last, but certainly not least, keep in your prayers Deacon Steven Leightell who, God willing, will be ordained to priesthood at the cathedral on Saturday July 13.

In blessed hope,

+ Long

## What's Inside

**Vows renewed at  
Chrism Mass**

Page 3



**Cathedral Choir's  
new recruits**

Page 10



# Preparations underway for first World Children's Day

**Mission Together – the children's branch of Missio, the Pope's charity for overseas mission – is helping children join their global sisters and brothers to celebrate World Children's Day in their school or parish.**

This inaugural event takes place over the weekend of May 25 and 26 and comes from a nine-year-old boy, Alessandro, who wrote to Pope Francis with an idea to unite children worldwide for a special event.

Alessandro hoped children could get to know one another, play and pray together and become friends.

World Children's Day invites children from around the globe, including those from areas of conflict and children of different faiths, to join together as sisters and brothers.

Although the main event will take place in Rome, Pope Francis calls on Catholics around the globe to celebrate this special event in their own diocese, too.

It is an opportunity to put children, who are the present and the future of humanity, back at the centre of the world's attention.

As Catholic schools in England and Wales are more diverse than the national school average, World Children's Day provides an excellent opportunity to celebrate the many cultures within our communities and remind pupils, parents and staff that we all belong to God's global family.

To help schools celebrate World Children's Day, Mission Together has produced free



Children praying together at St Mary's Catholic Primary School in Malton

resources including an assembly, Celebration of the Word and activities.

Supporting Mission Together through prayers and donations helps to provide feeding programmes, residential care and educational, pastoral and spiritual support to

some of the world's poorest children.

Visit [missiontogether.org.uk/calendar/world-childrens-day](https://missiontogether.org.uk/calendar/world-childrens-day) to download the free resources.

If you're interested in becoming a Mission Together volunteer, email Claire at [missiontogether@missio.org.uk](mailto:missiontogether@missio.org.uk).

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NEWS

Generous parishioners foot the bill for podiatry sessions

It was just before Christmas that a group of 24-plus willing people wanted to reinstate the Upper Room from the old John Paul Centre in Middlesbrough.

Three months later, the team has been running the drop in at the Salvation Army for over eight weeks.

By Holy Saturday the sessions were busy and the most recent was the busiest yet, with several new guests joining the regulars for a hot sausage bun, toast and jam, a hot drink and a takeaway bag.

One week, a team of volunteer podiatrists from the charity Forgotten Feet visited and gave treatments to those who wanted them and, thanks to the generosity of parishioners in the area, gave out nearly-new trainers and new socks to them all.

Those of us who have treatment on our feet, either out of necessity or because we want them to look good in the summer, know how it feels at the time and afterwards. I don't think we can imagine how much more important it is if you are on the streets.

The project is grateful for the £5,000 grant from the St John Paul II Fund.

This money, which comes from the proceeds of the old building which housed the original Upper Room, has been ring-fenced for the poor of the area.

Thank you from the team at the Upper Room with Middlesbrough SVP project.

• If you have a project you think fulfils these principles you can apply for a grant, whether or not you yourself (or your organisation/charity) is Catholic. For further details of the scope of these grants and for an application form, please contact the chair of Middlesbrough Caritas, Canon John Lumley, at [jl@rcdmidd.org.uk](mailto:jl@rcdmidd.org.uk).

Frances Gilchrist



A podiatrist from Forgotten Feet tending to a guest at the new Upper Room

Peace is focus of International Day of Prayer for Eastern Christians

In a message to mark the International Day of Prayer for Eastern Christians on Sunday May 5, Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald has urged the Catholic community to pray for our Eastern Christian brothers and sisters.

He says we owe them an enormous debt of gratitude for their lasting contribution to the Church and the Body of Christ.

“The day offers us in the West an opportunity to think of the Eastern Churches and to give thanks to God for all that we owe them,” writes Cardinal Fitzgerald, who headed the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue from 2002 to 2006.

“We thank them for the first preaching of the Gospel, the origins of the monastic tradition,

the early Church Fathers, and above all, the witness of the Eastern Christians down the centuries, which has been, and still is, an inspiration to our faith.”

At Mass, parishes can add this intention to their own bidding prayers:

Let us pray for peace in the world, especially in Ukraine and the Middle East. May the Christians in these lands be strengthened in their faith so that they may continue to give witness to Jesus Christ.

A longer prayer for Eastern Christians is provided by Fellowship and Aid to the Christians of the East (FACE):

Heavenly Father, we pray today for peace in the world, especially in the Middle East and Ukraine.

By your heavenly grace, strengthen the faith and hope of Eastern Christians.

May they be blessed with peace and prosperity in their lands.

And may we be inspired by their devotion and witness to the Gospel, by their love and compassion for all in their communities, and by their courage, endurance and self-sacrifice against oppression.

Through their charity, tolerance and friendship, bring peace and reconciliation to the troubled lands where Christianity was born and first spread.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen

BISHOP TERRY'S MAY ENGAGEMENTS

- 5 Celebrates Mass and Confirmations at Ampleforth 11.15am
- 7-9 Attends ordination of bishop-elect Bosco McDonal, Clifton
- 11 Attends the ruby jubilee Mass for Canon John Loughlin Sacred Heart, Middlesbrough Noon
- 11-12 Parish visitation to Our Lady of Lourdes & St Peter Chanel
- 14 Attends Trustee Board Meeting 10.30am
- 15 School visitation to St Mary Queen of Martyrs, Hull 1pm
- 18 Celebrates Mass and Confirmations at Malton 6.30pm
- 19 Parish visitation to St Anthony & Our Lady of Mercy, Hull 10am
- 21 Celebrates Confirmations in Central Deanery, Our Lady's, Acomb 7pm
- 22 Attends meeting of the Northern Province, Bishop's House, Leeds 10.30am
- 23 Attends chapter meeting at St Mary's Cathedral, Middlesbrough 11am
- 26 to June 1 Annual Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes

Walk of Witness in York

Tang Hall, Heworth and Osbaldwick Churches Together organised a Good Friday Walk of Witness.

They hoped a couple of dozen people may walk a loop of the area to remind everyone what the day really meant and show local churches working as one.

What a positive response we had, with well over 60 people taking part. After a brief Stations of the Cross liturgy at St Aelred's Church, we made our way to Holy Trinity Church, Heworth, where the first stop and reading was proclaimed.

After a further two stops and readings at Heworth Church Hall and Heworth Scout Hut, we made our way to the final destination, Tang Hall Road shops and St Hilda's Church.

Here we stopped for the final reading with hymns, supported by the busking vicar of St Hilda's, David Caswell, before entering the church for tea, coffee and hot cross buns.

This was our most successful Walk of Witness for many years in terms of numbers and in people engaging in conversation and acknowledging our presence on the way.

We look forward to even more taking part in 2025 as we continue working with our Christian sisters and brothers throughout the year.

Father Bill Serplus



Some of the Christians who took part in a Good Friday Walk of Witness in York



# Priests renew their vows at annual Mass of Chrism

Parishioners joined clergy from all over the diocese during Holy Week to celebrate the Mass of Chrism at St Mary's Cathedral.

Bishop Terry presided as priests reaffirmed their ministry and renewed the promises made at their ordination.

He also blessed the Oil of Chrism, Oil of the Sick and Oil of Catechumens, which will be used in every parish throughout the year.

“Remember that first anointing, when you were called in baptism to be sons and daughters of the Father, children of God,” Bishop Terry told the congregation in his homily.

“No matter what stage in life you received the anointing – as a baby, a young person, as an adult – there is a deep down memory of that encounter with the Father.

“He recognises the image of his only begotten son in each one of us and acknowledges us as his beloved sons and daughters.”

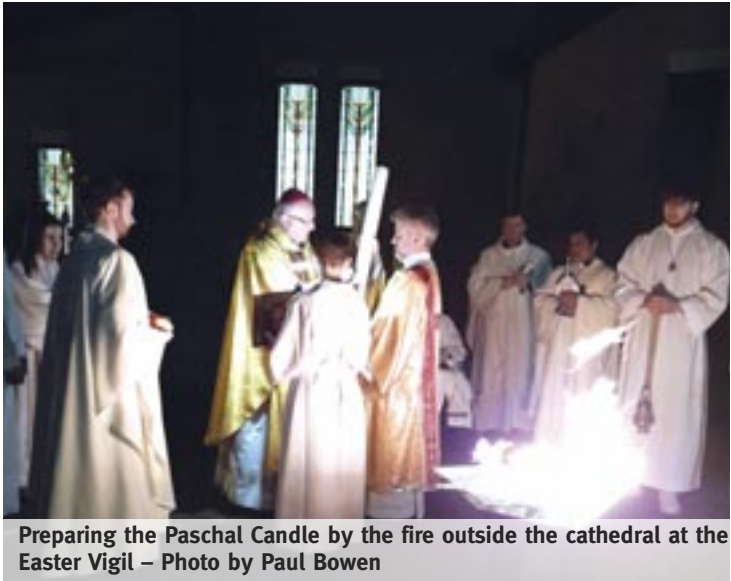
The Mass of Chrism is central to the sacramental life of the whole diocese and is an ancient ceremony that takes place in cathedrals around the world.



Bishop Terry blessed the oils to be used in every parish throughout the year



Some of those who joined the Church at the Easter Vigil were welcomed during the Rite of Election



Preparing the Paschal Candle by the fire outside the cathedral at the Easter Vigil – Photo by Paul Bowen

# Grant funding brings much-needed parish improvements

Parishioners and visitors at Withernsea's Ss Peter & John Fisher's Church can now experience enhanced accessibility, courtesy of a newly installed, same-level accessible toilet.

This initiative, entailing the construction of the facility from scratch and incorporating comprehensive accessibility features, became a reality through a generous £4,350 grant from the Do It For East Yorkshire Community Fund.

Diocesan fundraising officer Dan Woodgate secured the grant, paving the way for much-needed improvements that elevate the overall experience for parishioners and the broader community.

The positive impact is already clear, with attendance for the soup and sandwich outreach initiative increasing and parishioners finding added comfort in staying for a cup of tea after Mass, thanks to the enhanced facilities.

Canon Stephen Maughan expressed his appreciation for the improvements, saying:

“It’s a wonderful addition to the social centre, much needed for the safety and wellbeing of our parishioners and other centre users. We are grateful to Dan and the funders for their generosity and support.”

The grant application, led by Dan, underlines his determination to help enhance parish facilities throughout the diocese.

“I’m delighted to have contributed to securing the funding, enabling another of our parishes to embark on a much-needed capital project,” he said.

“I hope the parish community enjoys their new facility and it allows for more social events and time spent together. Thanks to Canon Stephen for his valuable input and to the team at East Riding Council for their support.

“Meeting parishioners Bernice Birkitt and Andrew Wells, who helped manage the project, and seeing the facility up and running, was truly the cherry on top.”

For information on parish grant funding, contact Dan at fundraising@rcdmidd.org.uk.



Dan Woodgate with parishioner Andrew Wells at the new facility



## SCHOOLS

# Caring Mini Vinnies make city a brighter place

The Mini Vinnies SVP group at St Vincent's VC Academy in Hull has been working hard for their school and the wider parish community.

Children work closely with St Vincent's parishioner Mrs Marshall, who is more affectionately known to everyone at the

school as Mrs Marshmallow.

The Mini Vinnies have been sharing love with their parishioners through bookmarks they made containing scripture messages.

St Vincent's prayer garden has also been given a spring update by the group, with planted daffodils and primulas.



Father Richard Nwagwu with two of the St Vincent's Mini Vinnies

Other charitable work carried out in the image of the school's patron saint has included decorating the statue of St Vincent in the church with flowers, serving parents during a fundraising afternoon, hosting a hot chocolate kindness afternoon with children from each class nominated for showing kindness to others and collecting teddy bears to donate to Welcome House in Hull for refugee children.

Mrs Marshall dedicates so much of her time to the children of St Vincent's, who are grateful for all she does.

Underpinning the group's charitable is a strong link between the school and the parish, helped by having the church right on their doorstep.

Each week one class attends Mass with Father Richard, reading prayers of intercession they have written.

During Lent, Father Richard came into the school for a beautiful service of reconciliation, which was followed by the opportunity for the children to make individual confessions.

- The SVP and CAFOD are working together to offer residential work experience for 20 young adults in England and Wales. The experience will be in London from July 7 to 13. Candidates must be aged between 20 and 30 and be passionate about social justice. Scan the QR code on the top right of the photo for more information.

## Glowing report for 'calm and focused' St Aelred's

A York school where classrooms are "calm and focused places to learn" has been handed a glowing report by Ofsted.

St Aelred's Primary – part of the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust (NPCAT) family of 38 schools throughout North Yorkshire and Teesside – was rated as good in all areas and good overall.

Inspectors said: "St Aelred's is a welcoming school. Pupils are proud to attend. They know and understand the school values of friendship, courage and respect. Pupils demonstrate these values in their attitudes to learning and relationships with each other and with staff. Pupils show maturity and confidence when talking about a range of issues. Equality and fairness are a key part of school life.

"Rapid progress is evident in the pace of change to strengthen the curriculum and improve behaviour in school. Classrooms are calm and focused places to learn. Pupils benefit from clear school rules. Their positive attitudes and hard work are rewarded in different ways."

Delighted headteacher Claire Hughes said a real team effort was the secret of the school's success.

"The report is testament to the hard work and commitment of our dedicated staff team who go above and beyond in their daily roles to support the children at St Aelred's," she said.

"Partnership working and links with the community are a critical aspect of school life and this is far-reaching, with involvement from stakeholders including governors, parents and carers and the parish, who are

all committed to and invested in helping our children flourish and grow.

"We have worked hard to drive forward several key improvements this year, including changes to our curriculum, more extracurricular activities and a new behaviour strategy, and we are delighted to have this work positively recognised."

Inspectors said school trips help pupils learn beyond the classroom and praised after-school activities such as dance and art clubs.

They added: "Stakeholders, such as governors, trustees and trust leaders, are proactive in holding leaders to account. They have the same high expectations as leaders."

Mrs Hughes thanked her dedicated team, including teachers, support staff and leaders who had worked so hard to secure this outcome.

She said: "The school has also benefited significantly from the support of NPCAT in moving forward key aspects of school improvement this year, and leaders and governors are extremely grateful for the support that has been afforded to the school through this partnership."

NPCAT CEO Hugh Hegarty said: "Mrs Hughes has had a significant impact since her appointment in April and the capacity of the trust to support leaders and staff at all levels has also been hugely important.

"The support from St Aelred's governors has been and continues to be so highly valued by both the trust and the school.

"We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with St Aelred's and to the impact of NPCAT reaping benefits for all the school's pupils in the years ahead."



St Aelred's in York has been rated a good school by Ofsted

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# Inspectors praise school that inspires lifelong love of reading

**Inspectors have praised a Redcar school where an “exciting” range of library books inspires a love of reading in its pupils.**

The Ofsted inspection of St Benedict’s Catholic Primary School in Redcar was not graded, but the report said “the evidence gathered suggests the grade might be outstanding if a graded inspection were carried out now”.

“The school inspires a love of reading for pupils,” the report says. “They are excited about the wide range of books in the school library.

“Leaders have embedded an excellent reading culture in the school. Pupils learn to read quickly and confidently. Pupils’ progress is checked diligently. The school provides effective support for pupils who struggle with reading. As a result, they catch up quickly.”

CEO Hugh Hegarty praised the school leaders and governors, whose hard work he said had laid down the foundations for Ofsted’s glowing report.

“Their total commitment has ensured that Redcar children continue to be offered fantastic Catholic education, where everyone is welcome,” he said.

“I would also like to thank the trust’s Primary Standards team for supporting the continued development of excellent provision.”

Acting headteacher Suzanne Dickinson said she was proud of everyone at the school and delighted that Ofsted acknowledged their efforts.

“This report is a testament to the hard work, perseverance and unwavering determination of our pupils, staff and parents alike,” she said.

“The report acknowledges an ambitious curriculum, which was demonstrated through the deep dives in reading, maths and history.



Children from St Benedict’s, Redcar, celebrate the school’s Ofsted report

“The work over the last three years to further develop our curriculum highlights the quality of leadership and education St Benedict’s provides for every child. We are committed to ensuring we deliver a curriculum that challenges and inspires all pupils to reach their full potential.”

Mrs Dickinson added: “We have a team approach, based upon the generous sharing of individual gifts by all pupils, staff, parents, governors and parish.

“Our strength comes from the whole St Benedict’s community – home, school and parish – working together and appreciating and encouraging everyone’s contribution.

“This community is a shining example of how working together can lead to remarkable

achievements. Together we have built an environment that nurtures our students, instils in them a love for learning and empowers them to become competent and independent individuals.”

Executive headteacher Kendra Sill added: “This report reflects the commitment of all

leaders and staff. We have been relentless in our ambition to provide the very best for the children.”

St Benedict’s, which has 388 pupils, is one of 38 schools that make up Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust.

## Caring pupils raise money for two charities

**It was a busy Lent for pupils and staff at All Saints School in York.**

Alongside the usual Stations of the Cross, reconciliation service and end-of-term Easter services, we also held Experience Easter workshops and two large fundraising events.

Firstly, a large group of pupils took part in the Big Lent Walk for CAFOD, walking more than 230km and raising £220 by walking as a group on Thursday lunchtimes. They were committed to the cause and came for a walk whatever the weather.

Secondly, a hardy group from Years 9, 10 and 12 took part in the Big Sleep Out to raise awareness of homelessness. By spending one night sleeping outside they raised more than £580 for CAFOD and homelessness charity SASH.

We have been overwhelmed by pupils’ dedication and support of staff and families for these events. Thank you to everyone involved.

**Rebecca Kramm, Chaplaincy Coordinator**



Years 9, 10 and 12 took part in the Big Sleep Out to raise awareness of homelessness – and also raised charity cash



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## SCHOOLS

# Festival success for talented St Hedda's pupils

**Taking part in the Eskdale Festival of the Arts has sparked a love of performing that now extends throughout the year at a North Yorkshire school.**

Gifted pupils from St Hedda's Catholic Primary School in Egton Bridge came away with an impressive haul of prizes after showcasing their talents for the second consecutive year, having sampled the spotlight at the 2023 event.

School governor Leanne Coates, who helped prepare the children for their performances, said taking part in the festival has sparked a passion for the performing arts at St Hedda's. "What started off as a drama club just so we could enter the Eskdale Festival soon ignited into something much bigger," she said.

"We've enjoyed seeing the children take on the challenge of learning their parts. Some children who wouldn't always speak up in class wanted to be on stage.

"The transformation in those children was astounding. Their confidence flourished and it made me realise we couldn't just do the festival then stop and we have since put on performances of Matilda and The Grinch.

"The children have learnt so much, working as a team, developing listening skills and building their confidence even more. Seeing their personalities coming out on stage is a delight.

"The staff have all played a huge part in getting the children and school ready. St Hedda's feels like one big, happy family!"

Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 scooped first, second and third prizes in the verse-speaking category after reading poems by AA Milne and Wes Magee.

Four children came first in the choral speaking category, two girls won first prize for a duologue poetry recitation and a Year 4 pupil took first prize for her piano solo performance of two songs.

Executive headteacher Kendra Sill was delighted with how well the children performed and thanked parents and carers for all their support.

"Oracy and performance are so important to us at St Hedda's, and the judges' notes mention the wonderful promise our pupils show," she said.

"It was lovely to hear positive comments from people attending the festival about the high standards of behaviour and performance from the children.

"We are so proud of you for all of your hard work letting your lights shine so brightly."

Some of the children were invited to perform at the Best of the Festival concert in March.

St Hedda's is part of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust.



Two of the St Hedda's pupils who were successful at Eskdale Festival of the Arts

## Using your voice and your vote from an informed perspective

**CAFOD and the SVP are collaborating to equip individuals and parishes with training to help you speak to your candidates on the issues that matter. We have prepared resources to help to inform you, including which questions to ask your candidate on several topical issues such as those mentioned below.**

Here at home in the UK we have the cost-of-living crisis that is seeing ever-growing numbers of people struggling to make ends meet and provide food for their families turning to food banks.

There is also the rising statistics of children living in poverty and the increasing costs of energy that puts added strain on already

overstretched budgets, to name just a few issues.

Then there are the desperate situations caused by armed conflicts raging in countries around the world, the effects of the climate crisis on people's lives and livelihoods, global hunger and migration and asylum, the debt crisis faced by many countries, business and human rights and building resilient communities and tackling regional inequalities.

Many SVP members and CAFOD supporters have been involved in volunteering or campaigning for many years on issues such as poverty, food and climate.

In 2021, parishes were closed and the

country was in the grip of Covid-19. Yet parishioners across the country organised themselves to hold meetings with their MPs and discuss vital issues that affected the world during the pandemic.

The greater the number of parishes contacting candidates, the stronger our Catholic voice will be.

The resources are available to order from CAFOD. Alongside this we will organise training sessions online for supporters and volunteers.

One of these will take place online on Saturday May 4 from 11am to 1pm.

You can sign up online at [cafod.org.uk/encounter](https://cafod.org.uk/encounter) or contact us at



[yearofencounter@cafod.org.uk](mailto:yearofencounter@cafod.org.uk).

If you have questions or want to know more about how you can get involved, please contact me at [ccross@cafod.org.uk](mailto:ccross@cafod.org.uk) or telephone 07779 804253.

**Carol Cross**  
Community Participation Coordinator

## International community urged to act now on Sudan

**Sudan is in crisis – more than half the country's 25m population urgently needs humanitarian aid.**

Nearly 18m people are struggling with acute hunger. UN figures have referred to the situation as "one of the worst humanitarian crises in recent memory, with potential to trigger the world's largest hunger emergency".

Church leaders who are working alongside those most affected have expressed their concern at the unfolding humanitarian crisis. CAFOD's local partner, Caritas Sudan, says the international community urgently needs to act.

In a statement, it said: "The ongoing crisis, compounded by security and administrative challenges, is preventing humanitarian aid reaching everyone who needs it. The coming rainy season between June and October-November will only make the situation

worse."

Pope Francis has repeatedly appealed for a negotiated solution to the conflict, recalling the suffering of Sudan's people and asking the international community not to forget them.

CAFOD is urgently working to address this crisis. We have allocated more than £250,000 for essential sanitation and hygiene services, as well as emergency cash payments, to refugees and displaced people.

We are calling on all our supporters to pray for the people of Sudan and peace for their country.

Your support is also vital to continue the work of our local experts in Sudan and its neighbours, who are providing practical help to families affected by the conflict.

A donation of £40 can provide emergency shelter for a refugee family. Together, we can

hope for long-term peace in Sudan.

Visit [cafod.org.uk/emergencies](https://cafod.org.uk/emergencies) for more

information, prayers and to support our work.



Women and children collecting safe drinking water from a newly constructed water pump in White Nile State – Photo courtesy of Sudan CAFOD



# Easter bonnet bonanza lights up parish hall

**Sacred Heart Parish church hall in Hull was ablaze with Easter colours to welcome housebound members to their monthly get together.**

The housebound committee did much work to make the hall so welcoming in the run up to Easter Sunday, filling it with flowers and Easter symbols.

Many of the members, especially the women, made their own Easter bonnets for the parade and choice of the member with the best hat.

Our day began with Mass celebrated by Canon John Loughlin, Father Noel Wynn, Father Frank Gallagher and Father Gerard Burns.

All those who had brought their own bonnets were called to the front for the judging.

A buzz of anticipation and excitement filled the hall as the judging was taking place. Congratulations to Cath Amos, a worthy winner!

After all this excitement, the day returned to normal and continued with a buffet lunch followed by a raffle, a quiz on the city of Hull and bingo.

It was another wonderful day, enjoyed by all those who took part. Our thanks go to Margaret Merrison and her committee, all the volunteers and, especially, the housebound members themselves, who always make the day extra special.

Chris Cuthill



Winner Cath Amos alongside Kath Holtby and Susan Wade



There was joy all round as the Mass of Easter at Ss Peter & John Fisher, Withernsea, finished with the celebration of much-loved parishioners Michael and Daphne Spicer's 70th wedding anniversary. They received a blessing from Pope Francis to commemorate reaching such a milestone. Congratulations to them both!

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NEWS

# Cardinal opens Ampleforth’s new visitor facilities

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols visited Ampleforth Abbey to bless Alban Roe House, a retreat and visitor centre which has been refurbished with the help of a generous donation.**

The building brings together residential accommodation, a tearoom, shop and visitor centre, all now open to the public.

The blessing was preceded by Mass in the abbey church attended by more than 100 invited guests including employees and volunteers, contractors who worked on the refurbishment project, representatives from local parishes, and staff and students of Ampleforth College. More than 800 people followed by livestream.

Cardinal Nichols presided alongside celebrants including Bishop Terry and the Abbot of Ampleforth Abbey, Abbot Robert Igo OSB.

In his homily, Cardinal Nichols recalled bringing a group of sixth-form students from Wigan to Ampleforth in 1973. “For the youngsters”, he said, “it was an eye-opener. Some had never been away from Wigan, never experienced the pitch black of night without streetlights, never sensed the spirit of prayer of the monastic Divine Office. Nor, more importantly, had some ever experienced the unconditional welcome they received from this community.”

The building dates back more than a century and leading retreats for school groups from across the north has more recently provided a new focus in ministry as thousands of young people from Catholic schools have experienced the monastic life.

In October 2020, Ampleforth Abbey Trust received a significant donation to develop the Ampleforth Retreat Centre project and enable Ampleforth Abbey to become a vibrant centre for retreats and for Christian life and formation.

The donation came with an expressed desire to see the hospitality apostolate reach young people and those who can’t afford the experiences Ampleforth offers.

Work on the refurbishment began in October 2021 and was completed this February. The



Bishop Terry with Cardinal Nichols at the Mass in Ampleforth Abbey

accommodation has been modernised with seven dormitories for school groups and ensuite rooms for group leaders and retreat guests. There are also recreation and activity spaces, and larger spaces suitable for exhibitions, conferences, training, and corporate and community events.

In his homily, Cardinal Nichols said: “I pray that the flow of youngsters to this new centre will become a flood, enabling many, many people to share the experience of my small group all those years ago.

“In these days, we speak much about a Church of deeper communion and mission.

Alban Roe House is surely a fine expression of these aspirations being put into practice.” For more information about hospitality and retreats at Ampleforth Abbey visit [ampleforthabbey.org.uk](mailto:ampleforthabbey.org.uk), email [retreats@ampleforthabbey.org.uk](mailto:retreats@ampleforthabbey.org.uk) or call 01439 766089.

# Mike thanks parish after Benemerenti medal award

**Bishop Terry visited York’s English Martyrs Church to present parishioner Mike Walmsley with the Benemerenti medal.**

This special honour is awarded by the Pope to members of the clergy and laity for service to the Catholic Church.

The presentation, which took place at the end of Mass, was witnessed by a packed congregation and also included a St Vincent de Paul long-service award, handed over by SVP national president Elaine Heyworth.

Mike said: “I would like to say a huge thank you to the parish for everyone’s good wishes on my Benemerenti medal and SVP long service award.

“The reception I received in the hall after Mass was very humbling and moving and I have never been so proud to be part of our warm and generous community.

“I’m very aware that there are many in our parish and elsewhere who quietly do similar work that is highly effective but unacknowledged and in accepting the award I feel I am doing so on behalf of all those, especially in our parish, who work for the good of the community.”

Parish priest Canon Michael Loughlin added: “It was a wonderful weekend. The much-deserved awards and the parish’s celebration of their presentation reflect a generous and prayerful parish here at English Martyrs.”



SVP national president Elaine Heyworth with English Martyrs, York, parishioners Veronica and Mike Walmsley and Bishop Terry



# Father Gerry passes away four days after 81st birthday

**A priest who was named Middlesbrough's Citizen of the Year for his dedication to the poor and marginalised at the town's John Paul Centre has died four days after his 81st birthday.**

Redemptorist Father Gerry Mulligan CSsR passed away in hospital in Glasgow on March 15 after a long illness.

Father Gerry, who was ordained in St Benet's, Sunderland, on September 24 1966, was one of three priests at the John Paul Centre, a much-loved pastoral centre on Grange Road that closed in 2020.

It became a hub for community and voluntary services, including groups serving refugees, asylum seekers, the homeless and other vulnerable people, as well as religious communities of several denominations.

On being awarded Citizen of the Year in 2002 Father Gerry said: "I'm delighted with the award, but I emphasise it is recognition of what the centre does. There are three priests here and 50 to 60 volunteers. I'm only one in a crowd.

"We operate an open-door policy, so we find many people coming in who are looking for friendship, acceptance or just someone to listen to them.

"We listen to them and try to offer help, whether it's spiritual or practical. We try to shorten the distance between the Church and the needs of the people."

Councillor Ken Hall added: "I am delighted Father Mulligan has accepted the award. It reflects the affection and admiration the people of the town have for him and his colleagues' work."

As well as a coffee shop and a chapel offering daily Mass for those visiting the town centre, the John Paul Centre provided a base



**Father Gerry Mulligan after being named Middlesbrough's Citizen of the Year in 2002**  
– Photo courtesy Gazette/Teesside Live

to charitable organisations including the North East Refugee Service, Investing in People and Culture and homelessness charity De Paul UK.

During his time on Teesside Father Gerry was also chaplain to the Middlesbrough Team of Equipes Notre Dame, an international organisation for Christian married couples.

"He hardly ever missed a meeting and gladly took his turn in hosting at the John Paul Centre," said Peter Wordsworth, a member of the team.

"He was a wonderful storyteller – usually against himself – and had us falling about

laughing on many occasions.

"We all adored him for his wisdom, tolerance, sense of humour and self-deprecation and we were very sad when he left us to move to St Mary's Monastery, Kinnoull, Scotland."

Father Gerry studied for the priesthood in Rome and after a period teaching at Redemptorist student house Hawkstone Hall in Shropshire, he was elected provincial superior.

He then joined the editorial team of Redemptorist Publications and later moved to Plymouth before his appointment to the John Paul Centre.

His next move was to Kinnoull, where he served as rector and then vicar provincial.

Paying tribute at his funeral service, Father Gerry's friend, Father Ronald McAinsh CSsR, said: "He was truly an extraordinary and outstanding man and Redemptorist priest, and the large crowd gathered here today – and from every sector of society – is a validation of this.

"He was a man of the gospel. His compassion for the marginalised and the poor at times was challenging for me, and for others in the community. How frequently I'd come in to find a gentleman of the road, sitting at table, scoffing a large meal and going off with a few pounds in his pocket. And I would say, 'You know he's going to use that for drink.'

"His response was forty years ahead of Pope Francis, who a couple of years ago said, 'You know when you pass beggars on the street the tendency is to ignore them, or to think well if I give them money, they'll use it for drink or drugs. You don't know that! They might be genuinely needy in other ways – but of course they might use it for drink – a drink that might be their way of dealing with the awful pain they are in.'

"That was the philosophy of Gerry, and no one was ever turned away. Gerry was not naive. He was compassionate. He could see things through the lens of the wounded and the broken.

"He had this extraordinary gift of being able to touch the sensitive, painful part of a human being, and simply to be with them in these moments."

Father Gerry's funeral took place in St Mary's Monastery, Kinnoull, on Monday March 25, before burial in the monastery grounds.

## Monastery pilgrimage focuses on east-west unity



**Our Lady Star of the Sea parishioners walk the Way of the Cross at the Coptic Monastery of St Athanasius**

**Pope Francis asks that we concentrate on what unites us in faith and beliefs rather than on what divides us when speaking of unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ.**

Forty-five parishioners from the Our Lady Star of the Sea churches of Bridlington, Eastfield and Filey took his message to heart as they stretched out the hand of friendship to the Coptic Monastery of St Athanasius, North Yorkshire.

The Lenten pilgrimage was led by Father Albert Schembri with Deacon Steven Leightell.

Father Yostos, one of the eight priests residing in St Athanasius, which is the first Coptic Orthodox Monastery in England and one of only 33 worldwide, met the group.

Monks lead a life of celibacy, prayer, contemplation and periods of daily fasting. Daily life follows a strict routine beginning at 5am with morning praise followed by Holy Mass during the day – using altar bread made daily in the monastery kitchen – and ending with Vespers in the evening.

They aim to be self-sufficient, growing their own fruit, vegetables and grain, keeping animals and selling wine, butter, honey and cheese.

Father Yostos gave an interesting and enlightening presentation on the faith and beliefs of the Coptic Church, which reflected our own faith and beliefs.

The Coptic Orthodox Church was brought to Egypt by St Mark the evangelist in the first century. Despite persecution, the early Coptic Church flourished and indeed its early scholars defined Christianity for generations to come.

Father Yostos explained that the three main Christian churches share the same faith, beliefs and gospels but explained traditions differed because of language and communication difficulties and distance between countries in the early church.

Our shared faith includes belief in the one true God, the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the death and resurrection of God's son Jesus, that God has no beginning and no end, that he is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient.

We learnt that, like us, the Coptic Church has seven sacraments, with the Eucharist considered the Crown of Sacraments. We share the gospels as the word of God and devotion to Mary. They also believe in the second coming of Christ and in eternal life.

We could visit the monastery church and see some of their many icons. A new church is being built on the monastery site.

Despite heavy rain, after lunch a group of pilgrims followed the magnificent Way of the Cross in the monastery grounds, with each station represented by larger-than-life marble statues. It was a fitting conclusion for our visit.

We learnt much about our Coptic brothers, who warmly welcomed us, and we look forward to a return visit next year when the new church will be completed.

**Maria Foxton**



NEWS

# Catherine’s call to love and never count the cost

**Cleveland Newman Circle welcomed Jeanne Guillemette from the Madonna House at Robin Hood’s Bay at its latest meeting.**

This centre was set up in 1985 at the invitation of the Bishop of Middlesbrough, but the Madonna House movement is international, with roots going back almost 100 years, and it has its own special spirituality.

Jeanne began by introducing us to the founder of the Madonna House movement, Catherine Doherty, now recognised as a Servant of God.

Her name sounds Irish, but she was Russian, born in 1896 into an aristocratic Orthodox family.

During World War One she fell in love with her first cousin, whom she was then pressured to marry. Escaping the Russian revolution, the couple fled to Finland, but starved there until rescued by the White Army. They were refugees in London, where Catherine became a Catholic, then emigrated to Canada and had a son.

Catherine was the family’s breadwinner, taking menial jobs and later lecturing and becoming well off. Inspired to read the gospels, the story of the Rich Young Man

took hold of her, especially Jesus’ words, “Go and sell what you own and give the money to the poor ... then come, follow me.”

Jeanne said Catherine provided for her son and then, in around 1930, sold everything to serve the poor in Toronto.

Others came to join her and the local bishop encouraged her to set up a “Friendship House”. Moving to New York, she set up another house in Harlem, working for interracial justice and offering clothes, food and friendship.

Her marriage was annulled and in 1943 she married journalist Eddie Doherty and moved to Combermere, Ontario. There, in 1947, they set up a new apostolate, Madonna House. Many lay people and priests came to form a community with them, embracing a simple way of life, serving Christ in the poor. Catherine continued as a speaker, a writer, an organiser and a helper to many.

There are now around 120 people in Combermere and about 75 in Madonna Houses around the world. Each community is involved with the practical issues of living simply, and regular prayer. They are houses of hospitality, welcoming visitors for long or short stays. Catherine’s “Little Mandate from

God” inspires all. It includes the words: “Preach the Gospel with your life – without compromise! Love... love... love, never counting the cost.”

For further information about the Cleveland Newman Circle, email [p.egerton123@gmail.com](mailto:p.egerton123@gmail.com) or phone 01642 645732.

Cleveland Newman Circle holds six talks a year, usually on Wednesdays, at 7.45pm in St Mary’s Cathedral Hall.

Its AGM is on Wednesday May 22 and there is a summer visit planned to Ampleforth Abbey on Wednesday June 12. As always, all are welcome.

Patricia Egerton



Madonna House founder Catherine Doherty

## New recruits bring choir to full strength

**Last term saw two new choral scholars join the Cathedral Choir, making the full complement of four for the first time since before the pandemic.**

Joining Alexa (soprano) and Oscar (tenor) are Esther (alto) and Orson (bass).

Diocesan director of music Steven Maxson said: “It has been wonderful to welcome Esther and Orson to the choir, and to see how well they have blended in seamlessly, both musically and socially.

“They have been warmly welcomed by existing members of the choir, and all four of our choral scholars are such positive role models for our choristers.”

New members are always welcome to enquire about joining the Cathedral Choir, whether they be children aged seven-plus or altos, tenors or basses of any age.”



Diocesan director of music Steven Maxson with Esther, Oscar, Orson and Alexa – Photo by Chris Booth

## A Letter From Madonna House - Vocation and journey in Christ

**God willing, on Saturday June 8 I’ll be making my final promises in Canada with the Madonna House community.**

This step comes after nine years of living in this family, growing in maturity and self-discovery and making myself more vulnerable and open to God’s graces and movements in the present moment.

We make promises of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience in Madonna House. In Poverty we relinquish reliance on monetary gains and depend on begging to allow God to provide for our needs.

In Obedience we are subjected to the will of God and a chain of authority and learn to put our self-interests third behind the good of others.

In Chastity we renounce marriage to serve God and our neighbours more fully and strive to find our rest and comfort in God alone.

A tall order to try to live up to, but what we gain from these promises is a reflection of Christ’s ministry. In giving ourselves to Chastity, we can unite ourselves more closely to God’s love for the whole world. In

Obedience, we can learn to live courageously the will of God in the small things we do.

In Poverty we see the daily miracles of God’s providence sustaining us, most evidently in meeting our physical needs and less visibly in fulfilling us in our deepest desires, the greatest of which is for God and his presence in our lives.

At this stage, as I journey with Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit, I have a long way to go before I can truly say I am fully living out my vocation. I’m sometimes confronted with the emptiness of my former way of life, a life of little faith. Whereas before, such a life had felt comfortable, now it appears vain and dead.

The life I strive to live now, in a daily surrender to God and the seeking of his will for me in every moment, is filled with his grace, peace and joy, though I don’t always fully perceive it.

This journey in Christ is a lifelong spiritual

progress needing a continual re-centring on God’s will and regular reviews of where I might have strayed from it. The sacraments and the intercession of Our Lady are a necessary part of my vocation.

My identity as a child of God, made in his image and likeness, and the death and resurrection of Christ are the loadstones and anchors of my spiritual life, ever reminding me that God is always with me and ever desires my good.

In all, my journey in this vocation has been life-giving and I’m so grateful for him calling me in this family of Madonna House.

I hope this journey of mine, with its ups and downs, might inspire those of you feeling God’s call in your life and those of you already in your life’s vocation to live more deeply for him, counting not the cost but the gains of Eternal life.

Mathieu Dacquay



# Children help to share the Flame of Love

**St Mary's Cathedral thriving children's liturgy learn about the Gospel and their faith through child-centred explanations and fun, relevant activities.**

During Lent, as well as the usual giving up sweets, the children performed a positive Lenten act by praying a special Flame of Love Unity Prayer to help heal the world.

They took home the prayer, which has been adapted to be child friendly, and tried to say it each day as their Lenten good deed.

This was a wonderful thing to do, especially as Pope Francis has designated this year as the year of prayer.

Where does the prayer come from? Its origins are in the spiritual diary of Hungarian mother of six Elizabeth Kindelmann, who died in 1985. The diary tells her account of revelations from Jesus and Our Lady. It has

been approved by a local bishop and Pope Francis sent the movement an apostolic blessing in 2013.

The prayer is being shared around the world and was translated into English just 14 years ago. Children are now helping parishioners to spread the prayer around the diocese.

Through this prayer the children are helped to understand that Jesus and Mary love them very much. Let's spread this message!

The children's liturgy takes place at 10am Sunday Mass during term-time and our numbers are growing. If you are interested in joining as a helper, we would be delighted to welcome you. Please email us at [clarelob@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:clarelob@hotmail.co.uk)

If you would like to learn more about the Flame of Love, visit [flameoflove.uk](http://flameoflove.uk).

Clare O'Brien



Children from the liturgy group and some siblings holding their Flame of Love prayer cards

# Do you need a DBS check?

**Do you volunteer in your parish? Does your role require you to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check?**

If you're not sure, please ask your parish priest, parish safeguarding representative or email the safeguarding team at [safeguarding@rcdmidd.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@rcdmidd.org.uk).

Did you also know that a DBS check is only one aspect of the safer recruitment process, and all of our DBS checks are enhanced checks?

A minimum of three items of ID are required to verify your identity and the safeguarding team is available to assist you with

completing your application.

They can arrange a Zoom meeting with you to verify your ID.

A DBS online application is required, in addition to the Volunteer Application Form (DBS1). Once submitted to the DBS, your application will go through five different stages of examination.

The safeguarding office does not know you have registered to the DBS Update Service unless you inform them.

**Jacqui Drysdale,  
Safeguarding Coordinator**



Mo Hunter, Lisa Whelan, Patti Wiczorek and Jacqui Drysdale of the diocesan safeguarding team – Photo by Chris Booth

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## NEWS

# Out & About

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

**4 Saturday**  
**9.45am to noon** Y-Pray, an annual event for women who are interested in exploring prayer creatively. Via Zoom, free to take part. Book at [wwdp.org.uk/y-pray-2024/](http://wwdp.org.uk/y-pray-2024/).

**6 Monday**  
**9.45-10.25am** Beverley Christian Meditation Group meets online. Further information from [christianmeditation.beverley@gmail.com](mailto:christianmeditation.beverley@gmail.com). Takes place every Monday.

**7 Tuesday**  
**10am** Coffee at the Cathedral. Mass, tea, coffee and treats, every Tuesday after 9.30am Mass. Make new friends and enjoy fellowship with a warm welcome and friendly atmosphere. Those who are alone are especially welcome.

**10am** Christian Meditation Group meets online. Further information from Terry Doyle [terry-doyle@live.co.uk](mailto:terry-doyle@live.co.uk). Takes place every Tuesday.

**7pm** Mass for Knights of St Columba Council 29, followed by a meeting at St Mary's Cathedral.

**8 Wednesday**  
**5.30pm** Sung Evening Prayer and Benediction. A time of prayer and quiet reflection before the Blessed Sacrament at St Mary's Cathedral. Takes place every Wednesday.

**7pm** Hull Circle of the Catenian Association's monthly meeting at Lazaat Hotel, Cottingham,

followed by a buffet-style meal. Email Charles Cseh at [hullcirclesecretary@gmail.com](mailto:hullcirclesecretary@gmail.com).

**9 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 Saturday**  
**7.30pm** Candlelight: Vivaldi's Four Seasons performed by a string quartet surrounded by candlelight at St Mary's Cathedral. Visit [middlesbroughrccathedral.org/whats-on](http://middlesbroughrccathedral.org/whats-on) for details.

**9.30pm** Candlelight: Queen v ABBA at St Mary's Cathedral. The greatest hits of Queen and ABBA performed by a string quartet surrounded by candlelight. Visit [middlesbroughrccathedral.org/whats-on](http://middlesbroughrccathedral.org/whats-on) for details.

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

**13 Monday**  
**2pm** Music for the Mind at St Mary's Cathedral for people who enjoy singing and connecting memories. No charge, all 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.

**14 Tuesday**  
**12.45pm** Catholic Women's Luncheon Club meets every second Tuesday of the month at

the Kingston Theatre Hotel, Kingston Square, Hull. Gather at 12.45, lunch at 1pm. All ladies in the Hull and East Riding area welcome. Call 01482 446565 or email [jayne.wilson24@ymail.com](mailto:jayne.wilson24@ymail.com).

**18 Saturday**  
**6pm** Mass in Italian in the Father Kelly Room at Our Lady's in York, followed by refreshments. All welcome.

**7.30pm** Peter Mylett is the guest performer at the Eddie White Sacred Heart Parish Dance. All dances at the Erimus Club, Cumberland Road, Middlesbrough TS5 6JB. £5 on the door. For further details call John Brown on 07871 958412.

**19 Sunday**  
**3pm** Catholic Fellowship Mass at Christ the King, Thornaby, celebrated by Father Pat O'Neill.

**23 Thursday**  
**7.30pm** Spring Serenade, an evening with St Mary's Cathedral choirs plus special guests. Sacred and secular instrumental and choral music, as well as popular classics.

**25 Saturday**  
**Noon** LGBT+ Ministry Social at the Bar Convent café, York. All welcome for a coffee or a meal and friendship.

**If you have any events that you would like to be included in the Out and About section, please email [heidi.cummins@rcdmidd.org.uk](mailto:heidi.cummins@rcdmidd.org.uk)**

## Don't treat Holy Land crisis like a game

**An abbot has accused the international community of treating the Holy Land crisis "as if it was a simple game" rather than responding to the urgent needs of families trapped in a "terrible situation".**

Abbot Nikodemus Schnabel, of Jerusalem's Benedictine Dormition Abbey, told Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) it is important to look at the conflict from a Christian perspective.

Abbot Schnabel said: "People are dying while the world watches as if it was a simple game, where one waves flags for one team or another. But this is a terrible situation.

"This is not a football match, and it's not about scoring points, seeing who has the most impressive stories or the best pictures. I am neither pro-Israel nor pro-Palestine. I am pro-human being. This is my theological position."

He highlighted the importance of the belief – shared by Christians, Jews and Muslims – that every human being is created in the image of God and deserving of respect and dignity, regardless of nationality or religion.

Abbot Schnabel said there was lots of dangerous rhetoric on both sides of the conflict, adding: "They don't talk about human beings. They say these are not people, they are monsters, beasts in human shape."

He said the Holy Land's Christian community, shaken by decades of violence and political conflict, has an important role, as the only faith group placing the message of forgiveness and compassion at the centre of its teaching.

ACN has provided emergency aid for more



Jerusalem's Old City – © ACN

than 3,400 Christians in the Holy Land who have lost their livelihoods because of the conflict.

# 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](mailto:catholicvoice@rcdmidd.org.uk)

Deadline Friday May 3 for June 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.



# Mass commemorates more than 10 million unborn lives

**A regional Mass in Hull will commemorate more than ten million unborn lives destroyed by legal abortion since the implementation of the Abortion Act.**

The service, at Our Lady of Lourdes & St Peter Chanel Church on Cottingham Road at 10.30am on Saturday April 27, is 56 years to the day since the act became law.

It is also offered for all lives lost in the womb through natural miscarriage and for mothers, fathers, siblings and relatives who have lost children before birth.

“Attempts are being made in parliament to liberalise abortion for any reason up to birth,” said Chris Leather, of the Hull Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) group.

“The event is a great opportunity for the community of Hull and East Riding Branch of the Society to come together, celebrate a Mass of hope, demonstrate our love for life and send a message to the wider community and our lawmakers that abortion is not an acceptable sacrifice for the failings of our social systems.”

There will be refreshments after Mass and an opportunity to discover more about SPUC’s work and how you can help improve the prospects for the most vulnerable in our society.



Members of the Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform UK and the Hull and East Riding Branch of SPUC supporting a rally to alert constituents of proposals to liberalise abortion promoted by Hull North MP Diana Johnson

For those seeking further involvement in raising awareness through practical outreach or who simply want to perform an act of

commemoration, a pro-life chain and silent witness is planned along Cottingham Road after the Mass, from noon to 1pm.

For further details contact Chris at [chrisleather@btinternet.com](mailto:chrisleather@btinternet.com) or call on 07557 565485.

# Catholics asked to oppose Criminal Justice Bill changes

**The Criminal Justice Bill, which is currently going through parliament, has two amendments that could fundamentally change abortion laws.**

An amendment tabled by Dame Diana Johnson, MP for Hull North, would remove offences that make it illegal for a woman to perform her own abortion at any point right through to birth.  
This change would apply throughout all nine

months of pregnancy and create a situation where abortion, including sex-selective abortion, is legal at any stage.  
A second amendment, tabled by Caroline Ansell, representing a cross-party group of 25 MPs, seeks to lower the abortion time limit from 24 weeks to 22 weeks.  
Thanks to advances in medical science, many babies can now survive before Britain’s 24-week limit. The current limit is also double

that of most of our neighbouring countries.  
The Church opposes both amendments, upholding the dignity and value of every human life from conception to natural end.  
It believes both unborn children and pregnant mothers deserve full protection under our laws, as some of the most vulnerable in our society.  
Pope Francis says: “It is troubling to see how simple and convenient it has become for

some to deny the existence of a human life as a solution to problems that can and must be solved for both the mother and her unborn child.”  
Catholics are encouraged to contact their MPs to ask them to vote against these amendments. You can do this at [cbcew.org.uk/contact-my-mp-decriminalisation-of-abortion](http://cbcew.org.uk/contact-my-mp-decriminalisation-of-abortion).

# Life seeks new ‘community and church champions’

**Pregnancy support charity Life is looking to expand its community organiser network across many more parishes.**

Life is looking for people with the potential to show community organising skills, with access available to quality training, mentoring and support.

For more than 50 years, Life has supported women who have an unplanned pregnancy. Services include a free and accessible helpline with a counselling option, an extensive network of houses and pregnancy tests.

The charity is looking for applicants aged over 18 who have good social skills, can listen, be respectful and non-judgmental. They will want to make a difference in their community and have the enthusiasm and willingness to help others.

Community and church champions represent the link between Life and the parish. They must care passionately about protecting vulnerable women and Life’s role in supporting new mothers and their babies. Each champion will work to maximise local



donations, ensure the smooth day-to-day running of activities and explore ways to raise income.  
They are asked to amplify Life’s appeals, roll out initiatives and help publicise its achievements. Help could include placing posters related to specific appeals, liaising with businesses to find opportunities to place Life collection tins or holding cake sales or raffles.

As a community and church champion, you will help promote a culture of life in your parish and keep issues uppermost in people’s minds.  
This is a flexible role to suit availability and there is no minimum time commitment.  
To find out more, email [mattfeeley@lifecharity.org.uk](mailto:mattfeeley@lifecharity.org.uk) or visit Life’s new website, [getinvolved.lifecharity.org.uk](http://getinvolved.lifecharity.org.uk).  
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For help, call free on 0808 8025433, text 0808 8025433 or email [help@lifecharity.org.uk](mailto:help@lifecharity.org.uk).

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NEWS

Day looks at how to take synodal process forward

Earlier this year, Bishop Terry convened a consultation day, which was attended by 110 parishioners and clergy across the diocese.

This was in response to the general secretariat of the Synod on Synodality inviting all baptised Catholics to resume our synodal journey and continue to feed in their thoughts, reflections and ideas ahead of the assembly's second session in October.

It aimed to encourage people to re-engage with the synod process by focusing on two sections of the Synthesis Report of the October 2023 General Assembly.

The theme was taken from the Synthesis Report, All Disciples, All Missionaries (section 8, the Church is Mission and section 16, Towards a Listening and Accompanying Church), with an emphasis on “how do we be a synodal Church in mission?”

Participants were divided into small groups in a café-style setting and the idea of using the “spiritual conversation” approach was explained.

After a brief introduction from Hexham and Newcastle priest Father Chris Hughes, who facilitated the day, people spent half an hour in silent prayer before the Blessed Sacrament as preparation for our group discernment.

Here are the questions we reflected on, and some thoughts that were given...

Is your call to use your gifts to minister within the Church or to use them in wider society?

We need to understand how our gifts can be more widely used. It was felt it is sometimes easier to identify our gifts when we are outside the Church. Having Catholic contacts only is not enough. We need to take our gifts into the world.

Community is important, as the Church is a place of “return” and “friendship”. We can make our Catholicism visible through gentle witness in the workplace. It's not just about being Catholics but being empathetic human beings. Inclusivity is important, especially concerning lay women.

What is needed in your parishes and the diocese to help you and others use and develop your gifts for the service of the Church and for the wider community?

We need to be better equipped to bear witness and give testimonies formed by regular engagement with scripture, theology and lives of the saints.

Improved mutual dialogue with younger people might come through asking young converts what drew them to the faith. What do young practicing Catholics aspire to in their relationship with Christ? Our formation and evangelisation must start “where people are”.

Leadership and vision are needed, along with encouragement and support for those seeking to share their gifts. Preaching and communication at parish and diocesan levels is important to developing leadership and vision. All the baptised have the common aim of being ambassadors of faith and called to use their gifts. This requires continuing, lifelong faith development.

We need to become a “community of faith” and be comfortable in asking for help.

Pay attention to ways of engaging the young and the old. Find ways of supporting hospital chaplaincies, nursing homes and befriending older or lonely people.

A two-minute address to parish about the gifts we all have and the importance of using them, possibly at the end of Mass.

Ministers being trained to lead in churches without a resident parish priest and how to run other kinds of events, such as coffee mornings.

We need to welcome different cultures, such as among migrants, as these are sometimes lost when they arrive at church.

Work outside of Church in the secular and ecumenical area, such as Churches Together, AA and the wider community, by encouraging people to work in teams or pairs. Training in sharing and listening at a local level.

Support for married couples, how to lead a good Catholic life and bear witness to our children. Seek to improve sacramental preparation, with parents and catechists being involved.

Promote engagement in opportunities such as the Alpha Course, Sycamore, Divine Renovation and good children's liturgy, and be affirming of people who seek to use their gifts inside and outside of the Church. Can we aim to get to know everyone who comes to our parish? Have a working pastoral parish council that tries new things and is not vetoed by the parish priest. Take care not to spread ourselves too thinly, and instead be visible and get out and about.

Share a time when being listened to and supported by another was important for you.

One person said when approaching parishes to discuss Divine Mercy events and in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Others never felt listened to in the Church at all.

What is needed in the parishes and diocese to develop this ministry of listening and accompanying?

Professional listening without judgement. Look to befriend older people who are not in church. We need training in how to listen to people and to the Holy Spirit, along with courses to develop spirituality. Establish a Ministry of Listening. Help people understand

the benefits of talking and listening to each other.

Could training be made available in how to support and encourage each other in all the parish ministries necessary? Better communication within the parish and more effective use of social media. Develop structures, strategies and plans to encourage people to take part and value the diverse cultures now in most parishes. Building in sustainability to our parish activities, making connections with other groups and communities to share good practice.

Growth in awareness that we are here for the people of God and not for our own self-importance. Create a “safe space” atmosphere to help overcome mistrust so we can show our informal, human and family side. Encourage the clergy to ask for help.

How can your parish be more welcoming to those who feel excluded by the Church and wider society?

• Understand that people are individuals and have a discerning accompaniment that makes the challenge of the Gospel clear, without ignoring the voice of the other.

• Need for humility and to be open about our own weaknesses. Listen without anger, being careful and considerate.

• Be available and active in our engagement with others and listen attentively. Recognise when to be available and be patient with those who aren't ready to talk or open up yet.

• Need for spiritual healing, awareness of the Gospel that is of love and not rejection. Pray for and with others. We should be more than just welcoming – it's about “belonging”.

• Become more agile in responding to change.

• The Mass-going community should be the building block to establishing wider relationships.

• Spiritual direction to be more available.

• Signposting to guidance or advice is required – we don't have to do everything.

• Pastoral counselling to support the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

• Build networks at deanery level.

• Other ideas included opening churches during the day, understanding the practicalities of accompanying people, holding informal get togethers to develop mutual support and using churches for other activities.

• Be joyful!

David Cross, Adult Formation Co-ordinator

Women invited to Year of Prayer event

We would like to welcome women in the diocese to a day of prayer and reflection at St Bede's Pastoral Centre in York.

Prayer is about your personal relationship with the Lord. As with anything personal, the approach, your expectations and its development can vary greatly.

Exploration is the only way to discover what the Holy Spirit has in mind for you. Prayer leads to the gifts of the Holy Spirit and allows women to become signs of Christ's presence in the world today.

We will be gently guided in our path by Siobhan Burke and we will also feel our way with an experience of praying with clay, which will leave you with something to have and to hold and show your way.

The format will be familiar for those who took part in our series of retreat days for nurturing our spiritual life in 2023 and our reunion last year, but the event is open to all Catholic women, although numbers are limited.

There is a small charge of £20 to cover costs for those who can afford it. St Bede's is on Blossom Street, close to York station, and has its own small garden space. We hope a peaceful day in the June sunshine in our beautiful city, home of St Margaret Clitherow, will be an inspiration for you.

The event, which is supported by the National Board of Catholic Women, takes place on Wednesday June 26 from 10am to 3pm.

Email fiona@stbedes.org or call 01904 464900 to reserve your space. For more information email Fiona or call Barbara Cookson on 07796 117704, email bec@filemot.com.

Barbara Cookson

Environment Corner – ‘Seeds of Hope’ theme for Laudato Si’ Week

Laudato Si’ Week began to celebrate the first anniversary of Pope Francis’ world-changing papal encyclical letter, *Laudato Si’: On Care For Our Common Home*.

Since then, the annual celebration has become a way for all Catholics to unite and rejoice in the progress we’ve made in bringing *Laudato Si’* to life and to commit ourselves to further prayer and action for our common home.

This year’s Laudato Si’ Week theme is inspired by the symbol for Season of Creation 2024, “First Fruits”.

This Laudato Si’ Week and Pentecost, let us gather in community to contemplate and nurture seeds of hope for our “suffering planet” (LD 2). *Laudate Deum* is a reminder about the urgency of the *Laudato Si’* message and the need for both personal and cultural transformation amid our

ecological and climate crises.

The theological reflection for this year’s Season of Creation contains the following words: “There are different forms of hope. However, hope is not merely optimism. It is not a utopian illusion. It is not waiting for a magical miracle. Hope is trust that our action makes sense, even if the results of this action are not immediately seen (cf Rom 8:24). “Hope doesn't act alone. In his letter to the Romans, Paul the apostle explains the close relationship of hope as a growth process: ‘endurance produces character, and character produces hope’ (Rom 5:4). Patience and endurance are close associates of hope. These are qualities that lead to hope.

“Hope is given to us by God as a protection and guard against futility. Only through hope we may realise the gift of freedom in its fullness. Freedom and responsibility enable



us to make the world a better place. Only when we work together with Creation can the first fruits of hope emerge.” Let us be seeds of hope in our lives and our world, rooted in faith and love.

Barbara Hungin



# The powerful novena Padre Pio prayed every day

Every year, 19 days after Pentecost, the Catholic Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In around 1670, a religious sister, Margaret Mary Alacoque, began reporting visions of Jesus. He appeared to her frequently, telling her of his love for the people of the world and explaining he had chosen her to make his love and his goodness known to all.

In 1674, Margaret Mary reported that Jesus wanted to be honoured through his most Sacred Heart. And then in 1675, during the octave of Corpus Christi, she received the vision that came to be known as the “great apparition”.

Jesus asked that the Feast of the Sacred Heart be celebrated each year, when we are invited to make acts of reparation for the sacrifice Christ made for us all. This year the feast falls on Friday June 7.

A powerful nine-day novena, to begin on Thursday May 30, the Feast of Corpus Christi, is an opportunity to place all our worries and concerns into the care of Jesus.

It was a favourite of St Padre Pio, who prayed it every day for all those who requested his prayers.

Deacon Paul Hagg

## Novena to the Sacred Heart

I. O my Jesus, you have said: “Truly I say to you, ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you.” Behold I knock, I seek and ask for the grace of (name your request)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be  
Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you.

II. O my Jesus, you have said: “Truly I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.” Behold, in your name, I ask the Father for the grace of (name your request)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be  
Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you.

III. O my Jesus, you have said: “Truly I say to you, heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away.” Encouraged by your infallible words, I now ask for the grace of (name your request)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be  
Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, for whom it is impossible not to have compassion on the afflicted, have pity on us miserable sinners and grant us the grace which we ask of you, through the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, your tender Mother and ours.

Say the Hail Holy Queen and add “St Joseph, foster father of Jesus, pray for us.”

## The 12 Promises of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

- I will give them all the graces necessary in their state of life
- I will establish peace in their homes
- I will comfort them in all their afflictions
- I will be their secure refuge during life, and above all, in death
- I will bestow abundant blessings upon all their undertakings
- Sinners will find in my Heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy
- Lukewarm souls shall become fervent
- Fervent souls shall quickly mount to high perfection
- I will bless every place in which an image of my Heart is exposed and honoured
- I will give to priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts
- Those who shall promote this devotion shall have their names written in my Heart
- I promise you in the excessive mercy of my Heart that my all-powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the First Fridays in nine consecutive months the grace of final perseverance; they shall not die in my disgrace, nor without receiving their sacraments. My divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.



Painting of Jesus and St Margaret Mary Alacoque used by courtesy of artist Stephen B Whatley – visit [stephenbwhatley.com](http://stephenbwhatley.com) to find out more

## Storey lecture looks at ‘courage of the white flag’

Father Rob Esdaile will speak about “The courage of the white flag?” at this year’s Anthony Storey Memorial Peace and Justice Lecture.

For the past 20 years, Father Rob has written reflections used by Pax Christi in Peace Sunday celebrations and he is priest adviser on social action in Arundel and Brighton Diocese.

As an introduction to the lecture Father Rob writes: “Many people were shocked when, in the course of a television interview in early March, Pope Francis spoke of ‘The courage of the white flag’ in relation to the war in Ukraine.

“Was this childish naivete or profound realism? Was it supine appeasement or a creative attempt to prevent a relentless cycle of violence?

“How should we balance principle and pragmatism? Christ’s radical command not to kill and to love our enemies with the sordid realities of realpolitik? What price peace – and what is the cost of the alternative?”

The lecture, which is hosted by the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission, will once again be on a weekday evening, Tuesday June 4 at 6pm, and again is via Zoom.

To register, email Barbara Hungin at [bhungin@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bhungin@yahoo.co.uk).



Father Rob Esdaile

## Pre-pilgrimage Masses in Hull and Middlesbrough

Everyone connected with the pilgrimage is invited to two Masses to be celebrated as we prepare to travel to Lourdes.

The first is at Sacred Heart Church, Southcoates Lane, Hull, at 2pm on Sunday May 5.

The second is at St Gabriel’s, Ormesby, Middlesbrough on Sunday May 19 at 3pm. Tea and coffee will be served in the hall after both Masses, where there will also be updates for those coming on this year’s pilgrimage.

## Tickets on sale for race night

Our Lourdes race night will now be on Saturday May 4 at St Francis Social Club, Middlesbrough.

Email John Brown on [john.brown160@ntlworld.com](mailto:john.brown160@ntlworld.com) or text 07871958412 if you would like to join us. Tickets are £5 each (includes pie and peas).

## Book now for Lourdes

Bookings are still open for this year’s Diocese of Middlesbrough Pilgrimage to Lourdes, from Sunday May 26 to Saturday June 1.

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. 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.

First flight 7.30am from Teesside Airport, arriving at 10.30am local time. Second flight is 2.30pm from Teesside, arriving at 5.30pm local time. Coming back on Sunday June 1, the first flight leaves at 9.30am, arriving at Teesside at 10.30am local time. The second flight is at 2.40pm, arriving at 3.40pm local time.

You can book now at [joewalshstours.co.uk](http://joewalshstours.co.uk). All helpers are reminded they must have DBS safeguarding clearance and attend a Formation Training Day. The last session is at Trinity Catholic College in Middlesbrough on Tuesday May 7 from 6pm to 10.30pm.



## NEWS

# Hundreds turn out for annual Good Friday service

Around 200 Guisborough Christians gathered around the ancient Market Cross in the centre of the town in the sunshine on Good Friday morning to commemorate the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

The service was conducted by Major Antony Mugford, of Guisborough Salvation Army, accompanied by the Band of the Salvation Army Citadel.

Readings, prayers and a hymn were led by representatives of denominations in the town to follow the story of Jesus' trial and crucifixion.

Major Mugford opened the programme and Reverend Stuart East from St Nicholas Church began the readings, followed by John Flett from Guisborough Christian Fellowship, Reverend Kevin Highfield and Roma Ross from Guisborough Methodist Church and Angela Etwell from Guisborough United Reform Church.

Maggs Harrison and Father Paul Dowling, from St Paulinus Catholic Church, closed the Service with the declaration, "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again."

Refreshments including hot cross buns were served afterwards at Guisborough Methodist Church.



St Paulinus parishioner Maggs Harrison and Father Paul Dowling take part in readings and prayers at Guisborough Market Cross on Good Friday

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