

Bishop's Column

Modern technology is meant to save us time by fulfilling all the humdrum tasks of the day with ease.

But I find it somehow makes demands on me that I would never have demanded of myself in times past.

Responses have to be made in seconds with barely time to think or reflect. If I am occupied in attending meetings, or, dare I say, taking a day off, by that evening there is a sack of emails "looking forward to your earliest response".

Somehow, with the darkening nights and the relentless march to "Yuletide" celebrations, the urgency appears to be greater.

Perhaps that is one of the very human reasons for Advent – a pause, a break, a gap, a change – so that we can use that very urgency to make ready for the Coming of the Son of Man – into our world, into our lives this Christmas.

"Let us give thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."
(Col 1, 12-14)

Allow me to share a poem with you as we enter into Advent and prepare for Christmas.

*You are always there in a quiet room
waiting for me to come to you.*

*This morning in a hilly field
sitting on the corner of a stone cattle
trough,
listening to the water tumbling down the
hill
into the silent river, watching the crows fly
to work
across the sky, why was I surprised to find
you there?*

*Lord, teach me to leave space in my mind
So that you can always be there.*

(Alice Taylor, *Praying Place*)

May you have a spiritually fruitful
Advent and a peace-filled Christmas.
In blessed hope,

+ Long

What's Inside

**Artist Mackenzie
comes home**

Page 5



**The story behind
the reredos**

Page 10



Light a candle, say a prayer for seafarers and fishers this Christmas

Children across the diocese are invited to light a candle and say a prayer for seafarers, fishers and all those spending Christmas away from their families.

Being at sea over the Christmas period is a tough reality many face, often under challenging conditions.

They miss spending this special time of the year with their families. Loneliness and homesickness can take a toll on their

emotional and mental wellbeing, making what should be a joyful time of year difficult.

"Christmas is spent tinged with a touch of sadness as they are far from family," said Deacon Peter Barrigan, Stella Maris regional chaplain for Tees and Hartlepool.

"We do all we can to let seafarers and fishers know they are not forgotten and to show that we appreciate all they do for us."

Supporting seafarers in the diocese

Parishes and schools across the diocese play a vital role in supporting Peter and his team of volunteer ship visitors.

Continued on Page 2



Father Phil Cunah during Mass on board a ship with a dartboard nearby

Christmas Mass Times

CHRISTMAS EVE

St Mary's Cathedral | Coulby Newham
Christmas Carols | 5:30pm
First Mass of Christmas | 6pm
(Suitable for families and young children)

Christmas Carols | 8:30pm
Midnight Mass | 9pm

St Francis' Church | Levick Crescent
Christmas Carols | 6:30pm
First Mass of Christmas | 7pm
(Suitable for families and young children)

St Clare's Church | Low Lane
First Mass of Christmas | 5pm
(Suitable for families and young children)

The Lady Chapel | Osmotherley
First Mass of Christmas | 3pm

CHRISTMAS DAY

St Francis' Church | Levick Crescent
Christmas Day Mass | 9am

St Mary's Cathedral | Coulby Newham
Christmas Day Mass | 10am

Happy Christmas from
St Mary's Cathedral
MIDDLESBROUGH
Serving the parishes of
St Francis | St Clare | The Lady Chapel, Osmotherley
01642 597750 | www.middlesbroughcatholic.org

THE BAR CONVENT
Living Heritage Centre

Christmas at the Convent
19 November- 22 December

Where a traditional Christmas
experience awaits you...

barconvent.co.uk | @barconventyork
17 Blossom Street, York, YO24 1AQ
Illustration by Nick Ellwood

Robert A. Drew & Son Ltd
Funeral Directors

*An independent family owned & run
business providing a personal
and efficient service*

- Practising Catholic Funeral Director within the company
- Pre-paid funeral plans available
- Guidance & Quotations willingly given

Golden Charter
Smart Planning for Later Life

SAIF
NATIONAL
INDEPENDENT
FUNERAL
DIRECTORS

78 MAIN STREET,
WILLERBY, HULL
Tel: (01482) 656537

www.robertadrew.com

Trusted local solicitors

**Wills & Probate
Family Law
Personal Injury
Conveyancing
Employment Law**

Macks

01642 252 828
www.macks.co.uk

NEWS

Light a candle,
say a prayer for
seafarers this
Christmas

Continued from Page 1

“People in this part of the UK have a soft spot for seafarers,” said Peter. “Even as things get more expensive, there is still a desire to make Christmas a bit special for those spending it miles from home and families.”

Generous donations of chocolates, biscuits, toiletries and warm gloves are collected and delivered to ships, along with Christmas cards featuring handwritten notes.

Where possible, Peter and his team also organise Mass on board ships during the Christmas season.

“The picture of Father Phil Cunnah shows him on board saying Mass with a dartboard nearby. It represents in a small way what we try to do by offering the chance of Mass and recognising that the guys need relaxation afterwards as well.

“Without seafarers and fishers, we would not have Christmas as we know it. They bring in everything we use and need at this holy time,” said Peter.

Anyone wishing to help seafarers and fishers this Christmas can donate at stellamaris.org.uk/christmas. Every contribution makes a difference.

BISHOP
TERRY’S
DECEMBER
ENGAGEMENTS

- 4 Attends the NPCAT Carol Service at St Mary’s Cathedral, Middlesbrough 11am
- 8 Attends a meeting of the Northern Church Leaders via Zoom 4pm
- 9 Chairs the Diocesan Trustee Board Meeting and Curia Christmas Lunch at the Treebridge Hotel, Middlesbrough 10am
- 11 Attends a DTEC meeting at the Curial Office, Middlesbrough 12.30pm
- 12 Attends the Bishop of Whitby’s Big Boro Breakfast event at Middlesbrough College 8am
- 16 Chairs a meeting of the Bishop’s Council via Zoom 10.30am
- 17 Celebrates Christmas Mass at HMP Deerbolt 1.30pm
- 18 Attends a meeting of the Ushaw College Trustee Board via Zoom 11am
- 19-24 Attends personal retreat
- 24 Celebrates Mass During the Night for the Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord at St Mary’s Cathedral 9pm
- 29 Attends the Middlesbrough Diocesan Clergy and Ampleforth Community Christmas meal at St Laurence’s Abbey, Ampleforth 12.30pm

Hope, faith and friendship mark
special pilgrimage to Rome

This Jubilee Year 2025 offered a unique opportunity to visit Rome on pilgrimage with our diocese, to open ourselves to God’s grace and seek reconciliation with God and each other.

Our pilgrimage began with 38 of us leaving Middlesbrough, York, Scarborough, Northallerton, including Bishop Terry, Monsignor Gerard Robinson, Canon Paul Farrer and Father Patrick Keogh. Our group also included some Scottish pilgrims. Most of us were strangers at the start but we quickly became friends. We all had petitions and personal expectations to experience spiritual renewal and a deeper connection with God. As days passed, it became a pilgrimage full of surprises as we learnt to acknowledge that unmet expectations can become blessings in disguise.

The theme “Pilgrims of Hope” was in evidence throughout the pilgrimage. We witnessed hope in the universal church as thousands of pilgrims from different countries visited Rome, all united in prayer and purpose. This served as a powerful reminder of community, power and solidarity in belonging to the Roman Catholic Church.

There was evidence of hope and acts of mercy both seen and unseen within the group, with support and encouragement given to each other as we negotiated the crowds that daily lined the streets of Rome in the heat. A helping hand was offered so no one fell on the cobbled streets or was separated from the group and water was shared when needed.

Humanity seen at best, with faith in action that started with Pope Francis and now continues with Pope Leo, was visible around the Vatican walls at night. Many homeless

people were given shelter in tents provided by the Vatican, with protection available from police and surplus food given by nearby cafes.

A poignant sculpture by Timothy Schmalz and dedicated to migrants is a reminder to show hospitality to strangers and to encounter the face of Christ in others.

Spiritual renewal and indulgences Walking through the Holy Doors of four major basilicas – St Mary Major, St Peter’s, St John Lateran and St Paul Outside the Walls – was a powerful symbol of spiritual renewal, forgiveness, God’s mercy and acceptance of God’s love to restart again.

We were blessed to have priests available for the sacrament of confession so that with renewed hearts we could offer mercy and forgiveness to others.

Witnessing faith in sacred art and sites visiting St Peter’s Basilica and seeing the beauty and art of the Sistine Chapel was truly breathtaking and directed the heart and mind to God.

Many pilgrims said one of their highlights was visiting the Catacombs of St Callixtus, a deacon of the early church.

The catacombs were places of catechesis and worship and provided an underground crypt for the first popes, along with 500,000 early Christians.

We navigated these underground burial sites and had the privilege of celebrating Mass in one of the ancient chapels, just like the early Christians of Rome, and we remembered the sacrifices of the early martyrs.

This was a positive and humbling sign of hope to keep faithful in dark and challenging situations.

Accepting disappointment and embracing blessings

Our expectations of seeing Pope Leo during the papal audience were so high at the start of the pilgrimage. However, God had other plans. In the quest to stay together as a group, a stampede of people in front of us meant we were pushed away from the barrier and didn’t see the Holy Father, but we did receive a papal blessing. I learnt a valuable lesson of accepting the importance and unique value of a papal blessing that was given during a Jubilee Year, and I will never be the same again.

Groups of pilgrims shared their life stories over many glasses of wine and lots of gelato. We celebrated a 33-year wedding anniversary for one couple and another couple renewed their wedding vows in the grounds of St Peter’s Basilica.

I have been on many pilgrimages over the years and each one has a different impact. There are many more blessings and stories during this pilgrimage that I would love to share. I feel a renewed sense of the Universal Church in this Jubilee Year and I am excited for the years ahead under the leadership of Pope Leo XIV.

This pilgrimage has reinforced that God is in control of everything. I witnessed the power of prayer change a situation and how to live the gospel authentically in ordinary life. I left home full of expectations and ended full of acceptance and trust in God’s providence.

Teresa Doto



Bishop Terry and clergy with fellow pilgrims in Rome

Relic of St Carlo draws hundreds for veneration

Scarborough parishes and schools were honoured and blessed to receive the visit of the first-class relic of St Carlo Acutis.

The visit was organised by ukmiracles.com in collaboration with Scarborough parishes. We welcomed Anna Johnstone, guardian of the relic and former governess to the Acutis family. Anna featured on an episode of BBC1's Songs of Praise, when presenter Aled Jones explored the mystery of miracles.

Visitors from across our diocese and also from neighbouring dioceses came to take part in this event. The visit began on Saturday morning with Mass and Adoration at St Peter's Church, after which Anna gave a talk on the life and spirituality of St Carlo, which was followed by veneration of the relic. In the afternoon, the first Abide in Me session took place, in which a group gathered to reflect on Carlo's spirituality and upon scripture, and this was followed by two other sessions on Sunday and Monday.

During the sessions, there was further opportunity to hold, venerate and pray with the relic. A short talk and veneration of the relic also followed the Saturday Vigil and Sunday Masses across the three churches of St Peter, St Joseph and St Edward the Confessor.

During the day, the relic also visited the Ministers Day at the Spa, Scarborough, which coincided with the visit. This made it possible for many more people to venerate the relic of St Carlo.

On the Monday and Tuesday, Anna visited St Peter's Primary School and St Augustine's Secondary School with the relic, giving age-appropriate talks to the children in the classrooms on St Carlo's life and spirituality

and the children were able to hold and pray with the relic.

In all, around 490 people were able to venerate the relic in church and around 450 at the Ministers Day, as well as many of the 300 St Peter's and 590 St Augustine's pupils. St Carlo was born in London on May 3 1991. He developed a profound love of Jesus, Mary and the Church at a young age, and a deep devotion to the Eucharist.

He said, "To be always united with Jesus, this is my plan of life", and that the "Eucharist is the highway to heaven".

Aged 11, he discovered the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano but also found that information about Eucharistic Miracles was not readily available. He set about changing this.

As a young computer genius, he designed a website on which, with the help of his parents, he collated all the Eucharistic miracles that have been approved by the Church.

At 15 years old, St Carlo became ill with what turned out to be aggressive leukaemia. He died just over a week later, on October 11 2006.

St Carlo Acutis' downloadable, online exhibition rapidly spread all over the world. This exhibition is now available from ukmiracles in poster format and, in 2019, Scarborough parishes were privileged to host this exhibition. St Carlo was beatified by the Church on October 10 2020 and was canonised on September 7 this year.

You can find out more about St Carlo Acutis, his International Exhibition of Eucharistic Miracles and much more on Anna's website, ukmiracles.com.

Elizabeth White



Canon Eddie Gubbins and altar servers with the relic



A St Augustine's pupil venerates the relic

Father Xavier reflects on St Carlo's inspiring legacy

The St Thomas More VC Academy community in West Hull was blessed to come together to celebrate the feast day of St Carlo Acutis.

Father Xavier Santhiyagu led everyone in a beautiful and joy-filled Mass that reminded all the power of faith, friendship and service. Parishioners from Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Hessle and the West Hull parishes and Deacon Chris Larwood were welcomed and their presence made the celebration feel even more special and united.

During the Mass, Father Xavier spoke about the inspiring life of St Carlo, who loved God deeply and used his gifts, especially his passion for technology, to share that love with others.

His words encouraged everyone to see that holiness isn't just for the saints of long ago, but something we can all strive for in our everyday lives, through kindness, gratitude, and faith.

The school choir filled the chapel with joyful music that lifted everyone's hearts. Many pupils took part in the readings and prayers and staff were proud to see how confidently they led the worship.

Together, they prayed in thanksgiving for St Carlo's example and asked for his intercession to help us live with the same courage and devotion that he showed.

After Mass, smiles and conversations were shared with the visitors, grateful for the chance to come together as one community. The celebration reminded us that faith is something we live and share – not just on special days, but every day.

Inspired by St Carlo, everyone left the chapel with renewed joy, ready to use their own talents to bring light and hope to others.

Martin Ward
Headteacher



Father Xavier celebrating Mass at St Thomas More VC Academy in Hull

Sacred relic inspires St Peter's pupils

St Peter's School in Scarborough was blessed with a truly special visit as Anna Johnstone arrived bearing a sacred relic of St Carlo Acutis.

The atmosphere was one of reverence and excitement as pupils and staff gathered to welcome Anna and learn more about St Carlo's inspiring life.

Speaking with warmth and clarity, Anna shared stories about Carlo's upbringing, his loving family and his unwavering belief in Jesus Christ.

Children listened attentively as she described how Carlo, despite his short life, made a profound impact on the Church.

Born in 1991 and passing away at just 15 years old, Carlo was known for his kindness, humility and his passion for documenting Eucharistic miracles online – a project that continues to touch lives around the world.

Anna encouraged the children to see Carlo not just as a saint, but as a relatable role model – someone who lived a life of holiness in the modern world.

She spoke of his deep love for the Eucharist, his daily Mass attendance and his commitment to prayer, reminding pupils that

sanctity is possible at any age.

The presence of the relic, a fragment of Carlo's hair, was a deeply moving moment for many. Pupils were invited to pray quietly and reflect on how they, too, could follow in Carlo's footsteps by living lives of faith, kindness and service.

Headteacher Sarah Seeley said: "It was a privilege to welcome Anna and the relic of St Carlo. Our children were captivated by his story and inspired by his example. This visit has truly deepened our school's spiritual life."



A St Peter's pupil venerates the relic of St Carlo

SCHOOLS

Panel recommends RE for National Curriculum

The Religious Education Policy Unit (REPU) has welcomed the Curriculum and Assessment Review panel's recommendation to recognise the value of Religious Education by including it in the National Curriculum.

The final report from the Curriculum and Assessment Review states that "RE's importance is not currently reflected in its standing in the curriculum" and recommends moving it to the National Curriculum in order to "improve access to high-quality provision and prevent further diminishment".

Since the 1988 Education Reform Act, RE has been a compulsory subject in the school

curriculum but not part of the National Curriculum. Each local authority instead has provided an agreed syllabus to determine what is taught.

But the review now calls for a "staged approach to reform" to have the subject adopted into the National Curriculum. It recommends that the government invites representatives from faith bodies, secular groups and experts from the teaching and wider education sector to develop an "independent task and finish group" that will decide on how the subject is taught in the new curriculum.

The Curriculum and Assessment Review also highlighted the Religious Education Council's work to "improve and standardise the RE curriculum" through its National Content Standard, describing this initiative as a "catalyst for more substantial reform".

Last year's Ofsted subject report on RE praised the subject as "intellectually challenging and personally enriching", saying: "It helps young people develop beliefs and values, and promotes the virtues of respect and empathy, which are important in our diverse society."

However, the subject has undergone decades

of neglect, with both a recruitment crisis alongside an ongoing problem with lessons being taught by teachers who have had no specialist RE training.

Half of secondary teachers who deliver RE lessons spend most of their time teaching another subject, while the total number of teachers has remained the same since 2011, despite a growth in entries at GCSE.

REPU is a strategic partnership between NATRE, REC and RE Today Services. The combined membership of the REPU represents more than 60 organisations and RE teachers in more than 4,000 schools.

Double celebration for 150-year-old school

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



St Wilfrid's senior leadership and chaplaincy teams celebrate the school's 150th anniversary and Catholic Schools Inspection report

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."

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."

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."

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 Mini Vinnies, despite having retired 15 years ago.

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

**To advertise your school
please contact Charlotte
on 01440 730399 or email
charlotter@cathcom.org**

A lesson in democracy as St Mary's children visit Houses of Parliament

Year 6 children from St Mary's VC Academy in Market Weighton travelled by train to London for an exciting and enriching visit to the Houses of Parliament.

The children enjoyed a fascinating tour of Parliament and had the opportunity to witness live debates in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

They also took part in a workshop, learning how the values of democracy and justice help us to build a fair and respectful society – values that reflect our Catholic commitment to the common good and to treating

every person with dignity.

A special highlight was meeting their local MP, Charlie Dewhurst, who spoke to the children about his service and leadership in public life.

After enjoying an ice cream in St James's Park and a walking tour of Central London, the group returned home tired but full of gratitude for a memorable day.

Staff were particularly proud of the children's behaviour and the way they represented St Mary's with respect and joy, living out our mission to learn, serve and love others in all that we do.



Children from St Mary's VC Academy in Market Weighton with MP Charlie Dewhurst in the Houses of Parliament

New mission statement underlines care for all students

It's been a busy start to the school year for the chaplaincy team at St Mary's College in Hull.

After consultation with pupils, staff, parents and stakeholders, the college launched a new mission statement, taken from Matthew 19:26

– “With God all things are possible”.

The statement highlights the school's determination that no child is left behind is well underway.

The launch has included assemblies for staff and all year groups, an art competition for a new mission design and the release of the first Mission newsletter.

The chaplaincy team celebrated the launch of SM6 Sixth Form Catholic Life with an assembly followed by an opportunity to explore the opportunities that being part of a Catholic sixth form offers.

From volunteering and fundraising to gap years and pilgrimages, students could ask questions and explore the possibilities during their time at SM6 and beyond.

Led by a team of dedicated sixth form students, the “Jesus Brunch” prayer group has taken the college community by storm, with 25 to 35 pupils from all year groups gathering in the chapel on Wednesday lunchtimes to pray, be encouraged and deepen their relationship with Jesus.

As part of their introduction to life in a Catholic school, Year 7 forms have spent form time in the chapel exploring the Rosary and



St Mary's College's new mission statement

the power of prayer. Pupils also have the option of taking a Rosary to continue this powerful prayer at home.

Katie Flood



Members of the Jesus Brunch prayer group

Mackenzie comes home to inspire transformation

World-renowned artist Mackenzie Thorpe returned to his beloved Teesside to unveil a stunning new art display.

Middlesbrough-born Mackenzie has been collaborating with talented pupils from St Paulinus Catholic Primary School in Guisborough, giving bespoke tutorials to inspire their efforts.

The vibrant art, which features local scenes such as Roseberry Topping and Gisborough Priory together with Mackenzie's signature love heart motif, now brightens the school's entrance and playground for all to enjoy.

During his visit, Mackenzie praised the special “vibe” at St Paulinus, adding: “Some schools I've been to don't touch this one. I just wanted to say that for all your staff and for you. You're so privileged and so lucky to be here.”

He told the children he began drawing in the fireplace ashes in the family's Cannon Park home and he still draws every day of his life.

“There's only one person who draws like me and there's only one person who draws like you,” he said.

And he told them they could do whatever they wanted to if they worked hard and put their heart and soul into it.

Speaking about his love for Teesside, he said: “I can only talk about it as a spirit. It's the men I grew up with in the shipyards or the

foundries and what I always taught as a kid – you don't let anybody down, you respect everybody and you don't get too big for your boots or forget who you are.”

As part of the project, art subject lead Mrs Rathbone took pupils to the art department at Redcar's Sacred Heart Secondary School, which, like St Paulinus, is part of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust (NPCAT).

St Paulinus head of school Rachel Bircham said the new display reflects the school's mission and values and its commitment to the community.

“Celebrating our school community has always been central to the vision we had for this project,” she said.

“Our PACE values – perseverance, ambition, community and empathy – are woven into everything, from our curriculum to relationships to fundraising events.

“We aim to offer the very best education so that all our pupils go on to achieve great success throughout their lives. We recognise that every person has their own God-given talents, and we are all God's work of art.

“This project also fits perfectly with our mission statement of ‘Love one another as I have loved you’, which is the beating heart of all we do.

“Mackenzie is passionate about our area and the pieces he has created are inspirational.



Artist Mackenzie Thorpe with children from St Paulinus Catholic Primary School, Guisborough

“We love his style of art and how it celebrates Teesside.

“Seeing the smiles on people's faces as they go by our school is a true blessing. Our children should be incredibly proud of themselves and of our school.

“We couldn't be happier with this project and

want to thank everyone who has worked tirelessly to make it possible.”

One of the proud St Paulinus pupils, Albee, said: “I was happy to meet Mackenzie Thorpe as I'd never had the chance to meet anyone like that before this project happened.”

NPCAT schools lead the way in teacher training

Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust (NPCAT) is proud to be at the forefront of teacher education in the region, offering a range of pathways for those inspired to make a difference through teaching.

Working in partnership with the University of York, York St John University and Leeds Trinity University, the trust provides high-quality PGCE programmes across both primary and secondary phases, each leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

Through these three accredited routes, trainees experience rich and varied

placements across NPCAT's family of 38 Catholic schools, spanning all or part of the following local authority areas: Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland, Stockton, York and North Yorkshire.

Each placement is carefully designed to provide excellent classroom experience, expert mentoring and the opportunity to develop as reflective, compassionate educators who can make a lasting impact in their communities.

Rooted in the trust's mission, “Forming lives ready to face the future”, NPCAT's teacher

training pathways nurture professional excellence alongside personal faith and vocation.

Trainees are welcomed into a community that values service, love and hope, ensuring they are fully prepared to inspire the next generation in Catholic education and beyond.

Sinead O'Neill, primary lead for NPCAT Initial Teacher Training, said: “Our trainees are part of a family that believes in nurturing both professional skill and personal vocation.

“We are proud to work alongside our

university partners to ensure that every trainee feels supported, challenged and inspired to teach with purpose and compassion. Together, we are forming lives ready to face the future.”

If you, or someone you know, is thinking about becoming a teacher, find out more about how you can train to teach within NPCAT schools by visiting npcat.org.uk/initial-teacher-education/overview or contacting Sinead at primaryite@npcat.org.uk.

NEWS

Cantabile's return heads Christmas programme

Organisers are hoping for the biggest audience yet as Cantabile return for their third Christmas at the Cathedral concert.

It's always one of the highlights of the festive season, with hundreds coming to enjoy stunning performances in the two previous concerts.

Under the direction of Rev Daniel Ackerley, this exceptional local choir will fill the cathedral with glorious music, light and festive cheer.

Arrive early to browse the Christmas mini-market, enjoy a drink from the licensed bar and treat yourself to mince pies and mulled wine before the performance.

Also returning after proving a huge hit with younger audiences last year is Santa's Jingle Jamboree from Tom Rolfe Productions

Get ready for a jolly good time with Santa's Jingle Jamboree, a brand-new, festive, family Santamime packed with magical moments, merry music and plenty of surprises.

Join Santa, Mrs Claus, and their mischievous magical elves as they work together to save Christmas in this heartwarming, fun-filled show.

Every child will receive their very own Nice

List Certificate – a special keepsake to remember this festive adventure!

There will be three school performances across December 16 and 17 with one public performance on December 16.

Almost 1,000 people saw the show in total last year and some performances are already close to selling out.

Full list of Christmas events

Saturday November 29: O Holy Night with Newcastle University Chamber Choir

Sunday November 30: Advent Carol Service

Tuesday December 2: Christmas Wreath-Making

Wednesday December 3: Christmas Wreath-Making

Wednesday December 10: The Christmas Orchestra

Friday December 12: Amelia Coburn Live in Concert

Saturday December 13: Cantabile: Christmas at the Cathedral

Tuesday December 16: Santa's Jingle Jamboree – School Performance PM



Cantabile return to St Mary's Cathedral on Saturday December 13 as part of a packed festive programme

Tuesday December 16: Santa's Jingle Jamboree – Public Performance

Wednesday December 17: Santa's Jingle Jamboree – School Performance PM

Tickets for all events at the cathedral are available from ticketsource.co.uk/middlesbroughcathedral, except The Christmas Orchestra, tickets from tickettailor.com/events/thechristmasorchestra/1636274.

Dementia-friendly carol service at the cathedral

As part of St Mary's Cathedral's continuing commitment to supporting those living with dementia, a special dementia-friendly carol service will again take place this Advent.

Each year, this short service is organised to help those living with dementia and their families and carers celebrate Christmas in a truly supportive and safe environment.

Music for the Mind is behind the service, supported by music lead Trish McLean and Marie Kerr from Dementia Action Teesside, which provides activities and dementia awareness, including a recent session for our diocesan clergy and lay members.

Marie explains: "As dementia progresses, people often become more socially isolated. Many tell us they begin to struggle to take part in ordinary parish life or more traditional, longer services – not because they don't want to, but because noise, crowds, length and complexity can become overwhelming.

"That's why shorter, more music-focused services can be more appropriate"

The service is 25 minutes long, with short, gentle readings and prayers. This year's theme is Hope, to coincide with the Church's Jubilee theme, Pilgrims of Hope.

"Music is central, because music is deeply held in human memory," says Marie.

"Carols are 'reminiscence anchors' – they help orient the season, help people connect and often unlock memory, emotion and joy in a way spoken language sometimes cannot.

"The carols will be sung by children from local primary schools, including St Clare's. This always brings immense joy to those who attend."

Music for the Mind volunteers will be on hand to support, smile, welcome, pour tea and share cakes afterwards in the hall. All the volunteers have attended a dementia information session with Dementia Action Teesside.

Trish, who also leads the cathedral's monthly dementia-friendly singalong, is co-ordinating the schools and the music. After the service, she will continue the singing in the hall.

This is an opportunity for everyone and anyone to come together – those living with dementia, families, parishes, carers, school communities and the wider faithful.

The service is at 2pm on Monday December 8 and will also be live-streamed on the Diocese of Middlesbrough YouTube channel, @MbroDiocese.



Volunteers at last year's dementia-friendly carol service

Joy as two religious congregations become one

After prayer, reflection and engagement of members, the two congregations of apostolic women religious, Congregatio Jesu (CJ) and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM-Loreto) have merged into one.

The merged Congregatio Jesu, around 1,800 sisters worldwide, will continue to honour the legacy and charism of its foundress, Yorkshire's Venerable Mary Ward.

The merger became a canonical and legal reality in November and was publicly proclaimed at a special Mass in Loyola,

Spain, presided over by the general superior of the Jesuits, Father Arturo Sosa SJ.

"We are very happy we can finally fulfil Mary Ward's dream of a united congregation of women religious with the same constitutions as those of the Society of Jesus," said Sister Veronica Fuhrmann CJ, general superior of Congregatio Jesu.

"Throughout history, but especially during the last years, we have journeyed in close connection.

We share the same charism, the same values

and the same understanding of mission.

"Union of minds and hearts, which St Ignatius has so aptly described and held in the highest esteem, is the bond that deeply connects us.

"Seeing this union now realised not only in sisterly and spiritual but also in canonical and legal terms fills us all with great joy and deep gratitude.

Sister Carmel Swords CJ, former Institute leader of the IBVM, added: "In a fractured world, our members have freely chosen to

become one congregation as a witness to Christ's gospel message of peace and harmony.

"We have listened to the promptings of the Spirit and embark on this journey with renewed missionary zeal. We believe that together we are stronger. We move forward filled with gratitude and a desire to serve God's people in freedom and joy."

A recording of the Mass is available at congregatiojesu.org.

Finding Christ amid the glow of Advent lights

I love Advent. The streets fill with twinkling lights, and festive music plays everywhere you go. It feels like the one liturgical season the whole nation celebrates – whether they realise it or not.

Yet Advent also holds a gentle tension. While the Church begins a new year, the world waits for January 1 to start afresh. Amid school plays, Christmas parties and busy diaries, how do we keep our hearts fixed on Jesus? How can we let the mystery of this Jubilee Advent of Hope form us?

Pope Francis, in his Angelus address back in Advent 2021, warned us about the temptation of “dozing off” in our spiritual lives. He encourages us to be vigilant and reminds us that “the secret to being vigilant is prayer”. How true that is at this time of year. The noise, the lists, and the glitter can lull us into a kind of spiritual sleep. Yet the Lord invites us to stay awake – not with anxiety or restlessness, but with watchful hope.

All the decorations in our streets, places of work and homes can be a reminder of what we are preparing for. In a 2009 Advent homily, Pope

Benedict described Advent as “an invitation to understand that the individual events of the day are hints that God is giving us signs of the attention he has for each one of us”. Every light we see strung across our streets, every candle lit in a window, can become a small reminder of the true Light of the World. Perhaps this Advent, we can pause – just for a moment – each time we notice the lights, and say a prayer of thanksgiving for Christ who comes to bring light into our darkness. Prayer doesn’t have to be complicated or lengthy. It could be taking five minutes of silence before the day begins, lighting your Advent wreath with your family, or praying the O Antiphons in the final week before Christmas. Small, intentional acts of prayer keep our hearts open so that when Christmas comes, we can truly rejoice. Advent invites us to slow down, to stay awake, and to rediscover the thrill of hope. May this Jubilee Advent remind us that Christ is near – the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Nicola Sweetman
Adult Faith Formation Coordinator



Decorations in our streets, places of work and homes can be a reminder of what we are preparing for during Advent

Football and art provide lifeline for asylum seekers

For the past five years, members of St John of Beverley SVP have been voluntarily working in partnership with Welcome House to provide a place of safety, harmony, equality and support for asylum seekers and refugees in Hull.

SVP members have helped to develop these lost and often frightened individuals into a large community made up of families, single men, women, teenagers and children. SVP members have built up their trust and confidence through kindness, compassion and love.

Support is provided in many forms such as food, clothing, housing, household goods, education, creative and sporting activities.

SVP members and those in Welcome House face the needs together with these asylum seekers and refugees, helping them to deal with asylum claims or find their way around Hull to schools, mosques or churches.

The SVP also runs a small shop within Welcome House called the Corner Store, where registered asylum seekers collect hygiene products.

Members are constantly fundraising and applying for grants to continue providing these items free of charge. Many of those frequenting Welcome House are fleeing from Sudan, so these activities have been eligible for grants from the SVP Sudan support fund.

St John of Beverley SVP would particularly like

to thank all who support the annual national SVP South Sudan Appeal, which provides these funds.

However, the need for these people of all nationalities and ethnicities is not just material or financial. Since 2020, St John of Beverley SVP has worked with organisations such as the Tigers Trust, Football Unites, East Riding FA, Active Through Football and Hull University to help a group of isolated, frightened young men become a successful football team, Acorn FC.

Initially, the players needed kit, which they often shared among themselves, as well as transport to and from fixtures and training sessions. This is another initiative for which SVP members are constantly looking for funds.

Last September, Humber Galleries in Hull commissioned a professional photographer to put on an exhibition called “A community through sport” and Acorn FC was the chosen subject.

From this exhibition SVP developed a Photo Club for those not playing football. Start-up finance came from the Marist Fathers and Hull SVP District Council.

This paid for workshops with a professional photographer, enabling the young men to develop photography skills using secondhand cameras, specialising in portraits.

They began last November with walks around

Hull Marina, followed by visits to Bridlington and York. They learnt to work with cameras from the Victorian era at a studio in Leeds and later visited Spurn Point.

A Photo Club chat group soon developed, and the young men walked in the evenings photographing everything in sight. When they showed their work to the footballers and families, everyone wanted portraits. St John of Beverley SVP then arranged a successful afternoon portrait and tea party fundraising event at St John of Beverley where participants could have a portrait taken by the newly skilled photographers for a small donation.

In November, 10 refugees and asylum seekers went on a sponsored walk from Hull to Beverley with their cameras to raise funds for future Photo Club activities. If you would like to support this valuable work with a donation, please visit justgiving.com/crowdfunding/photoclubwalk.

To find out more about this marvellous work email presidentc13@svp.org.uk to be put in touch with Maureen Mulligan, who leads St John of Beverley SVP members on their Welcome House activities.

Patricia Nobbs
Middlesbrough SVP Central Council President



A member of the SVP Photo Club

A Letter From Madonna House – Waiting for Christ

The seasons of Advent and Christmas come once more as we circle back to the start of the liturgical year.

I usually think of Advent as a time of waiting. In the readings of the Mass and the prayers in the divine office, we move from a focus on the end times and waiting for the second coming of Christ to waiting with Our Lady and St Joseph for the birth of Jesus at Christmas.



A carving of the donkey carrying Mary to Bethlehem

Growing up, Advent was a time of preparation for Christmas. An Advent wreath with four candles was set up on our dining room table, and each Sunday we lit the number of the candles corresponding to how far along in Advent we were (one candle for the first week, two for the next, etc).

There would be an Advent calendar counting down the days until Christmas, as well as a lot of baking. As we got closer to Christmas, more decorations would go up, but none of the lights would be lit until December 25.

On Christmas Eve we ate a light meal and then attended a Vigil Mass for Christmas and then on coming home we would celebrate with a festive meal, a réveillon. That meal to me was the end of the waiting.

However, when I joined Madonna House in 2015, the Mass we had at midnight became the end of the waiting, when the solemn

proclamation of Christmas was intoned and Christ’s incarnation was once more brought to light for me.

A hunger for a deeper waiting arose in me. Our foundress Catherine Doherty has a number of reflections on the Advent season, but one that stands out for me has to do with a donkey’s bell.

She relates that her mother used to wear bells in increasing numbers as the Advent season went on to symbolise the coming of Christ in the womb of Our Lady who, as Catherine learned from her parents, would have come to Bethlehem on a donkey wearing a bell.

Catherine calls that donkey the first church of Christ, for he carried our Lord and our Lady as the Church carries Christ in the Eucharist and in the Tabernacle.

One experience of waiting came during one

of my illnesses, when I had to isolate from the others in the house. For about a week, a priest would come daily to bring Communion to me, carrying a bell with him to signal that he was carrying the Eucharist.

I would anticipate hearing that bell long before the priest was actually there, my longing to receive Our Lord making me hear bells when they weren’t there yet.

This, coupled with some spiritual reading on the Eucharist, helped deepen in me an appreciation of Communion, and in waiting for the coming of Christ into my life and into our world.

So as we journey through this season, I pray we may all experience a hunger with patient longing for Christ to come again.

Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus, come!

Mathieu Dacquay

Christmas Mass

Ampleforth Abbey
St Laurence's Abbey Church
Christmas Eve
10.15pm Christmas Night Mass
Christmas Day
10am Mass of Christmas Day

Cottingham
Holy Cross
Christmas Eve
Christmas Vigil Mass 6.30pm
Christmas Day
Midnight Mass
10am Mass During the Day

Hessle
Our Lady of Lourdes
Christmas Eve
6.30pm
(Family Mass),
11.30pm Carols followed by
Midnight Christmas Mass
Christmas Day
8.30am
& 10.30am Mass

Hull
Our Lady of Lourdes and St Peter Chanel
Christmas Eve
Carols at 7.30p.m
First Mass of Christmas at 8.00pm
Midnight Mass (Latin)
Christmas Day
10.00am Mass

Hull
St Vincent's
Christmas Eve
Confessions 6.30pm to 7pm
8pm (Carols from 7pm)
Christmas Day
10am

Ingleby Barwick
St Therese of Lisieux
19th December
Candlelit Carol Service 7pm
Saturday 21st
Mass 5.30pm
Sunday 22nd
Mass 11am
Christmas Eve
Christmas Eve 5.30pm Mass
with Children's Nativity
8pm First Mass of Christmas
Christmas Day
9.30am

Middlesbrough
Our Lady Of Perpetual Help Parish
Christmas Eve
Wednesday 24th December
Corpus Christi Church
4.00pm Vigil Mass of Christmas
Saint Gabriel's Church
5.00pm Nativity Play & Carols
5.30pm Vigil Mass Of Christmas
Christmas Day
Thursday 25th December
Saint Gabriel's Church
9.30am Christmas Day Mass
(Quiet Mass With No Singing
And Adoration From 8.30am &
Rosary 9.10am)

Nunthorpe
St Bernadette's
Christmas Eve
5.00pm Mass with Children's Nativity
7.30pm "Midnight" Mass
Christmas Day
9.30am Dawn Mass of Christmas

Lealholm, Egton Bridge, Ugthorpe
Our Lady, Lealholm
Christmas Eve
5.30pm Carols
6.00pm First Mass of Christmas
St Hedda, Egton Bridge
Christmas Eve
8.00pm First Mass
of Christmas
St Anne, Ugthorpe
Christmas Day
10.00am Mass

Stokesley, Great Ayton & Crathorne
St Joseph's Stokesley, St Margaret Clitherow, Great Ayton, St Mary's Crathorne Parishes
24th December Christmas Eve
5.30pm Mass suitable for children and families at St Josephs Stokesley
Christmas Eve
8pm Mass
St Josephs Stokesley
25th December Christmas Day
9am Mass at St Mary's Crathorne
Christmas Day
10am Mass at St Margaret Clitherow Great Ayton
Christmas Day
10.30am Mass at St Joseph's Stokesley
26th December Boxing Day
10am Mass
at St Joseph's Stokesley
27th December
St John the Evangelist - 9.15am
Mass at St Joseph's Stokesley
5.30pm Vigil Mass at St Margaret Clitherow Great Ayton
28th December The Holy Family
9am Mass
at St Mary's Crathorne
10.30am Mass
at St Joseph's Stokesley

Teesville
Parish of St. Andrew's St Andrew's Church, Fabian Rd
Christmas Eve
Vigil Mass 6.30pm preceded by Carols from 6.00pm
Christmas Day
Morning Mass 8.00am
New Years Day
Holy Mass 12.00noon
St. Anne's Church, Eston
Christmas Day
Mass 10.00am

Yarm
St Mary & St Romuald
Sunday 22nd December
Mass 9.30am
Christmas Eve
Mass 8pm
Christmas Day
Mass: 9.30am

Wishing Cath
and a happy
parishes, the T
and even

Christmas Times

Whitby

St Hilda's Whitby & English Martyrs Sleights

Christmas Eve

6.30pm Mass at St Hilda's

Christmas Day

9am Mass at English Martyrs, Sleights.

10.30am Mass at St Hilda's

York

St George

December 18th

7pm Advent service
To be confirmed

December 24th

7pm Christmas Vigil

December 25th

9.30am Christmas Mass

December 26, 27th

10am Mass

December 28th

10.30am and 6.30pm Masses

January 1st

10am Mass only

Confession before and after every
Mass on request

York

St Joseph and St Wilfrid

CHRISTMAS AT THE YORK ORATORY

www.yorkoratory.com

St Wilfrid's Catholic Church

Duncombe Place YO1 7EF

Christmas Carol Service

Wednesday, 17th December
at 7pm

Christmas Eve

5pm Mass with Carols (English)

11.15 pm Readings and Carols

Midnight High Mass (Latin)

Christmas Day

8.30 am Mass (English)

10.30am Sung Mass (English)

4 pm Solemn Benediction

(No 12 Noon Mass on

Christmas Day)

St Joseph's Catholic Church

Kingsway North, Clifton YO30 6JX

Christmas Day

9.30 am Mass (English)

York

English Martyrs

Christmas Eve

6.00pm First Mass of Christmas

11.30pm Carols

12.00pm Midnight Mass

of Christmas

Christmas Day

10.30am Mass

Dalton Terrace, York YO24 4DA

Catholic Voice readers a holy
Christmas from all our
Diocese of Middlesbrough
everyone at CathCom



NEWS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Catholic Young Writer Award attracts record entries

The Catholic Young Writer Award 2025 attracted a record 124 entries from Catholic secondary schools across the country. First prize was shared by students from De Lisle College in Loughborough and one from Stonyhurst College in Lancashire. An Ampleforth College student came joint-second. Sponsored by the Catholic Union Charitable Trust, the Catholic Young Writer Award was launched more than 30 years ago by The Keys, the Catholic Writers’ Guild of England and Wales. This year’s question was on CS Lewis’ statement about Christ in 1952: “A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said wouldn’t be a great moral teacher. He’d either be a lunatic on a level with a man who says he’s a poached egg, or else he’d be a devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse.”

‘Mariathon’ turns up volume on ‘Quiet Revival’

Twenty-four-hour Catholic radio station Radio Maria England’s 2025 “Mariathon” raised more than £62,000. The three-day national fundraising broadcast celebrated the theme “The Quiet Revival”, highlighting the renewal of Christianity it says is taking place across the United Kingdom. Radio Maria England can be accessed through smart speakers (ask for “Radio Maria England”), the Radio Maria Play App for smartphones and tablets, on its website, RadioMariaEngland.uk and from podcast providers including Anchor, Spotify, Apple and Google. For more information, email info@RadioMariaEngland.uk or follow the station on Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn.

Decoding symbols behind reredos

The reredos behind the main altar of St Mary’s Cathedral is a magnificent painting stretching from the floor to the high ceiling, dominating the sanctuary while placing a focus on the altar.

It was painted in 1987 by Robert Brumby, a Yorkshireman, who remains content that people can make their own interpretations of the work.

At first sight, its glowing colours and patterns appear to be abstract forms. However, as Professor Luca Settimo explained in his talk to the Cleveland Newman Circle, closer inspection can lead to valuable reflection on our salvation history and even to considerations of the origins of the universe.

Luca, originally from Italy, is a pharmacist, scientist and theologian, with doctorates from Finland and Nottingham. He is especially interested in areas where theology and science meet.

His talk, which was comprehensively supported by biblical texts, focused on how

meditating on the images in the reredos can open up ideas both about creation and cosmic evolution and also about our redemption through the crucified Christ and the life of the Church.

The dark areas at the base of the painting provide a suitable foil for the altar to “sing out”. In themselves they can be seen as the chaos and disorder from which God in his love freely created our universe. They can also be seen to contain the seeds and weeds from which creation evolves.

As we look higher up the painting there is more colour and more light. Luca identified areas where we can discern a calf, a man’s face, an eagle and a lion, the symbols of the evangelists.

Fish and a net can be seen to represent Christianity. There are three crosses and church buildings discernible, then four arches for the gospels, with three towers to signify the Trinity.

As the eye ascends, we see planets spinning, reforming and at the top, all the colours mingle



The reredos at St Mary’s Cathedral – Photo by Joe Harrison

into a brightness that Luca suggests is an ultimate unity, a sublime expression of Christ’s spirit of love.

Luca’s enthusiasm for interpreting the symbolism in this painting was infectious. He encouraged his audience to look for themselves, to spend time meditating on the reredos, opening themselves to new meanings.

We can all learn much by just

absorbing this art. So when you are next in Coulby Newham, come in to explore the reredos. Luca’s presentation can be viewed at youtu.be/TmPyquraC_c.

For information about the future programme of the Cleveland Newman Circle, email p.egerton123@gmail.com or call 01642 645742. Talks are held in St Mary’s Cathedral hall and all are welcome.

Patricia Egerton

York poet launches new collection

York poet Mary Callan launched her latest poetry collection, *Butterfly Across the Battlefield*, during York 50+ Festival.

Subtitled *Poems of Loss and Love*, the book tackles the age-old themes of death and mourning and what comes after – judgement, Hell or Purgatory and Paradise.

“Paradise is where we are heading, thanks to Jesus,” says Mary. “That is the best news, and we need to share it, but we also need permission to mourn the hardship and mistakes in

our lives.”

The book is now on sale, priced £5 plus P&P. Email Mary at blazinggrannies@gmail.com.

Light for our Darkness

You’ll have to lift our hearts, Lord. Our cares just drag us down.

At last, we come to Christmas, when you make our cares your own.

Whether the star seems distant, or the stable straw feels brittle,

Whether our load is too heavy, or the presents seem too little,

Among the empty wrappers and the future we cannot see,

You feel for us in the darkness, without a Christmas tree.

God, lying low in the manger, new life in a frightened world,

Step by step, through the nonsense, you show us a map unfurl’d.



York poet Mary Callan

Thomas Hardy at Christmas: Hope in dark times

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

Thomas Hardy lost his faith early in life.

He joined the thousands of Victorians shocked into unbelief by science’s discoveries about the age of the world, the vastness of space and the archaeological evidence of gigantic “lizards” that walked the earth millions of years before the appearance of humankind.

Many struggled to reconcile the Biblical account of Creation with the evidence of

evolution, but Hardy replaced the notion of a loving God with an indifferent Fate governing the lives of the characters in his novels, such as *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* or *Jude the Obscure*.

As anyone who has read them knows, these are piercingly tragic stories in which innocence, love and hope are crushed.

When *Tess* (spoiler alert!) is hanged for the murder of her seducer, Hardy comments ironically: “Justice was done, and the President of the Immortals ... had ended his sport with *Tess*.”

Hardy’s use of the word “sport” is an echo of old Gloucester in Shakespeare’s *King Lear* who, blinded at the urging of his own son, cries out: “As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods,/They kill us for their sport” (sport here means a game).

It’s a dark view of human existence in a meaningless, cruel universe. It wasn’t shared by Shakespeare himself (see *June’s Voice*) but it was by Hardy and many of his contemporaries, and perhaps not a few of our own.

So can we pray with Hardy, the atheist? The *Oxen* was written in 1915, when the poet was in his 70s and people had begun to realise the war wasn’t going to be “over by

Christmas”.

He takes us back to his rural childhood and the ancient folk belief that at midnight on Christmas Eve, the farm animals in their sheds and byres knelt in honour of the Incarnation.

There’s a lovely picture in the first two verses of the young boy and the old folk united in faith with the animals, quietly accepting the gift of the Christ child’s birth. It never occurred to anyone to doubt it.

Hardy interrupts his pastoral dream with an ugly line of f-sounds, jolting us into the sceptical present. No one believes those fairy stories today! But the old poet who once knew a simple faith, wants to believe again, to be given proof that, despite the “gloom” of the contemporary world of science and war and unbelief, it’s true. Our prayer can join with Hardy’s in that same restless mixture of desire and hope.

The Oxen

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.

“Now they are all on their knees,”

An elder said as we sat in a flock

By the embers in hearthside ease.



*We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.*

*So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
“Come; see the oxen kneel*

*“In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,”
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.*



Thomas Hardy was an atheist but this later poem suggests he wished he could believe again

Generous parishioners find refreshing way to raise funds

Parishioners of Sacred Heart, Hornsea, have been collecting money during tea and coffee after Mass on Sunday mornings for the last 12 months.

Each year a charity is chosen by the parish to benefit from this collection, and this year Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation (RENATE) will receive a cheque to further their work in this important field.

The total collected was £1,424.37 from teas and coffees, which was rounded up by the generous donation of the parish 200 Club to total £1,500. Next year's donations will be used for the parish Lourdes Pilgrimage fund.

In addition, Hornsea parishioners Red and Rachel Noel held a Macmillan Coffee Morning after Mass one Sunday. Along with the excellent cakes and sweet treats, Red provided some savoury delights including curry and rice, Jamaican patties and sticky ribs.

The event raised £250, which will help Macmillan Cancer Support provide its vital services to assist those in need.

Thanks must go to the volunteers who serve the after-Mass refreshments and to Red and Rachel for their efforts in raising these fantastic amounts.

Deacon Robert Colombari



Volunteers at Sacred Heart, Hornsea

Christians come together to walk with Eucharist

A solemn Eucharistic procession through the streets of Middlesbrough drew together members of different Christian traditions in a spirit of prayer and unity.

The event was preceded by Mass at St Joseph's Catholic Church, presided over by Father Dominique Minskip alongside Father Andrew, a Syro-Malabar priest, Father Paul Kronbergs, an Anglican minister, Father Andreas of the Greek Orthodox Church and a representative from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

After the Mass, the ecumenical procession set off, marshalled by the Men of St Joseph, a Catholic men's prayer group, as hymns were sung, Rosaries were said and prayers recited, mainly in English and Malayalam, the language of Kerala.

At 3.30pm the procession reached St John's Anglican Church, where the congregation was blessed by Father Paul, and visitors also prayed in the chapel where a relic of Polish saint Sister Faustina was held.



The procession makes its way through Middlesbrough

NEWS IN BRIEF

New programme focuses on Ignatian spirituality

The Jesuit Institute has announced its 2025-26 programme as it continues to share Ignatian spirituality widely. Highlights include new online retreat days focusing on creativity, journaling and nature, as well as individually guided retreats during Advent, New Year and Pentecost. These retreats offer opportunities for prayerful reflection and deeper connection with God's presence in everyday life. The institute also provides bespoke retreat days, guided prayer weeks and courses on prayer, Ignatian listening, and discernment tailored to parishes, chaplaincies and other communities. For details on all events, visit jesuitinstitute.org/events or email eharrison@jesuit.org.uk.

Webinar examines beauty's place in moral formation

The Catholic Union has organised a webinar to explore the place of beauty and other transcendentals in the moral formation of the person and of society. Speakers include Father Patrick van der Vorst, a former entrepreneur, dealer, art expert and BBC's Dragons' Den winner, and Stefan Kaminski, director of the Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst. The webinar is on Monday April 20 at 6pm and booking is essential. To register, email info@catholicunion.org.uk for a Zoom link.

Pope praises Newman's lasting legacy

Pope Leo XIV named St John Henry Newman the 38th Doctor of the Church during a Mass at St Peter's Square on November 1. Newman was also named co-patron of Catholic education alongside St Thomas Aquinas. In his homily, the Pope highlighted Newman's significant contributions to educational theory and practice, emphasising education's role in forming individuals to "shine like stars" in their full dignity. Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster, who concelebrated the Mass, praised Newman as a "sure guide and teacher of the true faith".

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Colin McGinley
Independent Family
Funeral Service

Principal Funeral Director:
Garry Savage
235a Acklam Road, Middlesbrough
(01642) 826222
3 Beechwood Road, Eaglescliffe
(01642) 786200

www.colinmcginleyfuneralservice.co.uk
enquiries@colinmcginleyfuneralservice.co.uk

A personalised and dignified family business

J G Fielder & Son
FUNERAL DIRECTORS

- Private Chapels of Rest
- Hearse and Limousines
- 24 hour service, 365 days a year

48-50 Clarence Street, York YO31 7EW
Phone: 01904 654460

If you would like to advertise in the Funeral Directors section, please contact
Charlotte Rosbrooke
on 01440 730399
or email
charlotter@cathcom.org



For every life is unique... so is every funeral

York's only fully qualified lady funeral director, undertaker and embalmer

Offering traditional, modern & bespoke funerals

Serving York and surrounding communities

Funeral plans available
Independent family run business

24-hour call out service

01904 792525

Email: reception@hayleyowenfd.uk
www.yorkfunerals.uk

Our Lady of Fidelity



The church needs religious sisters URGENTLY to bring Christ to others by a life of prayer and service lived in the community of Ignation spirituality. Daily Mass is the centre of community life. By wearing the religious habit we are witnesses of the consecrated way of life.

If you are willing to risk a little love and would like to find out how, contact Sister Bernadette

Mature vocations considered.

CONVENT OF OUR LADY OF FIDELITY

1 Our Lady's Close, Upper Norwood, London SE19 3FA Telephone 07760 297001

Our Lady's Bookshop

Christian books, cards & gifts for all occasions.

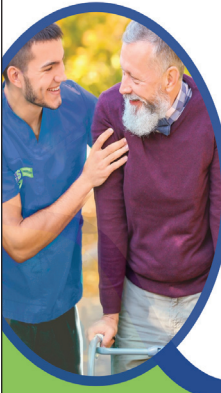


23/25 Northgate
Hessle, HU13 0LW
Tel: (01482) 641835
hessle-bookshop.co.uk

Regulated by


DOMICILIARY CARE SERVICES

(For Private and Funded Service Users)



GHS Goodwill Healthcare Services

ABOUT US

GHS CARE provides high-quality, compassionate and compliant care services that supports safe and independent living.

OUR SERVICES

- Personal Care ✓
- Companionship ✓
- Medication Management ✓
- Shopping Services ✓
- Feeding and Nutritional Support ✓
- Housekeeping ✓

CONTACT US TODAY!

07340994084 

info@ghscare.org.uk 

ALL SHE WANTS FOR CHRISTMAS IS A NAME

Make a donation today to register a child





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 December 5 for January 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.

NEWS

Out & About

1 Monday

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

7pm Catholic charismatic prayer group meets on first Monday each month at St Bede's Pastoral Centre, Blossom Street, York. For more information, contact Sharon on cdscsmiddlesbrough@gmail.com or 07932 420809.

2 Tuesday

10am Coffee at the Cathedral. Tea, coffee and treats every Tuesday after 9.30am Mass. A warm welcome and friendly atmosphere. Make new friends and enjoy some fellowship. Those who are alone especially welcome.

10am Christian Meditation Group meets online. Further information from Terry Doyle terry-doyle@live.co.uk. This takes place every Tuesday.

6.30-8.30pm Christmas Wreath-Making at the Cathedral.

7pm Knights of St Columba Council 29 meets at St Mary's Cathedral, beginning with Mass at 7pm in the cathedral chapel.

3 Wednesday

5.30pm Sung Evening Prayer and Benediction at St Mary's Cathedral. Join us every Wednesday for a time of prayer and quiet reflection before the Blessed Sacrament.

6.30-8.30pm Christmas Wreath Making at the Cathedral.

4 Thursday

1pm Christmas Carol Concert at the Cathedral with Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust.

5 Friday

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

6pm Carol Concert at the Cathedral with Trinity Catholic College.

6 Saturday

11am Catholic women are invited to share an hour of feminine communion including meditation, via Zoom. Text Barbara on 07796 117704 with your mobile number and email address so she can add you to the WhatsApp group, or email catholicwomenmdl@gmail.com for Zoom link.

6pm Mass in Italian in the Father Kelly Room, Our Lady, Acomb, York. Followed by refreshments. All welcome.

8 Monday

2pm Dementia-Friendly Carol Service for people living with or without dementia and their families, carers and friends at St Mary's Cathedral. Schools will deliver the carol service, produced by Trish McLean, followed by refreshments, singing, dancing and fun in the cathedral hall.

9 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 12.45pm, lunch at 1pm. All ladies in the Hull and East Riding area welcome. Call 01482 446565 or email jayne.wilson24@gmail.com.

10 Wednesday

7pm Hull Circle of the Catenian Association holds its monthly meeting at Lazaat Hotel, Cottingham, followed by a buffet-style meal. Email Charles Cseh at hullcirclesecretary@gmail.com.

The Christmas Orchestra at the Cathedral.

11 Thursday

Christmas Nativity at the Cathedral with St Augustine's and St Gerard's schools.

12 Friday

8pm Amelia Coburn in concert at St Mary's Cathedral.

13 Saturday

Irish dance with Sally Glennon at the Erimus Club, Cumberland Road, Middlesbrough TS5 6JB. Contact John Brown on 07871 958412.

7.30pm Christmas at the Cathedral with Cantabile.

14 Sunday

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

3pm Catholic Fellowship Mass with Canon John Lumley at St Bernadette's, Nunthorpe.

16 Tuesday

12.30pm Hull Catenians Christmas Lunch at the Lazaat Hotel at 12.30pm. If interested, email hullcirclesecretary@gmail.com by November 30.

27 Saturday

Noon LGBT+ social gathering at the Bar Convent, York. All welcome

If you have any events that you would like to include in the Out and About section, please email heidi.cummins@rcdmidd.org.uk.

SVP celebrates lottery win boost

This summer, SVP Middlesbrough Central Council received the good news that our bid to the National Lottery Fund was successful.

The money allows us to employ our membership support officer, Teresa O'Hagan. Teresa works on average 15 hours a week to help facilitate the project work carried out by SVP volunteers in parishes across our diocese.

However, she's been so busy travelling around the diocese visiting many of our 34 conferences that we haven't been able to catch her for this presentation picture until now!

With Teresa's help, the SVP in our diocese aims to reach a further 150 individuals in need by January 2027, in addition to those we continue to support.

The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) serves those in need regardless of creed, ethnic or social background, health, gender or political opinions.

The only criterion for our help is need; the cause of it does not matter. We plan to find those in need by providing more warm spaces, food banks and by making closer links with prisons.



Teresa O'Hagan with the SVP's cheque from the National Lottery Fund



COMMUNITY FUND

We would also appreciate your help. If you would like to know more about the work of the SVP, visit svp.org.uk or talk to a member of your parish conference. If you don't have an SVP but would like one, please contact Teresa by emailing teresao@svp.org.uk or call or text 07554 336984.

Patricia Nobbs
Middlesbrough SVP Central Council President

If you would like to advertise please contact

Charlotte Rosbrooke on

01440 730399

or email

charlotter@cathcom.org

How Jesse Tree brings story of salvation to life

EMMA WALTON is a Catholic illustrator, wife to Dan, and mother of two living in beautiful East Riding. She runs Tanglewood Atelier, a creative studio specialising in religious and ecclesiastical art. Here she tells us about the Jesse Tree, as Advent custom all the family can enjoy together...

The Jesse Tree is one of my favourite Advent customs to enjoy as a family.

It's such an exciting and imaginative way to teach biblical literacy, the genealogy of Jesus and God's plan of salvation.

The idea of the Jesse Tree as a modern Advent practice sprung from traditional paintings depicting the genealogy of Jesus.

These artworks showed various biblical figures springing from the Stump of Jesse, forming a family tree.

Genealogy and bloodlines were extremely important in the Middle Ages – a much larger part of life than they are now.

Noble families would often have Jesse Tree tapestries or paintings on display in their homes to emphasise the royal lineage of Jesus. Later, the Jesse Tree concept was used to inspire family tree artwork.

The modern version of the Jesse Tree was thought up in the mid-20th century and is primarily used during Advent.

It consists of anywhere between 24 and 28 different tree decorations, each symbolising a different part of the salvation story.

Starting with Genesis, we discover the story of a different biblical figure each day, from Abraham and Isaac to Esther and Daniel. This builds and culminates in the birth of the Messiah.

If you do this each year, the stories of each figure will become easy to recall for your children and they might even remember specific scripture verses, too.

Yes, some of the stories are pretty cool in their own right (for example, a young David defeating the giant Philistine warrior Goliath with just a slingshot and some rocks, plus his faith in God), but what they all teach is a confident reliance on the providence and power of God, plus the hope we have in Christ as Christians.

The Jesse Tree opens up the scriptures to

resemble a perfect jigsaw. As each day passes and the excitement for Christmas builds, our Jesse Tree grows and starts to reveal the beauty of this story of salvation – in essence, a love story – woven through the pages of the Bible.

We already know the Bible is living and active (Hebrews 4:12) and is much more than a collection of poetry, stories and historical accounts.

Everything in it points towards Jesus, and a smile will spread across your face (if you're anything like me and obsessed with patterns and puzzles) when your eyes are opened to this.

It's quite amazing and an invaluable concept to teach your children as they grow.

How can you make the Jesse Tree work for your family? Well, the beauty of the Jesse Tree tradition is that it's very adaptable!

If you have young children, there's no need to start with the full readings and reflective questions. Play it by ear and maybe summarise the passages afterwards, depending on your child.

For our young children, we started with the symbols and building familiarity. The next year, we incorporated them into our dinnertime prayers alongside shortened readings.

This year, we have an inquisitive four-year-old so will be beginning to add in some time for questions and reflection.

A short prayer of thanksgiving for the witness of each biblical figure works very well if you're adding it to your existing family prayers.

Above all, have fun with it! God can't wait to spend this time with you and your family as you get ready to welcome the infant Jesus.

If you're looking for a Jesse Tree set, I have made a 24-day wooden set which comes complete with a simple guidebook.

The only extras you will need are a Bible and something to hang the ornaments on. A collection of foraged twigs or branches works well. A printable version, as well as colouring books, is also available. You can find them at tanglewoodatelier.co.uk/shop.



One of the Jesse Tree sets made by Emma Walton



LESS ADMIN
MORE MINISTRY

I enjoy using Caspar because it puts the parishioners at the heart and centre of Parish Administration.

Fr Derek Turnham,
St Anne's Parish

It can seem daunting when one is faced with all the administration that comes with running a parish, as if there is no time for anything else.

That is where Caspar comes in!

Caspar is an easy-to-use system that takes away the burden of parish admin and allows more time for pastoral ministry.

Fr Brendan Seery,
Chancellor,
Northampton Diocese

BE THE PRIEST WHO'S
GOT LESS ADMIN!

info@caspar.church

www.caspar.church

Here to listen and make life easier for you!



Follow the Diocese of
Middlesbrough on social media

Twitter: @MbroDiocese

Facebook: facebook.com/MiddlesbroughDiocese

Flickr: flickr.com/photos/middlesbroughdiocese/

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

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

Historic moment as Pope and King Charles pray side by side during royal couple's Vatican visit

Pope Leo XIV welcomed King Charles III and Queen Camilla and joined them in an ecumenical prayer in the Sistine Chapel during the royal couple's state visit to the Vatican, marking a historic moment in Anglican-Catholic relations.

The visit included a private meeting between the two leaders in the Apostolic Palace and an ecumenical service in the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls, where King Charles was conferred the title of Royal Confrater of St Paul.

Father Martin Browne, an Irish Benedictine monk and official of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, whose work focuses on the Church's relationship with the Anglican Communion, said: "One of the most significant things is that an English King has not prayed in the same place as a Pope since before the Reformation, since long before the separation of the Church of England from the Church of Rome."

Despite many English sovereigns having visited the Vatican, the last time they prayed with a Pope was 500 years ago. This

historical event thus marks a "further development in the warmth of the relationship" between the two Churches, Father Browne said.

With the King becoming a Royal Confrater, he was "welcomed formally to the basilica and seated in a very special chair that has been created for the occasion," which bears his coat of arms and the verse in Latin from the Gospel of John, *Ut unum sint* ("That they may be one").

"Traditionally, before the Reformation, the English sovereigns were known as the protectors of St Paul's Outside the Walls. The Benedictine Abbey to this day still has a symbol of the British Order of the Garter, which is the highest order in the United Kingdom, as part of its coat of arms," Father Browne said.

The Vatican official underlined that, since King Charles III also holds the title of Supreme Governor of the Church of England, he wanted to have a "spiritual dimension" to his trip, despite it being a state visit to the Holy See.



King Charles sitting on the special chair made for his state visit to the Vatican
– Photo © Mazur/cbcew.org.uk

For Father Browne, the King "clearly wished to express a closeness that he believes already exists and to make that concrete and visible" through the various events.

Both Pope Francis – with whom the ecumenical prayer had initially been scheduled in April but had to be postponed due to his ill health – and then later Pope Leo XIV welcomed this initiative.

Pact calls on government to scrap 'naming and shaming' plans

The Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact) has called on the government to protect families and children by scrapping plans to "name and shame" people convicted of a crime.

Clause 35 of the Sentencing Bill, published in September, would give probation staff new powers to publish the names and photos of people delivering community payback schemes, such as litter picking or cleaning graffiti.

"Overall, the legislation contains many sensible and welcome proposals," says Pact CEO Andy Keen-Downs CBE.

"However, we are deeply concerned about the plans to name and shame people in this way. Not only would it do little to foster rehabilitation, it would also greatly worsen the stigma faced by the families of people in the criminal justice system.

"In particular, it would have the potential to expose children and young people to bullying, emotional and psychological harm, and even threats of violence or vigilantism.

"In an open letter sent to the Justice and Education Secretaries published today, we, along with over 20 other organisations and individuals are calling for this clause to be withdrawn from the legislation."

Missionaries call for courage at landmark climate meeting

As I write this, world leaders are meeting in Brazil for what has been described as the most important COP gathering since the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Much hope and expectation rests on the outcome. One of the most powerful messages was voiced by the Columban Missionaries.

"We call on leaders to find the courage and clarity needed to commit to an agreement that recognises the fragility of this moment in Earth history.

"True and lasting peace includes peace with the natural world. Earth is not simply a place we inhabit. It is a revelation of God's presence, beauty and wisdom.



"Columbans witness both the cry of the Earth and the hope of its defenders through our lived experience with the communities devastated by climate change.

"With every typhoon, flood, wildfire and landslide we hear the earth proclaiming to humanity that so many of us have lost our way and calling us back to right relationship in the inter-generational web of life.

"Along with so many others, we pray that the outcomes will demonstrate principles of restorative justice, the common good and deep listening to each other and the Earth." Visit columbans.co.uk to find out more.

Barbara Hungin

THE WELL

A DAY OF REFLECTION FOR CATECHISTS

Join us for a day of teaching, discussion, reflection and encouragement.

Saturday 31st January 2026

10.30am - 3pm

Parish Hall of Our Lady's Catholic Church, York
YO24 3Dx

Bring your own lunch | Refreshments provided

'Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.'

John 4:14



Diocese of Middlesbrough Adult Faith Formation
adultformation@rcdmidd.org.uk

The false step that leads to a good cause

I remember as a kid after having my tea at my auntie's house, she told me to go straight home, which wasn't easy because I lived round the corner.

If your highlight of the Christmas party is pulling a cracker and reading the joke, then a copy of Faux Pas is just down your street.

Faux pas is a French term meaning to make a false step or mistake. It's also a very apt title for a 24-page booklet of funny stories and jokes about the fellas who volunteer to work as brancardiers in Lourdes with our pilgrimage.

Thanks to the support for Volume 14 from our Lourdes pilgrims this year, more than 110

copies were sold, raising £340 for the Lourdes Sick Fund.

Also, thanks again to Paul and James Griffiths at Middlesbrough-based hydraulic engineering company IMH UK for their generous contribution of paper and printing.

Not many people know this, but Paul is a very good driver, but he always drives everywhere in reverse. He knows the Highway Code backwards.

Work has already started on Volume 15 for next year's pilgrimage. Thanks for your support over the years!

Joe Harrison



Joe Harrison hands over a cheque to pilgrimage director Mark Taylor

Sadness at passing of former Lourdes doctor

We were very saddened to hear of the passing of Doctor John Doherty, who served as our pilgrimage medical director for several years before being succeeded by Doctor Sarah Bottom in 1990.

He was also a much-loved family doctor in Redcar for many years and served as executive chairman of Langbaugh Primary Care Trust.

John, who lived in Guisborough and formerly Middlesbrough, passed away peacefully surrounded by family at James Cook University Hospital on Tuesday October 21, aged 77 years.

His funeral Mass took place at St Paulinus Church, Guisborough, on Wednesday November 12, followed by cremation at Kirkleatham Memorial Park and Crematorium. Donations in his memory will be donated to the Lourdes Sick Fund.

Please remember John and all his family and friends in your prayers.



Doctor John Doherty, who has passed away at the age of 77 – Photo by Joe Harrison

May he rest in peace.
Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for him
St Bernadette, pray for him

Prices confirmed for our 73rd pilgrimage

Prices have been announced for the 73rd Diocese of Middlesbrough Pilgrimage to Lourdes, which takes place from Sunday May 24 to Saturday May 30.

This year's theme is "Hail, Full of Grace".

Supported pilgrims who would like to stay in the Accueil or hotels in Lourdes should get in touch with Lourdes secretary Pat Ling as soon as possible for an application form.

Pat can be contacted by email at lourdessecretary@rcdmidd.org.uk or by calling her on 01642 760105.

Hotel	Price per person sharing
Méditerranée	£925
Agena	£925
St Sauveur	£909
Padoue	£989
Eliseo	£989
Roissy	£989
Accueil Notre-Dame	£909
Seat Only	£645

New training required for DBS applicants

Earlier this year, the bishops of England and Wales agreed to introduce a new training module for all new and renewed DBS applications.

Dioceses were allowed to introduce this at a point in the year that was manageable for them and we will start this from the end of January 2026.

If the use of new technology is an issue for you and you need to renew your Lourdes DBS in readiness for 2026, I would recommend applying sooner rather than later. That way you would not have to complete the online module.

Mark Taylor
Pilgrimage Director

Dates for your diary

- Saturday December 6: Hull Christmas Party at Sacred Heart, 2pm start, no Mass
- Saturday December 13: Middlesbrough Christmas Party, St Gabriel's, Ormesby, 2pm start, no Mass
- Saturday January 31: Lourdes Ceilidh, Holy Name of Mary Parish Hall, Middlesbrough
- Saturday March 7: Hospitalité Formation Day, Trinity Catholic College, Middlesbrough
- Tuesday May 5: Hospitalité Formation Day, Trinity Catholic College, Middlesbrough

Travel insurance needed for official pilgrimage bookings

Insurance regulators have now stipulated that all those who are travelling on pilgrimage with the diocese's designated tour operator must have travel insurance in place.

Many pilgrims will take the insurance on offer from Joe Walsh Tours (JWT). However, if you choose another provider, this must be in place before you book.

You will be asked for your insurance reference number when you book and JWT will make note of this, enabling us to activate your cover more easily if needed.

NEWS

Celebrating a year journeying as Pilgrims of Hope

Since the Jubilee Year launched on Christmas Eve 2024, tens of thousands of Catholics around England and Wales have journeyed together to be "Pilgrims of Hope".

Pope Leo XIV called this year a time of "conversion and renewal, an opportunity to embark on a new path, animated by the hope that we can build a world in which everyone can lead an authentically human life in truth, justice and peace."

The official Jubilee icon, commissioned by CAFOD with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, has toured around the country visiting churches and cathedrals.

People have been able to come and venerate the icon, while learning more about the Ethiopian context in which artist Mulugeta Araya painted it.

This icon depicts Luke 4:16-21, in which Jesus preaches that he is the fulfilment of the year of the Lord's favour, bringing sight to those who are blind, liberty to those who are oppressed and good news to those who are poor.

Responding to Pope Francis' call to be "tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind", parish communities across the country have shown their generosity in so many ways.

By giving to CAFOD's Family Fast Day appeals

at Lent and Harvest, taking part in the Big Lent Walk and giving monthly to CAFOD, they have been living witnesses to Jesus' commandment to "love your neighbour".

These acts of faith and solidarity are true signs of hope for our global family in this Jubilee Year.

Parishes across England and Wales have been inviting people to sign a worldwide Church petition about the debt crisis that's affecting so many of the world's poorest countries.

More than 34,000 parishioners signed the petition calling for urgent action, 1,000 CAFOD supporters wrote to their MP and in July, 300 CAFOD supporters were among 5,000 people who met their MPs face to face to discuss the climate crisis and the critical need for debt cancellation.

Together, we've helped lift the issue of the debt crisis up the global agenda, and that of our own government, and we will continue the call for urgent action on this crisis in 2026.

Children and young people have also been busy throughout the Jubilee Year, with many schools getting involved in the debt campaign, taking part in the Big Lent Walk to raise money for CAFOD's work in communities around the world, learning about the meaning of the Jubilee Year and spending time in prayer and reflection.



Young people campaigning for debt cancellation during Flame 25

This year of action has culminated in over 60% of Catholic schools signing a Jubilee pledge, committing their school community to living out Catholic Social Teaching in the long-term. What an amazing legacy of this Jubilee Year!

If you would like to get involved in CAFOD's work and volunteer in your parish or our schools, email me at rblaylock@cafod.org.uk or visit cafod.org.uk/volunteer.

Rachel Blaylock



– serving Schools, Business and Homes

BODDY PRINTERS

For all your parish printing, prayer cards, booklets, calendars, photocopying, stationery, business stationery, bingo and raffle tickets

Wedding Stationery, Leaflets and Flyers
Bingo and raffle machines also available

210 Parliament Road, Middlesbrough TS1 5PF
T: 01642 224800

E: kevin.boddy@btconnect.com
W: www.boddyprinters.co.uk

Church Pews Uncomfortable?
Why not try

safeoam

top quality upholstered foam pew cushions?
Safeoam, Green Lane, Riley Green,
Hoghton, Preston PR5 0SN

www.safeoam.co.uk
Freephone 0800 015 44 33

Free Sample Pack of Foam & fabrics sent by first class mail.
When phoning please quote MV101



If you would like to advertise
please contact Charlotte
Rosbrooke on
01440 730399 or email
charlotter@cathcom.org



**Marygate House
on Holy Island**
Upcoming retreats



Wintering

A Retreat for Candlemas

31st January to 3rd February 2026

This is for you if...

*You struggle to allow yourself to rest and slow down
You have experienced loss, change or transformation
and feel the need to find 'ground'*

*You long to connect more deeply to nature's mystery
and the Church and Earth's cycle in your life.*

In the Footsteps of Saint Aidan

Peace and reconciliation in today's world.

27th February to 2nd March 2026

*With Canon Sarah Hills, formerly
Canon for Reconciliation at Coventry*

For more information and to book:
<https://www.marygatehouse.org.uk/>
Marygate.house@gmail.com
Tel: 01289 389246