



As you can read elsewhere in this month's *Voice*, it was a memorable and joyful occasion as Bishop John and I celebrated his diamond jubilee of priesthood and my golden jubilee.

Together we celebrated the Eucharist, a word that means "thanksgiving". And thanksgiving is the principal theme to describe all that took place and indeed for the many years of our priestly service.

Thanksgiving in the first place to Almighty God, the giver of all good gifts. Experience teaches us that left to ourselves we would not persevere very long or far; it is only by the grace of God that we have reached this milestone on our journey.

I want to give thanks to my parents for their quiet, kind encouragement, even though at times they weren't sure what they were encouraging – and if the truth were told, neither did I completely.

But they encouraged me, supported me every step of the way.

And to my sister and family and friends – who have always kept me grounded, sometimes gently reminding me of what truly matters.

I thank also Cardinal Roche for his lifelong friendship and patient advice, for stepping in when I couldn't see the wood for the trees.

I remember with gratitude those who have gone before us, whose prayers and support continue to inspire us.

I also want to extend a special word of thanks to the lay faithful of our diocese – your faith, dedication and friendship have been a source of strength and encouragement throughout these many years.

Thanks to all who organised everything for our celebration. I am very well aware that a huge amount of work has gone into today, weeks and weeks of planning.

I especially want to thank Canon Paul Farrer, the cathedral dean, and his amazing team, Father Peter and his fellow MCs who navigated us all through the liturgy, and also director of music Steven Maxson and the musicians and choir for helping us to better praise Almighty God.

Thanks to one and all who joined us and to those who would have wanted to be with us but for various reasons could not come. For all the prayers and spiritual support, heartfelt thanks.

The priestly vocation is a path of service, sacrifice and joy. I am grateful for the grace that has sustained me through the ups and downs alike.

As I give thanks, may I also look forward with hope, continuing to serve God and his people with renewed energy and faith.

And finally, all is grace, all is a gift from the Lord. To him be glory and praise for ever more. Amen.

Yours in blessed hope,

John Longley

What's Inside

Bishops' celebration picture special
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Celebrating Monsignor Gerard's silver jubilee Page 12



Diocese honours jubilarian bishops' decades of service

A packed St Mary's Cathedral included friends, family and senior Catholic clergy and representatives from other denominations as the diocese honoured Bishop Terry and Bishop John for their years of faithful service.

The Mass marked 50 years since Bishop Terry was ordained to the priesthood and 60 years since the same milestone for Bishop John.

Among the guests were Cardinal Arthur Roche, Archbishop of Birmingham Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Cardiff-Menevia Mark O'Toole, Abbot of Ampleforth Robert Igo OSB and Bishop of Hamilton, Canada, Douglas Crosby OMI.

Also in attendance were ecumenical guests including the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, the Bishop Emeritus of Whitby and the Synod Moderator of the United Reformed Church.

Bishop Terry began the service by welcoming his brother bishops and their representatives and priests and religious from our diocese and beyond and our ecumenical brothers and sisters. He also welcomed his and Bishop John's families and friends.

He then mentioned some others present who celebrate jubilees of priestly ordination this year, including Canon Pat Harney (platinum), Cardinal Roche, Bishop Douglas Crosby and Father Michael Keogh (golden), Canon Michael Loughlin (ruby) and Monsignor Gerard Robinson and Father Bill Serplus (silver).

In his homily, Cardinal Roche said of the two jubilarians: "Although in terms of service, they



Deacon Tom Rolfe, Bishop John, Bishop Terry, Bishop Tom Williams and Deacon James Nevison enjoy a lighter moment during the celebration – Photo by Chris Booth

are separated by 10 years, they are deeply united in their vocation, called as they have been, to be stewards entrusted with the mysteries of God, caring for his people.

"Our two jubilarians, indeed every priest, is someone who has listened very carefully to that inner voice speaking to him, persistently calling him, 'Follow me'.

"Where do you live, Lord?" "Come and see" is always the reply, as well as a daily commitment.

"The crown of priestly ministry is not in their achievements, but in their faithfulness to the

choice that was put to them.

"That is the real achievement of their lives with all its ups and downs, its treasured moments of great joy, and privileged intimate events in their ministry, sharing in the life of their flock, their joys and their sorrows.

"When Jesus said, 'You did not choose me, but I chose you', he was revealing to us a wonderful mystery, but one that needed the one chosen to accept with freedom.

Continued on Page 2

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NEWS

Diocese honours jubilarian bishops' decades of service

Continued from Page 1

"So blessed indeed are those whose ears have heard and whose eyes have seen, and who every day since that day of your ordination have had the trust and the courage to follow and to keep saying yes."

Bishop John thanked Bishop Terry for inviting him to share a beautiful liturgy, "so prayerful, so carefully prepared".

Turning to Cardinal Roche, he said: "It's only a few short months since you and your brother cardinals in that dramatic and exciting few days of the conclave elected Pope Leo to the Petrine ministry.

"You must be feeling enormously happy and thankful to God at the choice you have made. Pope Leo's first steps in this ministry have

been so sure and he's been so gracious.

"He stands on his own ground. He's very comfortable in his own skin, and he's deeply rooted in his Augustinian spirituality.

"And so today we feel through you that Pope Leo is very close to us, and we surely remember him in our prayers.

"I can't but add a sentence to say how much we appreciated the ministry of Pope Francis. What a blessing for the Church that he was."

Echoing Bishop Terry's welcome to our ecumenical guests, Bishop John said: "No celebration of ours as a Catholic community, no liturgy that we celebrate, is not hugely enriched by your presence. One day we're going to pray ourselves into unity."

His last words were addressed to "the people, the priests, the deacons, the religious of this fine, fine diocese of Middlesbrough".

He said: "I had the unexpected but great joy of being with the diocese two months ago on pilgrimage in Lourdes.

"It was such a special occasion for me, so moving to realise that the bonds of love and affection built up over the years of my stewardship here was still firm and strong and I gained enormously from that week.

"Pope Benedict said when we go through the doorway of faith we begin a journey that will last a lifetime and the purpose of that journey is to meet the person of Jesus Christ.

"During my years with you, I encountered that face of Christ in so many ways, and that is now deeply, deeply part of my life."

Vicar General Monsignor Gerard Robinson presented gifts to Bishop John and Bishop Terry on behalf of the diocese.

"To Bishop John, we give thanks for your

faithful and generous service to the church, especially for your time as bishop of the Diocese of Middlesbrough.

"Your ministry has touched many lives, and we remain deeply grateful for your pastoral care, wisdom and witness to the gospel.

"To Bishop Terence, we give heartfelt thanks for your 50 years of faithful service to the church, and especially for your dedicated leadership as Bishop of Middlesbrough since 2008.

"Your pastoral care, wisdom and deep commitment to the people of this diocese has been a true blessing and we are grateful for your tireless work in guiding, nurturing the faith of so many."

The celebrations continued after Mass with an reception in a marquee erected in the cathedral grounds.

Pope Leo sends apostolic blessing to Bishop Terry

The Holy Father, Pope Leo, wrote to Bishop Terry to congratulate him on his Golden Jubilee. Here's a rough translation from the original Latin...

To our Venerable Brother, Terence Patrick Draine, Bishop of Middlesbrough, who is celebrating the golden jubilee of his ordination as a priest obtained in the Diocese of Salford, we express our congratulations for the pastoral zeal exercised and the action demonstrated among the people of God in the Archdiocese of Kisumu in Kenya, as well as for having brought to the colleges of Valladolid and Ushaw the gift of faith to preach with passion and evangelise the poor with kindness, with which he preached the expectation of blessed hope and served God with all his heart and mind with faithful witness.

As we wish him well, we cordially impart to him and his loved ones our Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, the third of July in the Holy Year of Two Thousand and Twenty-Five.

Leo PP XIV



The bishops were presented with papal blessings from Pope Leo – Photo by Chris Booth

Arma Christi medieval scroll returns to public display

The Bar Convent's Arma Christi medieval scroll – which is the best preserved in the world and the only one on public display – is the centrepiece of its new Treasures Gallery.

The original scroll will be on display from September 12 to October 31 alongside many sacred objects that have never been on display before.

This spectacular and rare prayer scroll dates to about 1475 and is one of York's most significant artefacts.

It was found in the convent's archives, buried in a box of leaflets from the 1980s. It had never been officially recorded and there was no information about its provenance.

However, research soon revealed it to be one of just 11 of these illuminated prayer scrolls known to exist in the world – and the best-preserved example ever found.

Collections manager Dr Hannah Thomas said: "The Bar Convent Arma Christi is one of the most awe-inspiring objects I have ever seen.

"Arma Christi scrolls have been the subject of academic study for over 100 years, with other examples held by the British Museum, Bodleian Library and Scottish Catholic Archives in the UK, as well as Huntington Library in California and Pierpont Morgan Library in New York.

"Not only is the Bar Convent Arma Christi the best preserved in the world, it is also the only

one that features response texts at the end of verse, marked in red on the manuscript, a significant new piece of information about these texts. The Bar Convent and York are privileged to be the custodians of such an internationally significant object.

"Naturally, with this honour comes responsibility and owing to its importance and rarity we need to ensure it is preserved for generations to come so it will have some rest periods throughout the year.

"During these periods, an historically accurate replica will be on display alongside a host of other 'treasures', many that have not been on public display before, that have been passed onto the convent's nuns for safe keeping over the last 200 years.

"From exquisite silverware and vestments donated by prominent Catholic families to simple devotional items rich in personal and spiritual history, each object tells a remarkable story of resilience, community and unwavering faith.

Bar Convent admission prices, which include the Treasures Gallery, are £9.50 for adults, £7.50 for concessions and £2 for children, with under sixes free. A family ticket (two adults and up to two children) is £20.

For more details, including a list of dates when the original scroll will be on display, visit barconvent.co.uk.



The Bar Convent's Arma Christi medieval scroll is the best preserved example in the world – Photo by James Hardisty

Triumphant return for Rocking in the Aisles

The legendary Rocking in the Aisles show is making a return to Middlesbrough – and this time there will be actual aisles!

Previous productions filled Middlesbrough Theatre as clergy and parishioners came together to showcase their talents. Now, after a lengthy break, the hugely successful show is back, with another show-stopping programme of music, laughter and dance, with a change of venue to St Mary's Cathedral.

A cast of local talent from across the parishes of Middlesbrough and beyond comes together to entertain you and raise a few quid along the way.

Stars of the show include Legacy (Dom Boyes and Frank Johnson), Deacon Tom Rolfe, The Chancey Brothers (Father Pat Keogh and Canon Eddie Gubbins), Spotlight Performing Arts, Canon Michael Loughlin, Maryann Dorgan and, making his RITA debut, Father Steven Leightell.

Cathedral dean Canon Paul Farrer said: "The return of Rocking in the Aisles marks an exciting new chapter for the cathedral's entertainment offerings. Our aim is to welcome more than 500 people, making the most of the larger space the cathedral offers. "Tickets are already selling fast for what's sure to be an unforgettable evening."

Rocking in the Aisles is among the highlights of an exciting programme of events in the cathedral's autumn/winter calendar.

On Friday October 3, Teesside's musical maverick Mike McGrother presents a powerful night of stories and song. Known for his high-energy gigs with The Wildcats of Kilkenny, Mike shares a more reflective side – still full of heart, humour and hometown pride.

With guitar, violin and a stripped-back band,

he brings us three rich sets: songs inspired by everyday Teessiders, a heartfelt tribute to Vin Garbutt and a rousing finale with his male choir, Infant Hercules.

On Saturday October 4, there's a return from indie songwriting legend John Bramwell, who rated his 2024 cathedral show as one of his top ten of all time.

Mercury Prize-nominated and regarded as one of the finest live acoustic performers of his generation, John's songwriting and presence are something every music lover should experience.

On Saturday November 15, Catholic singer, songwriter and musician Jo Boyce and friends present An Evening of Praise. A regular on BBC's Songs of Praise and a familiar voice on Sunday radio, Jo's music has inspired worshippers for decades. Together with friends, Jo will lead this uplifting evening of music and praise.

And on Friday December 12, Middlesbrough's own ukulele sensation Amelia Coburn brings her spellbinding sound and sharp northern charm to the cathedral stage.

With praise from Paul Weller and Paul Heaton, national BBC airplay and a recent feature on Weller's latest album, Amelia's star is rising fast. Fresh from headline shows and SXSW, this is your chance to see her up close.

St Mary's Cathedral Autumn/Winter Programme

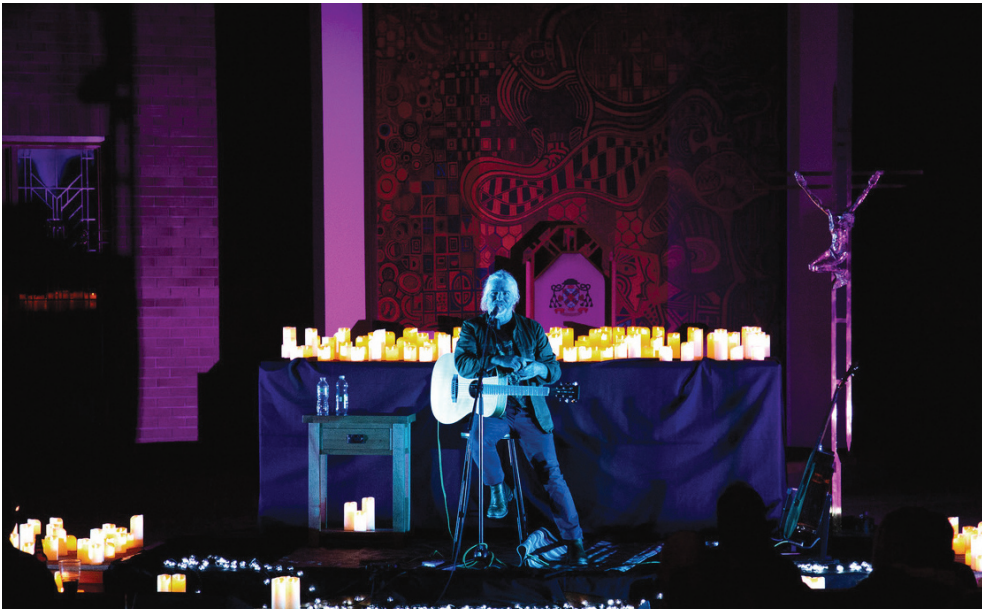
October 3: An Evening with Mike 'Wildcat' McGrother

October 4: John Bramwell (Solo)

October 17: The Cathedral Series: The New Eden Consort

October 18: Candlelight: Hans Zimmer

October 18: Candlelight: Coldplay



Indie legend John Bramwell is returning to the cathedral after last year's stunning show

October 25: Jeremy McMurray & the Pocket Jazz Orchestra

November 8: The Cathedral Series: Come and Sing Fauré Requiem

November 11: Light Still Shines – An Evening of Reflection and Prayer for the Bereaved

November 15: An Evening of Praise with Jo Boyce and Friends

November 21: Fleetwood Bac

November 29: O Holy Night with Newcastle University Chamber Choir

November 30: Advent Carol Service

December 2 and 3: Christmas Wreath Making

December 10: The Christmas Orchestra

December 12: Amelia Coburn Live in Concert

December 13: Cantabile: Christmas at the Cathedral

December 16 and 17: Santa's Jingle Jamboree

Tickets for Candlelight concerts from [feverup.com/en/middlesbrough](https://www.feverup.com/en/middlesbrough) and for the Christmas Orchestra from [thechristmasorchestra.co.uk/2025-tour](https://www.thechristmasorchestra.co.uk/2025-tour).

Tickets for all other cathedral events are available from [ticketsource.co.uk/middlesbrough cathedral](https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/middlesbrough-cathedral), the telephone box office on 0333 666 3366 or via the parish office, which is open Tuesday to Friday from 9.30am to 3.30pm on 01642 597750.

Compliments all round as boys' choir sings first Mass

Boys from several schools in the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust came together to sing Mass as part of the newly formed St Mary's Cathedral Boys' Choir.

Their voices rang out with a pure tone and many compliments were received on this, their first Mass at the cathedral.

The boys had been practising hard every week, learning the Daniel Schutte Mass of the Saviour, the psalm and antiphons for the day and Cesar Franck's famous and well-loved Panis Angelicus.

The Boys' Choir has been enjoying a well-deserved summer break but rehearsals will resume with the new school term, with the boys taking their turn singing Mass again in due course.

New singers are always welcome. Please email musicdept@rcdmidd.org.uk or call 01642 850505 extension 265 if you know anyone who would like to join.



St Mary's Cathedral Boys' Choir recently sang their first Mass

BISHOP TERRY'S SEPTEMBER ENGAGEMENTS

| | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|--|----|---|----|---|
| 3 | Attends Friends of the Lady Chapel Meeting at the Curial Office, Middlesbrough 11am | 16 | Attends meeting of the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales via Zoom 10am | 23 | Chairs meeting of the Trustee Board at the Curial Office, Middlesbrough 10.30am | 25 | Attends meeting of prison chaplains at the Curial Office, Middlesbrough 10.30am |
| 9 | Attends meeting of the Bishop's Council via Zoom 10.30am | 17 | Visits St Paulinus Primary School, | 24 | Celebrates Mass for the Consecration | 26 | Attends retired priests lunch in York 1pm |
| 14 | Celebrates Mass for the Consecration | | | | | | |

SCHOOLS

Glowing report is cherry on 150th birthday cake

A York school is celebrating a very special double milestone – 150 years of dedicated service to the community and outstanding results in a recent inspection.

A week of anniversary events at St Wilfrid’s Catholic Primary School in Monkgate was capped by the publication of a glowing Catholic Schools Inspection report.

The school received the top grade in every category – overall effectiveness, Catholic life and mission, religious education and collective worship.

Inspectors observed worship and RE lessons, examined pupils’ work and performance data and talked to stakeholders.

“The leaders of the school, especially the headteacher, demonstrate exceptional commitment and effectiveness in fostering a thriving Catholic community centred on Christ,” the report says.

“The behaviour and attitudes of pupils at St Wilfrid’s is outstanding, reflecting a deep commitment to the values of respect, responsibility and care for others.

“Pupils demonstrate high levels of attainment, and the work in their books is presented exceptionally well.

“The school’s environment and its welcoming, inclusive community ethos, proudly proclaim and celebrate its Catholic identity.

“Links with the diocese, parish and other schools are strong. Pupils send Christmas cards to senior parishioners, and some vulnerable families receive generous support from the parish SVP.”

One parent told the inspectors: “The teachers feel like members of our family.” Another added: “It feels like this is our second home.”

Pupils were also asked for their views, with one commenting: “Teachers help us. They enjoy being with us, and we listen and behave.”

Headteacher Helen Keith said the report reflects the hard work and expertise of staff and the volunteers who support the school.

She said: “The most pleasing part of our inspection was our wonderful children. They engaged with inspectors in such a positive and eloquent manner, took part in prayerful

moments and showed their individuality and creativity, as well as trying their very best.

“They are very proud to be part of our school and we are very proud to be part of their school life and journey.

“We have just planted a lovely apple tree in a beautiful planter to commemorate our 150th anniversary.

“The tree will stand proud for another 150 years of excellent education at St Wilfrid’s Primary – thank you to AGH Engineering for the very generous donation of both tree and planter.”

Miss Keith described St Wilfrid’s – which is part of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust – as a place that stays in your heart.

She said: “What makes St Wilfrid’s so special is the love and friendships that begin and grow here in our Christ-centred school.

“I look at our wonderful children who are making friends that will last a lifetime. I frequently hear how staff who have left school continue to meet up and continue their friendships.

“People often comment about our excellent academic achievements and exemplary behaviour and I always refer to our hard-working and outstanding team who work so well as a team to make it possible.

“They really do look after each other and care about one another.”

Inspectors especially praised the school’s Mini Vinnies, who help pupils put their concern for the world around them into action.

The group led fundraising for causes such as York Against Cancer, CAFOD, Martin House, Mary’s Meals, Carecent, Refugee Action, Get Cycling, Zoe’s Place and Snappy.

Kath Campbell, who was St Wilfrid’s school administrator for 32 years, serving under five headteachers, now volunteers to help run the



St Wilfrid’s pupils and staff celebrate their school’s 150th birthday and Catholic Schools Inspection success

Mini Vinnies, despite having retired 15 years ago.

She said: “If you were to ask me what makes St Wilfrid’s continue to be a special place after 150 years, my answer would be that it is not only a good school but also a community of faith, love and care, where everyone is treated with dignity and supported in good times and bad.

“Over the years there have been many memorable events and occasions, but one I recall distinctly was the refurbishment of the school, which was completed in 1994.

“The headteacher then was Sister Teresa, a



member of the Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle, who founded the school 150 years ago.

“During the ten arduous months of building work, pupils were taken care of by a hard-working and caring staff and continued to be educated on the site.”

The week of celebrations began with Mass at St Wilfrid’s Church and continued with a special celebratory lunch.

There was more fun later in the week with a dressing up day, featuring colourful fashions through the 15 decades since the school opened.



Christ the King Primary School

A member of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust

Tedder Avenue, Thornaby, Stockton-On-Tees TS17 9JP

Executive Head Teacher: Mr M Ryan
Head of School: Miss H Lickess

Tel: 01642 765639
Email: enquiries@ctking.npcat.org.uk




St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School

Part Of the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust

South Bank, Middlesbrough TS6 6TA

Tel 01642 835370

Headteacher: Miss C McNicholas
email: enquiries@smc.npcat.org.uk

Bishop’s Study Day invites our schools to be ‘beacons of hope’ in community

The Bishop’s Study Day is a well-established annual event enabling educationalists and clergy to gather to reflect upon aspects of the faith to support and nurture our schools, colleges and parishes.

Schools from across the diocese were represented by school leaders, foundation governors and directors, in addition to members of the clergy.

Taking inspiration from the Jubilee Year, the theme of this year’s study day at York Racecourse was “Schools as beacons of hope.”

The day began in a wonderfully uplifting manner, with prayers and music led by a group of students from St Mary’s College in Hull and St Augustine’s RC Secondary in Scarborough.

This was followed by a welcome address from Bishop Terry and Kate Bailey, director of schools for the Diocese of Middlesbrough.

The morning session, led by Brenden Thompson from Word on Fire Catholic Ministries, focused on supporting leaders to develop and share “habits of hope”.

Brenden also spoke about leaders in schools being “agents of hope” in the face of many complex challenges.

Building upon the theme of hope, the afternoon session was led by Tom Baptist, head of chaplaincy at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust in the Diocese of Nottingham. During the session, Tom

spoke about the crucial role schools play in offering hope to vulnerable pupils and their families.

Almost 130 delegates attended, including school and trust leaders, governors,

directors and members of the clergy.

Work will soon begin in earnest to plan next year’s event in June 2026.

Martin Macaulay, Deputy Director of Schools



Tom Baptist speaking at the Bishop’s Study Day

St Clare's shines in latest Ofsted inspection

St Clare's Catholic Primary School in Middlesbrough has been praised in its latest ungraded Ofsted inspection, with glowing recognition for its nurturing environment, high academic expectations and strong sense of community.

Inspectors described St Clare's as "a caring and happy school where pupils' love of learning is nurtured".

Over the course of their education, pupils were observed growing in confidence, developing mutual respect and striving to meet the school's ambitious standards.

Inspectors said pupils are rightfully proud of their achievements, with the report noting they "enjoy the high academic challenges that the school's ambitious curriculum provides".

"They have big dreams for their futures, which the school sets them up well to fulfil," the report adds.

"Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. All staff have consistently high expectations for pupils' conduct. Classrooms are calm, purposeful and orderly places."

The school's focus on character development is further underlined by its strong support for pupils' personal wellbeing, which the report says is a strength of St Clare's.

"Pupils relish the many opportunities that they have to show leadership and responsibility," it says. "Sports leaders enjoy organising activities at break-time to help their friends stay active."

"Some pupils have been trained to support others with their mental wellbeing. They take this role seriously and are proud of the

contribution they make to their school.

"School councillors have brought the fundamental British value of democracy to life by encouraging pupils to vote for their choice of playground equipment."

Visits from professionals across a wide range of careers have helped inspire pupils to dream big and set ambitious goals for their futures and older pupils are offered first-aid training to help them be responsible citizens.

The report says: "The early years is a warm and inviting space for children to learn in. Children play together confidently."

"Those with responsibility for governance have a detailed knowledge of the school and its performance. Local governors and the trust carry out effective work to check that the school is safe and the curriculum is impactful."

Since the last inspection, Ofsted said St Clare's – which is part of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust (NPCAT) – has made significant strides in developing a well-structured curriculum.

The report praised the clear identification of the key knowledge and skills pupils need at each stage of their education.

Attendance has also been a focus, with the school praised for its tenacious follow-up on absences and swift action to support improved attendance.

Delighted headteacher Liz Eddies said St Clare's success is down to a real team effort.

"This outcome is a testament to the hard work of our staff, the enthusiasm of our



Pupils at St Clare's School, which has been praised by Ofsted

pupils and the unwavering support of our families and parish," she said.

"I'm delighted the inspectors noted that staff describe the school as 'a big family', as that's exactly what we are."

"As St Clare's continues to grow from strength to strength, it remains a beacon of excellence, where children are not only taught but truly inspired. Together, we will continue to live out

our school's mission to Walk in the Light of Christ."

Chair of governors Vicki Putson added: "We are delighted that the report reflects the warmth, dedication and ambition that defines our school community."

St Clare's, which is on Trimdon Avenue, Acklam, has 236 pupils aged from three to 11.

Song, dance, art and drama bring bible

St Cuthbert's RC Academy Trust celebrated the Jubilee Year by exploring stories of hope in the Bible throughout the summer term.

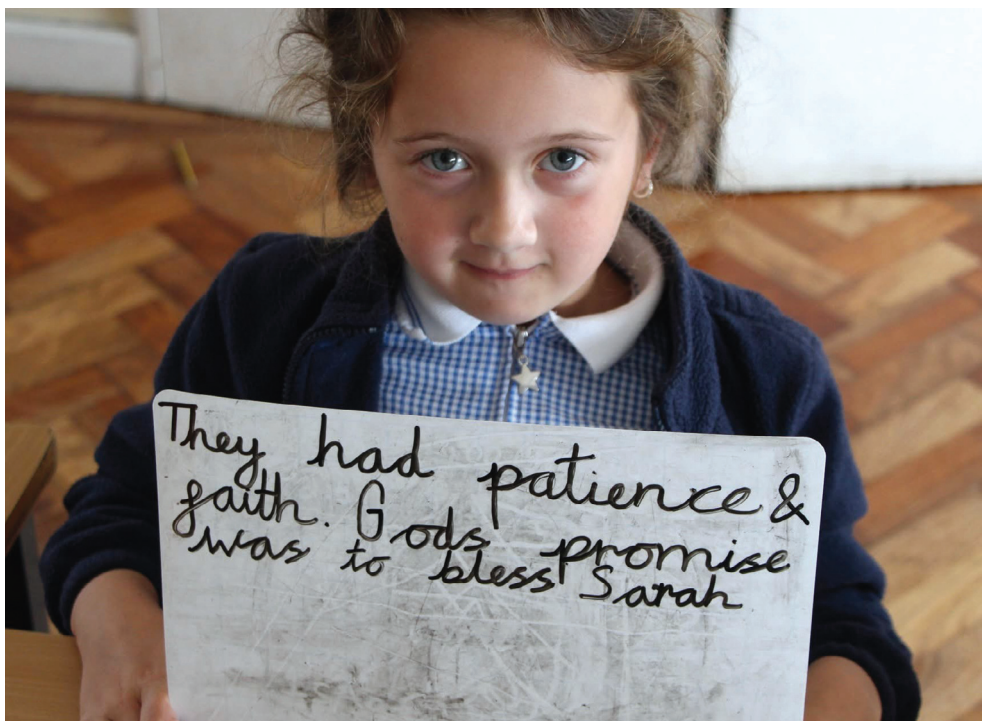
From Creation and the Great Flood to Abraham and the miracles of Jesus, pupils in the 13 primary schools delved into the wondrous adventures of the Bible and gathered to retell these stories to each other using song, dance, art and drama.

They discovered the golden thread of each

narrative – that God sent his only son to save us because he loves us beyond measure!

None of this would have been possible without the trust's Chaplaincy Team, who prepared and facilitated the days, and all the staff across the schools who helped with the missions with such enthusiasm and joy.

Pupils in the schools are now wonderful messengers of hope in our world.



One of the pupils with her message of hope

Looking towards the future with hope

Year 10 students at St Mary's College in Hull took part in a very special Pilgrims of Hope Mission Day.

The event took the theme of our Jubilee Year and encouraged them to spread hope and focus as they prepare to enter the next important academic year in Year 11.

In the morning, students engaged in a storytelling welcome to the day, followed by a carousel of sessions around the site where they created powerful statements of hope, as well as personal messages for their futures. These contemplative moments helped them consider how they can be beacons of hope in our school, in the wider community and in their own lives in the months ahead.

Guided by the words of Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future", they designed their own t-shirts filled with inspiring messages and adorned with the names of the people who give them hope.

The day culminated in a joyful and vibrant colour run, with everyone proudly wearing their creations and celebrating together in a burst of colour and laughter.

It was a truly wonderful and uplifting day, reminding us all about the power of hope and community.

Katie Flood



St Mary's College students having fun at the colour run

NEWS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Relics of Carlo Acutis come to Scarborough

There will be an opportunity for Mass, Adoration and veneration when the relics of Blessed Carlo Acutis comes to St Peter's, Scarborough, on the weekend of September 20 and 21. Blessed Carlo, who died aged 15 in 2006, is to be canonised on September 7. For more details visit scarboroughcatholicparishes.org.uk.

Mass celebrates centenary of Whitby parish

Bishop Terry, parish priest Father Michael Sellers and former clergy will concelebrate Mass to mark the centenary of the consecration of St Hilda's Church in Whitby at 7pm on Wednesday September 24. All are welcome to attend this very special occasion, which will be followed by a parish celebration.

Next dates for Whitby retreats

The one-day Saturday retreats at St Hilda's Priory in Whitby are open to anyone, but especially those with some experience of contemplative prayer. The next days are September 27, October 18, November 8 and December 13, all from 9.30am to 4.15pm. If you are interested in attending, please contact Sister Helen Stout by emailing hospitality@ohpwhitby.org.uk or calling 01947 899600 or 07595 215083.

Charity demands return to in-person appointments

Pro-life campaign group Right to Life UK is calling for a return to in-person abortion appointments as ONS figures showed almost one in three conceptions now end in abortion. In 2022, 29.69% of conceptions in England and Wales ended in abortion, up from 26.54% in 2021 and 20.84% in 2012. Between 2020 and 2022, after the introduction of at-home abortion pills by post, the number of conceptions ending in abortion rose by nearly 20%. In 2022, there were 834,260 conceptions, with 247,703 ending in abortion. Right to Life UK spokesperson Catherine Robinson called the rise a national tragedy linked to the shift away from clinical settings.

Pilgrims pray and walk through heat and rain

The second walking pilgrimage from the Oratory in York to Osmotherley saw an increase in numbers and some challenging weather.

Three-three people took part in some way, facing intense heat and humidity on the Friday and driving rain on the Saturday – a typical English pilgrimage.

We began with Mass at the Oratory at 6am on Friday, followed by a quick collation of crumpets and tea in the garden, courtesy of Brother Thomas.

Shortly after 7am we headed off, beginning our journey through the city of York and joining the Foss Path to walk through the vale.

We had an excellent breakfast at Strensall Coffee House before continuing to Farlington, where we prayed in St Leonard's Church and had a drink at the Blacksmith's Arms – both much to be recommended.

After much walking through the heat, we arrived at Ampleforth Abbey for Vespers, supper, Compline and sleep.

After Mass and breakfast on Saturday, the pilgrims set forth for Rievaulx, where we were further refreshed and joined by some younger parishioners and Brother Thomas.

At Rievaulx it began to rain, and didn't stop for the rest of the day, but the pilgrims continued to sing and pray.

We stopped at All Saints, Old Byland, for hymns and prayers and then at High Paradise Farm for shelter and food.

We finally arrived at the Lady Chapel at Osmotherley at around six o'clock, wet but grateful.

The pilgrimage concluded with dinner at the Queen Catherine, the only inn in England named after Queen Catherine of Aragon, who was a patroness of the Lady Chapel.

**Father Daniel Seward
CongOrat**



The Oratory pilgrims during their walk to Osmotherley

A Letter From Madonna House – To follow Jesus

The ever-changing North Sea and sky fascinate and charm me.



One day while basking in brilliant sunshine on a hillside high above the Cleveland Way near Robin Hood's Bay, the peace and radiance of God filled me.

Gradually, I noticed someone hiking towards Whitby – or was it two close friends striding along? I looked away and then glancing back, saw that it was indeed just one person. While I continued to watch intently, the one set of legs became two again. Amazing! Watching the unity of this person and his shadow brought to mind a reflection on the words 'to follow' and 'to be a shadow'.

The word shadow has many connotations: perhaps depressing as in becoming "a shadow of oneself", or frightening, "the dark shadows", or challenging, like learning a trade by "shadowing someone" to name a few. This last meaning could be applied to the spiritual life as well.

In the Gospels, Jesus speaks the challenging words "Follow me" many times. There are several examples in Matthew. Jesus says to Matthew at the tax booth, "Follow me."

Mathew leaves everything and follows Jesus (Mt 9:9).

Jesus tells the crowd, "He who doesn't take up his cross and follow after me isn't worthy of me" (Mt 10:38).

We could interpret this to mean walking in his footsteps or doing what we see Jesus doing. The disciples who responded to Jesus left everything to follow Jesus. Gradually, their hearts and minds became attuned to the Lord's own heart, changing their attitudes, revolutionising their thinking, and reordering their goals in life.

Perhaps the most challenging of the Lord's "Follow me" commands is this: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24).

A shadow is never without its master! Becoming Jesus' shadow will involve suffering. If I am suffering, Jesus is suffering with me. If I am celebrating, so is the Lord. The next question might what am I celebrating?

To see in another's eyes mutual recognition

of personhood, acceptance, understanding, love – that is a joy worth celebrating.

To remember Jesus is with me and I am with him though I'm tired, with my nerves and patience running thin – to call on his name at that moment, restoring my inner peace – that can give me great joy.

Erasmus Leiva-Merikakis writes in Fire of Mercy that "to follow behind Jesus" does not mean to "imitate Jesus". It means to be wherever he is, whenever that might be, serving him in doing whatever he happens to be doing.*

Apparently, the Greek word for "to follow" contains the implication to "be a shadow of". Does this not imply total union with Christ?

To believe the Lord is with us, and to desire to be with him, that is the greatest gift. An excellent daily prayer is, "Lord, increase my faith. I want to be united to you!"

*Fire of Mercy, Heart of The Word, Vol1 P609

Carol Ann Gieske

Remembering the bravery of Father William Finn

While on holiday in Turkey, I visited Gallipoli where Father William Finn CF is buried at the V Beach Cemetery.

Father Finn was a diocesan priest who became a military chaplain and was killed on April 25 1915, the first day of the landings.

He is believed to be the first of 172 chaplains killed in the First World War.

The story of his bravery that day is told by Ian Stubbs in an article in a 2015 edition of the Cleveland History magazine.

It is also mentioned in Voices from the Past, The Wooden Horse of Gallipoli by Stephen Snelling.

The cemetery is on the edge of V Beach and is a tranquil place today, a far cry from April 1915, when the sea was red with the blood of the men of the Dublin and Munster Fusiliers who attempted to land there.

Peter Loughlin



Gravestones at the cemetery where Father Finn is buried

NEWS IN BRIEF

Calling all former Notre Dame pupils and staff

The British Federation of Notre Dame (de Namur) Associations (BFNDA) links past pupils, staff and others connected with Notre Dame schools across the country. Many such schools have closed or merged (such as Mount Pleasant College into Liverpool Hope University) but others continue. BFNDA's annual weekend away combines an AGM with social events, a dinner and speaker. A major role is funding alumni support for Notre Dame projects worldwide, supplying essentials such as fresh water and education in underprivileged areas. For more, visit bfnda.org or email francesca@fmflynn.plus.com.

Views invited for mother and baby consultation

Politicians in Northern Ireland have launched an international appeal to victims and survivors of the province's mother and baby institutions, Magdalene laundries and workhouses that operated between 1922 and 1995. They want to hear their views on legislation to establish a public inquiry and financial redress scheme. The deadline for contributions is the end of September. The consultation is available online at lk.cmte.fyi/InquiryRedressBill or you can get a hard copy by emailing cteotrconsultation@niassembly.gov.uk.

Opening the doorways of hope

Catholic women have an opportunity to gather to nurture our spiritual lives at St Bede's Pastoral Centre, Blossom Street, York, on Wednesday September 24.

As Pilgrims of Hope in this Jubilee Year we will explore what hope looks like in the reality of our own lives.

We will draw on the wisdom of Christopher Chapman's book, Doorways to Hope, in which he says: "There is a hope that meets us in our struggles, renewing what is broken and restoring what feels lost. It is relational and dynamic, drawing us into a shared journey of healing and renewal. God's compassion and purpose open the door to new possibilities, inviting us to step through."

Led by Siobhan Burke, the day will include guided reflection and small group sharing with an emphasis on the spiritual conversation that has so enhanced our continuing synodal journey. We will finish with a shared lunch.

To register to attend, please email fiona@stbedes.org.uk. A donation of £20 to support costs would be appreciated.

This is an event supported by the National Board of Catholic Women (NBCW), a membership organisation supported by the Bishops of England and Wales to encourage women to share communion, participation and mission.

We look forward to increasing our membership and sharing our perspectives on faith with each other and the leadership of our Church.

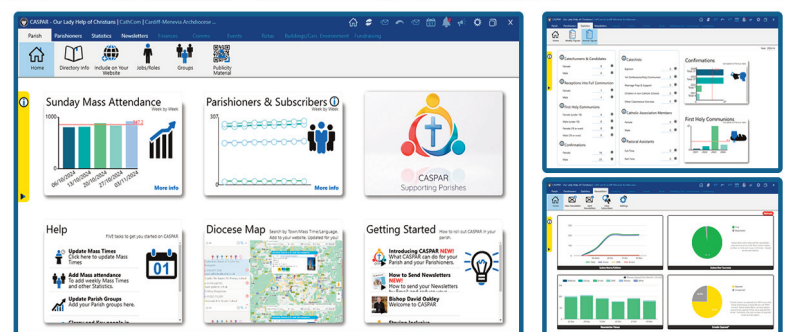
Barbara Cookson
NBCW Treasurer



A doorway in the garden of Nymans National Trust garden in West Sussex

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NEWS

420 great reasons to celebrate together

Jubilarians with 420 years of priestly service between them came together at our special celebration for Bishop Terry and Bishop John. Here are some pictures that capture a day full of smiles, thanks, prayers and beautiful music. All photos are by Chris Booth except where stated.



Bishop John addresses the congregation



Bishop John and Bishop Terry at the consecration



Bishop Terry addresses the congregation, including his brother bishops



Bishop John



Religious from throughout the diocese attended the service



Steven Maxson leads the diocesan choir



Diocesan building and environmental surveyor Glenn Melvin and his wife Chantal, who teaches at St Edward's Catholic Primary School in Middlesbrough, introduced their newborn twins, Alexander and Isla, to Bishop John during the jubilee celebrations



Cardinal Roche giving the homily



Bishops from England, Scotland, Wales and Canada attended the service



There was a special mention for Canon Pat Harney, who this year celebrated the platinum jubilee of his priestly ordination



Bishop Terry shows his appreciation



Canon Paul Farrer with Bishop John and Bishop Terry – Photo by Joe Harrison



Brothers from Council 29 of the Knights of St Columba, who worked so hard to make the service a success – Photo by Joe Harrison

NEWS

Cardinal Newman to be made Doctor of the Church

Pope Leo XIV is to officially declare St John Henry Newman, the most recently canonised saint from England and Wales, the 38th Doctor of the Church.

In a statement from the Holy See Press Office, Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, said Pope Leo XIV has confirmed the title of Doctor of the Universal Church, which will soon be conferred.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols said: “I am delighted and thrilled that Pope Leo has announced that he will declare St John Henry Newman to be a ‘Doctor of the Church’.

“This request has been before the Holy See for some time, having received declarations of support from many parts of the world and, of particular importance, from the Bishops of the Church of England.

“This recognition that the writings of St John

Henry Newman are a true expression of the faith of the Church is of huge encouragement to all who appreciate not only his great learning but also his heroic sanctity in following the call of God in his journey of faith, which he described as ‘heart speaking unto heart’.

“This moment brings back vivid memories of the Papal Visit in 2010 of Pope Benedict XVI to these countries when he declared the beatification of John Henry Newman. That moment now reaches its fulfilment and gives great joy to all who strive to follow Christ today.”

September 2025 marks the 15th anniversary of St John Henry Newman’s Beatification in Cofton Park, Birmingham in 2010 by Pope Benedict XVI.

The theme for the historic Papal visit was inspired by the words Newman chose as his motto, Cor ad cor loquitur, which translates to

‘Heart speaks to heart’.

A Doctor of the Church is a man or woman of great holiness and learning whose teaching and wisdom not only resonated with their own contemporaries, but still illuminates, instructs and inspires today.

The Church gives them the title ‘Doctor’, from the Latin ‘docere’, meaning ‘to teach’, in recognition of the eminent contribution to our knowledge of the faith – spiritually, intellectually or morally.

A celebrated intellectual heavyweight, St John Henry Newman was deeply engaged in the theological and philosophical issues of the time, and his teaching and legacy endure to this day.

Born in 1801, he was ordained as a priest for the Church of England and soon became the leader of the Oxford Movement before converting to Catholicism in 1845.



St John Henry Newman is to be made a Doctor of the Church

Final preparations for Pilgrimage of Hope

Preparations are being finalised for the Pilgrimage of Hope, a national walking pilgrimage for the 2025 Jubilee.

An initiative of the Hearts in Search of God project, which promotes walking pilgrimage, four main ways converge at the Cathedral of St Barnabas, Nottingham, on Saturday September 13.

The pilgrimage aims to embody the values of the Sisters of the Holy Cross of compassion, faith, prayer and community.

The four ways start at Cardiff, Leeds, Norwich and London Catholic cathedrals and will bless our nations with a sign of the cross and with the gospels.

Hearts in Search of God project lead Phil McCarthy said: “The Pilgrimage of Hope will be a way for Catholics and other Christians to witness to their faith and hope in the crucified and risen Christ across England and Wales. It will be an opportunity to experience walking a sustainable pilgrimage on foot as pilgrims of hope.”

The ways are named after the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and routes use established hiking routes and are off-road as



The Cathedral of St Barnabas, in Nottingham, where the pilgrimage will converge

much as possible.

In the Catholic Church, Jubilees or Holy Years are special years of grace, forgiveness and reconciliation. The first was declared by Pope Boniface VIII in 1300.

The 2025 Jubilee has special significance in England and Wales as it commemorates 175 years since the restoration of the Catholic

hierarchy after the penal centuries that followed the English Reformation.

The Jubilee has the theme Pilgrims of Hope and the logo shows people coming from the four corners of the earth in solidarity.

Visit pilgrimways.org.uk/national-jubilee-pilgrimage-of-hope to find out more.

Newman Circle announces new season of talks

A new season of Cleveland Newman Circle talks has been unveiled.

All talks take place at St Mary’s Cathedral Hall in Middlesbrough, with refreshments served at 7.30pm before a 7.45pm start.

The full programme for you to cut out and keep is:

Wednesday September 17: “Interior prayer – the Holy Spirit at work within us”

Wednesday October 29: “Theology of creation and the reredos at Middlesbrough Cathedral – might they be connected?”

Wednesday November 19: “Meeting Martha of Bethany and Mary Magdala in Luke and John’s Gospels” – please bring your Bible.

Wednesday February 25: TBA

Wednesday March 18: “God’s messengers/angels/prophets”

Wednesday April 15: “A Mission for the North – the Capuchin Franciscans in Thirsk 1923-1960”

For more information, please call 07486 172973.

An English prophet answers ‘new atheists’ of his day

St Peter’s, Scarborough, parishioner Andrew Carter continues his series of reflections on the close links between poetry and prayer...

*Mock on, mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau!
Mock on, mock on – ‘Tis all in vain!
You throw the sand against the wind
And the wind blows it back again.
And every sand becomes a gem
Reflected in the beams divine;
Blown back they blind the mocking eye,
But still in Israel’s paths they shine.*

*The atoms of Democritus
And Newton’s particles of light
Are sands upon the Red Sea shore
Where Israel’s tents do shine so bright.*

We often associate prophets with (righteous) anger, but the great prophets of the Old Testament were also mystics who communicated the beauty of God and his loving relationship with his people, often in wonderful poetry.

It has been said the poet and painter William Blake is a homegrown prophet in this mould. He had a lot to be angry about – political oppression, slavery, children forced to work in factories, religion used to justify social inequality and the failure of the French Revolution to bring about the just society it promised.

Blake produced his Songs of Innocence and Experience between 1789, when the revolution began in a burst of popular enthusiasm, and 1793, the year the optimism turned to terror, with new political tyranny and the appearance of the guillotine.

This little poem was never published by Blake (he engraved and printed his own books, with the words set within symbolic illustrations, and then hand-painted by himself and his wife, Catherine).

It is written, like the Songs, with simple rhythm and rhymes but its biblical echoes make it a powerful criticism of the mindset of his (and our?) time.

The satirist Voltaire and the philosopher Rousseau were the “new atheists” of their day, mockers of religion. Under the influence of their rationalist ideas, cathedrals in France were stripped of Christian imagery and turned into Temples of Reason.

Democritus was an ancient Greek philosopher who proposed a purely scientific explanation of the universe; Blake’s contemporary, John Keats, feared that Newton’s theories would destroy the poetry of the rainbow.

Blake himself writes an imaginary conversation in which he is asked, “When the sun rises, do you not see a round disk of fire somewhat like a guinea?” and he replies, “No, no! I see an innumerable company of the heavenly host crying, ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.’”

Blake’s radical vision is evident in this poem too: he rejects materialism and shows us the spiritual foundation of the universe.

The sand the atheists throw is transfigured



in divine light (another of his poems teaches us to “see a world in a grain of sand/And heaven in a wild flower/Hold infinity in the palm of your hand/And eternity in an hour.”) The poem ends with a radiant image of the tents of God’s family, about to experience the miracle of redemption. We should remember those humble tents: God dwells in a tent among his people.

Welcome to your St Vincent de Paul Society!

This is my lovely dad, Tom O'Hagan, who passed away two years ago. He was president of Bridlington SVP and gave some of his spare time to helping others – visits, outings, meals and always lots of cakes!

We need you and God needs you to carry on with his good works. We ask for an hour or

two a month – you all have skills you can bring, whether cooking, music, technology, organising or just listening and chatting!

You can start a new SVP if there isn't one in your area. Just call me and we can start the ball rolling, or I can put you in touch with your local conference.

There's always something going on – sporting events, camps for the youth, meals and quizzes, walks and activities and tea with the SVP.

So come along and join our little families dotted all over the diocese. Keep the fires

alight for the darker evenings to share friendship and faith.

Contact teresao@svp.org.uk or call on 07554 336984.

Teresa O'Hagan



Tom O'Hagan enjoying a cup of tea with his granddaughter – tea with the SVP events, where people come to chat and tell stories, are happening in parishes throughout the month

How we can all celebrate the Season of Creation



Last month's Environment Corner highlighted the Season of Creation, offering resources we can all use as we now begin our journey, culminating in the Feast of St Francis of Assisi on October 4.

International faith leaders are inviting Christians around the world to take part in the initiative.

The "Peace with Creation" theme calls for action, justice and hope in response to the impact of climate change and ecology loss. It aims to redress destructive human behaviour that is causing a "war on creation".

The major advocacy focus for 2025 is debt relief, highlighting that one of the biggest injustices facing our world today is the tremendous level of debt owed by poor and vulnerable countries to rich countries.

These poorer nations suffer the worst impacts of climate change even though they have done the least to cause it. CAFOD's website is a source of information of how we can be involved in working for debt relief.

The symbol for the 2025 campaign depicts



SEASON OF CREATION

a dove carrying an olive branch to bring life to "the garden of peace". It is a reference to the Genesis story, in which the return of the dove with the olive branch comes to be known as a sign of new peace.

The campaign is described as a "time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion and commitment together".

During the Season of Creation, we join our sisters and brothers in the ecumenical family in prayer and action for our common home.

As a diocesan family we can engage in prayer, advocacy and action to show our own commitment to each other and to our common home. There is a celebration guide on the website seasonofcreation.org.

Barbara Hungin

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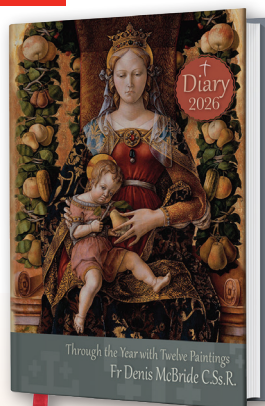
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NEWS**Out & About** will return next month**Plan comes together for Monsignor Gerard's silver jubilee celebration**

When parishioners at St Joseph's in Stokesley learned that our parish priest Monsignor Gerard Robinson would this year mark 25 years since his ordination, they decided to hold a special celebration.

The parish also includes St Margaret Clitherow's in Great Ayton and St Mary's in Crathorne and a small group was formed from the three parts to help plan the occasion.

This became the springboard for a magnificent parish celebration and parishioners received regular updates with frequent requests for specific help.

On the feast of SS Peter and Paul, Bishop Terry, Monsignor Gerry Dasey, Monsignor Ricardo Morgan, Father Bill Charlton and Father Pat Keogh all concelebrated the Mass with Monsignor Gerard.

The Mass was simply beautiful, with every aspect expertly prepared, from music to singing to readings. Monsignor Gerry's homily was particularly special.

We expected at least 200 people, so the Mass was live-streamed and afterwards everyone gathered in the garden and hall, which was adorned with silver bunting and two huge silver balloons displaying "25", a special celebration banner and photographs of Monsignor Gerard from a little boy through to his ordination.

There were some very special images of him with his mum and dad on his ordination day and others showing him with Pope John Paul II.

Celebration cakes were made by parishioners and the buffet table was full of wonderful things to eat, all made and donated by a large team from all parts of the parish. The hall was overflowing, with lots more people in the garden and an impressive wine bar was set up – again, all donated.

In a marquee in the garden, the music group entertained everyone with well-loved songs, several chosen especially for Monsignor Gerard, with a song sheet provided to involve everyone.

It was such a beautiful, sunny day – also part of the plan! – and the children's games were a big hit.

A representative from each part of the parish then made a presentation. Isabella Smith, one of our young people from St Joseph's, spoke first and presented a cheque on behalf of all three churches.

A special commemorative book, which came just in time from Utah, USA, was presented by Denis Burns on behalf of St Margaret Clitherow's. All parishioners had been invited to write a personal message in it.

Diane Gent on behalf of St Mary's presented a



Isabella Smith presents a cheque to Monsignor Gerard

papal blessing from Pope Leo XIV and Diane. Finally, Maureen Mitchell, from St Joseph's, told Monsignor about the volunteers and their work for his party and then invited him to cut a jubilee cake, accompanied by cheers and applause, before Monsignor Gerard responded with a funny and fascinating "thank you" speech.

A wonderful parish event was shared by everyone as Monsignor Gerard was richly celebrated. We really know how to party in our part of North Yorkshire and, as Monsignor Gerard said, the parish is "buzzing".

Isn't it great when a plan comes together?

Philip Tucker
St Joseph's Parishioner

Gift keeps Canon Pat in the picture

St George's, York, SVP conference was delighted to present Canon Pat Harney with a framed photograph of him with his family to commemorate the 70th anniversary of his priestly ordination.

The picture was taken by photographer Greg McGee at the celebration Mass at English Martyrs.

Canon Harney thanked members and shared heartwarming stories of his first contact with an SVP conference, which was in Middlesbrough on the day of the first Mass he celebrated after arriving from Ireland.

In those days, he recalled, the common currency for families in need wasn't food vouchers for the local supermarket, it was bags of coal to keep warm!

God bless Canon Harney.

David Harper



Canon Pat Harney with the photograph

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 September 5 for the October 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.

Friends step out for suicide prevention charity

The morning after celebrating his silver jubilee with family, friends and parishioners at St Aelred's, York, Father Bill Serplus boarded an early-morning train ahead of his latest challenge.

Having undertaken several sponsored walks during his time here at St Aelred's, we weren't surprised when Father Bill signed up to join his friend Ronni Moore to walk the length of Hadrian's Wall for charity.

Ronni, who previously worked for Christian Aid, was attending the charity's 80th anniversary celebrations at Haltwhistle and invited Father Bill along.

Several supporters were walking and cycling for Christian Aid, but since they were walking much further, Father Bill and Ronni raised funds for Papyrus, in memory of Ronni's brother, Chris, who died by suicide in 2021, and others in our parish and beyond.

Papyrus is a national charity set up by parents who had lost their children to suicide. You may well have seen or heard about the "Three Dads Walking". This is a cause close to Father Bill and Ronni, as both have been touched by suicide.

Father Bill hoped his many years of regular walking and cycling would help him and despite extreme heat, hard ground, torrential rain and almost no shelter, they covered 93.5 miles in a week.

The support of our parish WhatsApp group helped keep Father Bill and Ronni going and

they posted regularly on their Just Giving page.

One parishioner played Walk with Me O My Lord on his harmonica in the WhatsApp group, which I am sure Father Bill kept in his head on hilly, up-and-down sections on that day.

One day, having walked just over 13 miles in blazing sun with little respite, Father Bill told us: "Today was just savage – that's one up from brutal!"

Midway through the walk, Father Bill and Ronni joined Christian Aid supporters in a joyful service of celebration at Haltwhistle Methodist Church to mark Christian Aid's amazing work to fight poverty.

Several people stopped Father Bill and Ronni during their walk and told their stories of being touched by suicide, with many donating along the way.

I am sure they must have felt relieved, elated, but soaked, sore and tired when they finally arrived at Bowness-on-Solway to the sign saying, "Ave terminvm callis hadriani avgvsti pervenisti" which means, "Welcome. The end of Hadrian's Wall path."

Well done and congratulations to you both – we are very proud of you!

A wonderful total of £5,000 has been raised for Papyrus. To donate, please visit justgiving.com/page/billserplusronnimoore.

Time to put your feet up now, Father Bill!

Kath Stubbs



Father Bill during his charity walk

Call to fix 'broken' system

An alliance of Christian leaders is calling on the government to work in partnership with churches, communities and faith-based organisations to tackle a "failing" criminal justice system.

In a new report titled Picking up the Pieces, the coalition outlines how Christian churches, charities, and volunteers have taken on roles once delivered by public services, supporting both victims of crime and those caught up in the justice system.

The report says the government has inherited a system in crisis and calls on ministers to invest in what works to make communities safer.

Nearly half the population of England and Wales identifies as Christian. Convened by the Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT), Picking up the Pieces reflects the shared values of the Catholic Church, the Church of England, the Quakers, the Free Churches Group and others.

Together, they urge the government to place victims' needs at the heart of the criminal justice process, investing in initiatives proven to tackle the root causes of crime, including schemes already being delivered by faith communities.

The report shines a spotlight on three powerful opportunities for reform – supporting prisoners' the children and families, investing in restorative justice and empowering faith-based communities. Churches and Christian charities are already delivering transformational change but say they need recognition and resources.

The report proposes a £10m small grants scheme, with up to £20,000 available for Christian and other faith-based projects, to harness this underused potential.

Bishop Richard Moth, liaison bishop for prisons for the Catholic Bishops' Conference, said: "Across the country, Christian churches, communities, and organisations, alongside people of other faiths, are working to support our criminal justice system at every level, and we will continue to do so as part of our Christian call.

"But the system is falling short of its purpose. This report sets out a clear path for meaningful change. Our vision is of a society where all people can flourish, where being tough on crime and its causes is not about locking up more people for longer, but about creating a transformed society."

The full report is available at prisonadvice.org.uk/picking-up-the-pieces.

Flowers and sadness as Sister Ann says goodbye

It was with sadness and immense gratitude that St George's Parish in York said farewell to our dear Sister Ann of the Corpus Christi Carmelites, who is moving to join her congregation in Birmingham.

The occasion was marked by a thank you celebration event at St Lawrence's Church Hall, with cake and refreshments to celebrate her amazing 29 years in St George's and to say farewell. There was also a presentation and a few words from Sister Ann, who expressed her thanks for her time with us here in York.

As Sister Ann turned 90 years old recently, we could also sing Happy Birthday after morning Mass and celebrate with cake and refreshments.

Warm thanks to St Lawrence's for kindly allowing us to use their church hall.

David Harper



Sister Ann with flowers presented for her 90th birthday – Photo by Lars Karlsson

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Sometimes emails go missing. If you have sent an item for the Voice and it has not been used, please email the editor at communications@rcdmidd.org.uk.

NEWS

Bishop condemns settler attacks on Christian town

Bishop Nicholas Hudson has condemned the escalation of settler violence in the West Bank town of Taybeh.

Priests representing the town's three Christian churches issued a joint statement about repeated attacks on their land, holy sites and property.

Arson threatened the fifth-century church of St George (Al-Khadr), one of the oldest religious

sites in Palestine, and highlighted an ongoing campaign of violence and intimidation that affects the security and stability of Taybeh.

Bishop Hudson learned about the challenges facing the community as part of an international delegation of bishops to the Holy Land in January.

He said: "Just six months ago, I was in Taybeh visiting what is now the last remaining

entirely Christian town in the West Bank.

"We were able to hear firsthand from Father Bashar Fawadleh, parish priest of the Church of Christ the Redeemer, about the extreme pressure being placed on the local community by Israeli settlers acting with impunity.

"In recent days we have learned of an alarming escalation in settler violence and intimidation that is going unchecked by the

authorities. The local churches have appealed to the international community for help and solidarity, and we wish them to know that we have heard their cry.

"We strongly condemn these attacks and all acts of intimidation and we urge the relevant authorities to take decisive action to prevent such incidents from happening again."

Gaza priest thanks charity for welcome support

A priest injured in an attack on Gaza's only Catholic church has thanked a charity for its support as innocents continue to suffer.

A shell from an Israel Defense Forces tank hit the Holy Family Church in Gaza City in July, killing three people and wounding 12 others, including parish priest Father Gabriel Romanelli.

Speaking to Catholic charity Aid to the Church in need (ACN), Father Romanelli said: "Here we are, after these terrible days of war, and especially these bombings – 15 people were hit, three of them died and two are still in serious condition.

"I want to say thank you for the prayers and friendship of Aid to the Church in Need, which fill our hearts.

"And besides that, I know ACN has plenty of initiatives to help the Christians in the Middle East, especially in these parts of the Holy Land, in the West Bank and in Gaza."

The Holy Family Church hosts more than 500 people including displaced children, elderly, sick and those with disabilities.

Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, who visited the church

after the attack, has warned that denying humanitarian aid "is a matter of life and death".

He said: "Refusing it is not a delay, but a sentence. Every hour without food, water, medicine and shelter causes deep harm."

Cardinal Vincent Nichols condemned the attack, saying he stands in solidarity with the people sheltering in the compound, Christians and Muslims alike.

He said: "I add my voice to Pope Leo's call for a return of hostages, and an immediate ceasefire to end the suffering in Gaza and bring peace to the region. I encourage you, in your homes and parishes, to pray for peace and an end to this war."

Cardinal Nichols also expressed his condemnation after Israel's security cabinet approved a plan to take control of Gaza City.

"There must be a better way, one that does not heap yet further suffering and misery on so many people," he said.

"Already too much innocent blood has been shed; too many lives destroyed; too much hunger and starvation. This war must be ended, not increased."



Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa visiting the church after the attack – Photo courtesy of Aid to the Church in Need

Catholic charities join demand for Gaza action

The Church's overseas aid and development agency CAFOD and charities Pax Christi and Caritas Internationalis are alongside 115 organisations to sign a joint letter calling for "decisive action" to end the humanitarian disaster in Gaza.

The charities demand an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the lifting of all bureaucratic restrictions and all land crossings to be opened and to ensure access to

everyone in all of Gaza.

They also called for the rejection of military-controlled distribution models, the restoration of a principled, UN-led humanitarian response and the continued funding of principled and impartial humanitarian organisations.

They wrote: "Piecemeal arrangements and symbolic gestures, like airdrops or flawed aid deals, serve as a smokescreen for inaction.

"They cannot replace states' legal and moral obligations to protect Palestinian civilians and ensure meaningful access at scale. States can and must save lives before there are none left to save."

How you can help

People in Gaza urgently need shelter, food and basic supplies. You can donate to CAFOD's Gaza Crisis Appeal at

cafod.org.uk/give/donate-to-emergencies/gaza-crisis-appeal. You can also join CAFOD in prayer by adding your name as a sign of your prayers, which will be shared in solidarity with CAFOD's partners who are responding to this humanitarian crisis. Visit action.cafod.org.uk/page/146774/petition/1 to find out more.

How our actions can help protect Palestinian lives

Ampleforth Justice and Peace group organised a Palestinian evening in Our Lady and St Benedict's Parish Hall.

Our speaker presented us with moving stills, video clips, anecdotes and testimony of the experiences of Palestinians in the West Bank, gleaned from three months living there as a human rights observer for the World Council of Churches.

For many of his audience this may have been the first encounter with details of the Israeli state's ongoing mission to remove Palestinians, by whatever horrific means, from the lands between the Jordan and the Mediterranean that they have since the first settler colonialists regarded as rightfully theirs and theirs alone.

The world wags a disapproving finger, a futile and cynical gesture with many explanations, none to its credit.

We as Christians – the eyes, the hands and the feet of Christ on earth (in the words of St Teresa of Avila) – must, therefore, act. In indignation and righteous anger, we have instructed our politicians to act on our behalf,

with limited success. But what have we achieved? How have we made our voices heard by those in a position to effect change?

Apartheid in South Africa was significantly weakened by protests, boycotts and internal resistance, further limiting that country's access to trade, investment and cultural institutions and eventually leading to the

dismantling of apartheid laws and the establishment of a democratic government with universal suffrage in 1994.

What worked in South Africa could work again in Israel, where the failure of state-promoted apartheid is resulting in de facto genocide.

More of us are turning to boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS), forcing our resistance

into the reality and awareness of our daily lives.

The BDS website – bdsmovement.net – draws attention to those everyday businesses and commercial enterprises we should target. Beware – this will call for sacrifices from you and your families.

David Cragg-James

Courses open for applications at St Bede's

St Bede's Pastoral Centre in York is inviting applications for a new intake on two courses.

The two-year personal and spiritual development course runs weekly at St Bede's on Tuesday mornings from 10am to 12.15pm and on one Saturday each term in the first year.

Described as a safe place to deepen your relationship with God, participants often find the course transformational and a significant stepping stone or way-marker in their journey of faith. The cost is £175 per term.

The one-year online spiritual conversation course opens on a Saturday morning in September and continues online on Tuesday evenings from 7pm to 9.15pm.

Become sensitive and alert to opportunities for spiritual conversation in everyday life while developing your confidence to enter spiritual conversations in a discerning way. The cost is £285 for the year payable in three instalments of £95.

For more details and an application form, contact Fiona Hill on 01904 464900 or email fiona@stbedes.org.uk.

Candles, care and kindness on life-changing week

St Aelred's, York, parishioner Henry Johnson tells us about his experience of going on pilgrimage to Lourdes with York-based HCPT Group 122...

In 2021, when I just turned 13 years old, I became dangerously ill, and I've had to fight for my life on more than one occasion.

Being so ill I have only been at home or hospital, so when I was offered the chance to go to Lourdes with HCPT 122 it became my goal to be well enough to travel.

This was going to be my first time away from home, flying and being in another country. I felt lucky and nervous. Thankfully, Group 122 reassured me and made me feel safe.

We landed in Lourdes to the amazing view of the Pyrenees, the mountains standing proud with a gentle dusting of snow. I remember thinking what a beautiful place to spend Easter Sunday and with such friendly people.

Later that day we attended Mass. The architecture of the church was surprisingly understated, but the atmosphere was definitely not. Other HCPT groups were there, all equally friendly. I felt like I was a member of a unique family, with a strong sense of belonging to 122. The hymns were joyful, the readings poignant as we all came together to celebrate the most important Christian feast.

Easter Monday was a day I will never forget. I awoke to the news that our Holy Father, Pope Francis, had died. I was given the privilege of reading a prayer for him at Mass that day. Although at times it was appropriate to reflect, the Mass was full of life, with uplifting hymns, dancing and community spirit.

That evening we had a night prayer. The day had been full of laughter and morale was high, but when we sat for the night prayer, everyone knew it was time for quiet reflection.

The words were moving. It was the first time in a long time that I felt calm, without worries. I didn't think about my health. I felt safe and secure.

Everyone said how the Grotto is an amazing experience that can never be explained in

words and that I would feel it physically. I'm not sure I believed them until I was pushed by in my wheelchair for the first time. Just being near the aura was breathtaking.

We were supporting each other, some finding it more moving than others. We all had our own personal reasons for healing. We recited three Hail Marys and I have never felt every word as deeply as in that moment.

Entering the Grotto, the mood was one of reflection. Feeling the smooth, cold rock was surreal. If you closed your eyes, the silence would have made you think you were alone. I found myself staring at Our Lady for a few minutes. The connection was powerful.

We attended the torchlight procession and with my ME carefully managed, I went in my wheelchair. Being unable to walk, you may think you wouldn't feel part of a walking experience, but it was the opposite. It was such an inclusive, emotional experience.

With so many people in one place you might expect selfish behaviour, but everyone was considerate, patient and allowed each other to share and enjoy praying to Mary in this amazing place. I started feeling happier and that I'm not alone in my health journey. It was humbling.

Every year our group lights a candle in memory of HCPT 122 angels and for those we want to pray for. Lighting candles has helped me through low periods. At Christmas, my parish priest, Father Bill Serplus, would allow me to light the paschal candle, giving hope that next year my health would improve.

As we gathered in an area for lighting candles, it was amazing to see so many prayers burning brightly. There is a lot of love in the world.

As our candle was carried into the area, everyone was silent, thinking about their own needs. Jack, our leader, called me up and asked if I would light this year's candle. This moment I will never forget.

I have had holy water given to me in hospital but this time I used it from its source. I loved this moment. I felt cold, tranquil water flow



Henry Johnson at the candles opposite the Grotto in Lourdes

into my hands as worries washed away. I washed my face and rubbed it into my scars as I closed my eyes and prayed my healing would continue.

Like many experiences in Lourdes, I couldn't quite believe they were happening to me. I cupped my hands and sipped the water for the first time. It was clean and refreshing – a taste I had never experienced before. I could feel healing from within, like weights off my shoulders, as if I knew I would be OK.

Through my health battles many decisions were taken away from me. I had no choice but to trust surgeons, doctors and nurses, hoping they would help me. Becoming a member of HCPT 122 was a choice for myself, trusting people I didn't know well to care for

me, taking me out of the country and letting me experience another part of the world but a place paramount to my religion. I looked around at my group and thought I'd made the best decision so far and how lucky I was to be cared for by happy, kind, thoughtful people who were giving up their free time.

This reassurance kept me going throughout pilgrimage and even when I came home. Ever since Lourdes I've been the best I've ever been and only hope healing continues.

Finding words to describe this unique experience is too difficult. Going to Lourdes is an amazing experience made more special by members of Group 122. Thank you, every one of you.

Lydia and Sophie sign up for Lourdes running challenge

Every year, millions of people travel to Lourdes on pilgrimage.

When I was 14, I volunteered to go on a school trip, without really knowing what I was signing up for – and it changed my life.

I travelled with the Diocese of Middlesbrough, who have been taking people on pilgrimage for 72 years. These include individuals with serious health conditions, people searching for peace and others who don't quite know why they've come – but by the end of the week, find something truly special.

Since that first trip, I've returned for 15 years and counting. I volunteer at our Lourdes hospital, caring for supported pilgrims who often wouldn't be able to travel without the dedicated help of our volunteers. We look after people with complex needs, from chronic illness to end-of-life care and everything in between.

It's hard to put into words what Lourdes gives you. It's humbling to be let into someone's most vulnerable moments, to care for them and to share laughter, tears and faith along the way. I've grown, been challenged and supported in ways I never expected.

I'm so grateful for the chance to volunteer each year. That's why I now want to give back and help others who perhaps can't afford to go.

On Saturday October 18, my lovely friend Sophie and I will run 18 miles (30km) to raise money for other volunteers called to go.

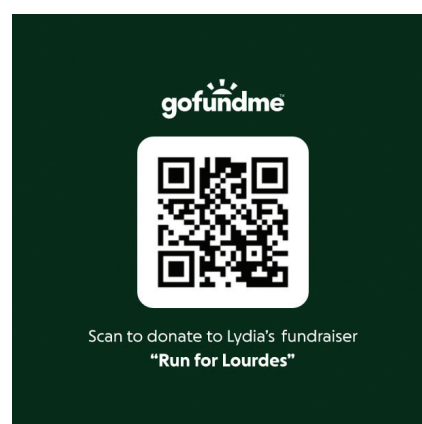
If you know Lourdes, you'll know that's one mile for every time Mary appeared to Bernadette. If you don't, just know it's a really long way!

If you're able to support us, you won't just be helping us run, you'll be helping someone experience the healing, love and peace Lourdes can bring.

Thank you so much for reading and for any support you can give. You'll be changing lives.

If you want to find out more about what we do in Lourdes, please follow our new Instagram account, @middlesbroughlourdes.

Lydia Coyle



Lydia Coyle at the Torchlight Procession in Lourdes

NEWS

Family Fast Day appeal for life-saving water

In southern Ethiopia, the climate crisis is threatening lives. Once, rains fell regularly, fields were green and water was close by.

Now the seasons are unpredictable, and long droughts are forcing women like Waré to walk for hours each day – even while pregnant – just to find water for drinking, washing and livestock.

“It was very traumatising,” Waré says. “When I was pregnant, I had to go fetch water in the mountains.

“Sometimes I felt so weak I could fall down, so I worried about my child.”

Yet Waré refused to give up. Guided by her own faith and uniting with her neighbours, she took action. With support from CAFOD and local water expert Abbiott, they built an underground water tank to collect and store every precious drop of rain. Now, more than 300 families have safe, clean water just a few steps from their homes.

This is the gospel in action: love made real through compassion, courage and community. As Catholics, we are called to be stewards of creation and stand alongside our sisters and brothers affected by climate change.

Your prayers and generosity make this transformation possible. But many more communities still walk miles for water.

This Family Fast Day, please give what you can so more families can access clean water and stay healthy, because a better world needs all of us.

Donate at cafod.org.uk/envelope or call 0303 303 3030.

Rachel Blaylock,
Community Participation Coordinator



Waré at the water tank in Ethiopia – Photo by James Cave/SCIAF

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