

“Let us open the doors to the Spirit, let ourselves be guided by him, and allow God’s constant help to make us new men and women, inspired by the love of God which the Holy Spirit bestows on us. Amen”



UCM News

The
Newspaper
of the Union
of Catholic
Mothers

www.theucm.co.uk

Spring 2021



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Cathedral of Christ
the King
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Reflection by Cardinal
Vincent Nichols
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Pope Francis proclaims 2021 as the “Year of St Joseph”

By Vatican News

In a new Apostolic Letter entitled *Patris corde* (“With a Father’s Heart”), Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows.

The Letter marks the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pope Pius IX’s declaration of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. To celebrate the anniversary, Pope Francis has proclaimed a special “Year of St Joseph,” beginning on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception 2020 and extending to the same feast in 2021.

Church grants plenary indulgence for year of St. Joseph

The Holy Father wrote *Patris corde* against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of “ordinary” people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, “the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence,” who nonetheless played “an incomparable role in the history of salvation.”

A beloved, tender, obedient father

Saint Joseph, in fact, “concretely expressed his fatherhood” by making an offering of himself in love “a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home,” writes Pope Francis, quoting his predecessor St Paul VI.

And because of his role at “the crossroads between the Old and New Testament,” St Joseph “has always been venerated as a father by the Christian people” (PC, 1). In him, “Jesus saw the tender love of God,” the one that helps us accept our weakness, because “it is through” and despite “our fears, our frailties, and our weakness” that most divine designs are realized. “Only tender love will save us from the snares of the accuser,” emphasizes the Pontiff, and it is by encountering God’s mercy especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation that we “experience His truth and tenderness,” – because “we know that God’s truth does not condemn us, but instead welcomes, embraces, sustains and forgives us” (2).

Joseph is also a father in obedience to God: with his ‘fiat’ he protects Mary and Jesus and teaches his Son to “do the will of the Father.” Called by God to serve the mission of Jesus, he “cooperated... in the great mystery of Redemption,” as St John Paul II said, “and is truly a minister of salvation” (3).

Welcoming the will of God

At the same time, Joseph is “an accepting Father,” because he “accepted Mary unconditionally” – an important gesture even today, says Pope Francis, “in our world where psychological, verbal and physical violence towards women is so evident.” But the Bridegroom of Mary is also the one who, trusting in the Lord, accepts in his life even the events that he does not understand, “setting aside his own ideas” and reconciling himself with his own history.

Joseph’s spiritual path “is not one that explains, but accepts” – which does not mean that he is “resigned.” Instead, he is “courageously and firmly proactive,” because with “Holy Spirit’s gift of fortitude,” and full of hope, he is able “to accept life as it is, with all its contradictions, frustrations and disappointments.” In practice, through St. Joseph, it is as if God were to repeat to us: “Do not be afraid!”

because “faith gives meaning to every event, however happy or sad,” and makes us aware that “God can make flowers spring up from stony ground.” Joseph “did not look for shortcuts but confronted reality with open eyes and accepted personal responsibility for it.” For this reason, “he encourages us to accept and welcome others as they are, without exception, and to show special concern for the weak” (4).

A creatively courageous father, example of love

Patris corde highlights “the creative courage” of St. Joseph, which “emerges especially in the way we deal with difficulties.” “The carpenter of Nazareth,” explains the Pope, was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting in divine providence.” He had to deal with “the concrete problems” his Family faced, problems faced by other families in the world, and especially those of migrants.

In this sense, St. Joseph is “the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty.” As the guardian of Jesus and Mary, Joseph cannot “be other than the guardian of the Church,” of her motherhood, and of the Body of Christ. “Consequently, every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is ‘the child’ whom Joseph continues to protect.” From St Joseph, writes Pope Francis, “we must learn... to love the Church and the poor” (5).

A father who teaches the value, dignity and joy of work

“A carpenter who earned an honest living to provide for his family,” St Joseph also teaches us “the value, the dignity and the joy of what it means to eat bread that is the fruit of one’s own labour.” This aspect of Joseph’s character provides Pope Francis the opportunity to launch an appeal in favour of work, which has become “a burning social issue” even in countries with a certain level of well-being. “there is a renewed need to appreciate the importance of dignified work, of which Saint Joseph is an exemplary patron,” the Pope writes.

Work, he says, “is a means of participating in the work of salvation, an opportunity to hasten the coming of the Kingdom, to develop our talents and abilities, and to put them at the service of society and fraternal communion.” Those who work, he explains, “are cooperating with God himself, and in some way become creators of the world around us.” Pope Francis encourages everyone “to rediscover the value, the importance and the necessity of work for bringing about a new ‘normal’ from which no one is excluded.” Especially in light of rising unemployment due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Pope calls everyone to “review our priorities” and to express our firm conviction that no young person, no person at all, no family should be without work!” (6).

A father “in the shadows,” centred on Mary and Jesus

Taking a cue from *The Shadow of the Father* – a book by Polish writer Jan Dobraczyński – Pope Francis describes Joseph’s fatherhood of Jesus as “the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father.”

“Fathers are not born, but made,” says Pope Francis. “A man does not become a father simply by bringing a child into the world, but by taking up the responsibility to care for that child.” Unfortunately, in today’s society, children “often seem orphans, lacking fathers” who are able to introduce them “to life and reality.” Children, the Pope says, need fathers who will not try to dominate them, but instead raise them to be “capable of deciding for themselves, enjoying freedom and exploring new possibilities.”

This is the sense in which St Joseph is described as a “most



chaste” father, which is the opposite of domineering possessiveness. Joseph, says Pope Francis, “knew how to love with extraordinary freedom. He never made himself the centre of things. He did not think of himself, but focused instead on the lives of Mary and Jesus.”

Happiness for Joseph involved a true gift of self: “In him, we never see frustration, but only trust,” writes Pope Francis. “His patient silence was the prelude to concrete expressions of trust.” Joseph stands out, therefore, as an exemplary figure for our time, in a world that “needs fathers,” and not “tyrants”; a society that “rejects those who confuse authority with authoritarianism, service with servility, discussion with oppression, charity with a welfare mentality, power with destruction.”

True fathers, instead, “refuse to live the lives of their children for them,” and instead respect their freedom. In this sense, says Pope Francis, a father realizes that “he is most a father and an educator at the point when he becomes ‘useless,’ when he sees that his child has become independent and can walk the paths of life unaccompanied.” Being a father, the Pope emphasizes, “has nothing to do with possession, but is rather a ‘sign’ pointing to a greater fatherhood”: that of the “heavenly Father” (7).

A daily prayer to St Joseph... and a challenge

In his letter, Pope Francis notes how, “Every day, for over forty years, following Lauds [Morning Prayer] he has “recited a prayer to Saint Joseph taken from a nineteenth-century French prayer book of the Congregation of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary.” This prayer, he says, expresses devotion and trust, and even poses a certain challenge to Saint Joseph,” on account of its closing words: “My beloved father, all my trust is in you. Let it not be said that I invoked you in vain, and since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary, show me that your goodness is as great as your power.”

At the conclusion of his Letter, he adds another prayer to St Joseph, which he encourages all of us to pray together:

*Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.
Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.*

**Photos, copy and distribution queries for The UCM News should be sent by email to catholic.mother@yahoo.co.uk.
For further details about the Union of Catholic Mothers please contact the National Secretary,
Kate Moss, at ucmnatsec@yahoo.co.uk**

EDITORIAL

Well, here we are again! As I write this, we are beginning another national lockdown. The only blessing this time around is the churches can remain open for public worship. I hope you all had a very happy Christmas celebrated in whatever way was appropriate for you. My thanks to all the dioceses and individuals who have submitted stories and articles for this edition of UCM News. The Spring edition of the newspaper has always been the most difficult to fill with ‘national’ news as there will have been very few meetings since the previous paper was published; so, I am doubly grateful for everything which has been sent in.

Just after the November paper had been printed, we were informed that The Hayes Conference Centre was remaining closed until the end of March, which obviously scuppered the National Study Days Conference for the third time. When it is possible to rearrange, we will, of course, let you know. At present, no plans have been put forward until the situation with the Covid-19 virus stabilises and we can hold a

National Committee meeting.

At the moment the programme for 2021 as outlined in the last newspaper is still going ahead, however, we appreciate some planned events might not be able to take place as nothing is certain at this time. We will keep you informed if anything changes.

The harsh reality is, until the infection rate reduces dramatically and the vaccine roll out continues and begins to have a positive impact, we are unable to guarantee anything! We must just pray, play our part and trust in God.

As you receive this paper, we will be entering the Holy season of Lent. I wish you all a prayerful and productive Lent and joy in the Easter risen Christ.

Val Ward
Acting Editor

A message of hope

Most people know that London’s Fleet Street became famous as the headquarters of Britain’s newspaper industry. Today, it has something of a sense of departed glory about it – famous newspaper offices turned into banks, and pubs once packed for long drunken talkative lunches now quiet and decorous.

The street, of course, takes its name from the Fleet river, which ran down to the Thames. In its latter years it wasn’t fleet at all, but rather sluggish, filled with rubbish and known as the Fleet Ditch. Eventually, it was channelled into pipes and now flows underground. In Medieval times a big Dominican friary stood where the river flowed into the Thames.

It is still commemorated in the name of the tube station that stands there – Blackfriars.

What most people don’t know is where the Fleet river rises – to the north of London, in the hills. Here, a spring feeds into Hampstead Ponds –

famous for wild swimming – and the Fleet river runs underground, beneath Fleet Road, down to the City and the Thames. And, pleasingly, a Dominican Friary stands there – St Dominic’s, built in the 19th century and recently formally dedicated as the diocesan shrine of the Rosary by Cardinal Vincent Nichols.

The church has chapels down the side aisles, each one dedicated to a Mystery of the Rosary. But something needed to be done when this new dedication was made. The Rosary now has a new set of Mysteries – the Luminous Mysteries, announced by St John Paul in 2002. There was no possibility of widening the church to create a new set of chapels, so instead a decision was made to create a garden: The Garden of the Luminous Mysteries – alongside the church. And to complete the project, I was invited to produce a book telling the story.

The site of the garden was a rubbish-strewn area

alongside a pathway. Two talented gardeners began work designing and planning – massive clearance work was necessary before foundational work was done to create conditions in which flower beds could be created and a winding pathway laid. The garden is now a triumph, and even in these wintry months is a joy to the eye with its fine statue of Our Lady of Cana and its subtle lighting echoing its luminous theme.

And the book – Transformed by Light, published by Gracewing - tells the story of the Fleet river in Medieval England and the Dominican friars building a church in the 19th century and St John Paul’s great revival of the Rosary as a popular devotion at the start of the 21st. It has Rosary meditations from the writings of St John Henry Newman, and information about the flowers in the garden and their links with Marian traditions.

Next time you’re in London, make a visit – the nearest tube is Belsize Park. This Autumn, I’ve been

leading History Walks around the area – which has links with the poet John Keats, and the novelist Daphne du Maurier and much more. I’m happy to organise a walk for your group – I am finding that an afternoon/ evening lamplit walk works well and gives a glow to an otherwise bleak time of year. And you can get the book – order it via Amazon or contact Gracewing Books: Transformed by Light, yours for £9.99. When we look back, 2020 will be seen as a dreary and on the whole horrid year, with lockdowns and riots. But it is also the year that a new garden in London opened a tiny new chapter of our faith story.

Joanna Bogle

Original article in November 2020 edition of The Portal - – the monthly review of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

Bishop joins UK faith leaders in call to PM to deliver world-leading plan on climate change

Source: CBCEW
Bishop John Arnold, Environment Lead for the Bishops' Conference, has joined over 60 UK faith leaders in writing to the Prime Minister to call on the government to deliver new, ambitious plans to tackle climate change.

The UK has the presidency for the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference that will be held in Glasgow in November 2021.

The faith leaders stress that, as COP26 President, the UK’s single most important job is to rally all countries to raise ambition and put forward enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that limit a global temperature rise this century to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels.

The Paris Agreement, reached in the French capital at the COP21 climate conference in 2015, requests each country to outline and communicate their post-2020 climate actions, known as their NDCs, to set a course towards sustainable development to achieve this global warming commitment.

In their letter, the representatives of Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist communities, emphasise that the UK government can lead by example:

"This is an historic moment for global leadership from the UK, to put forward a world-leading NDC to inspire all other nations of the world to do the same - arguably the most important investment that could be made in all our futures."

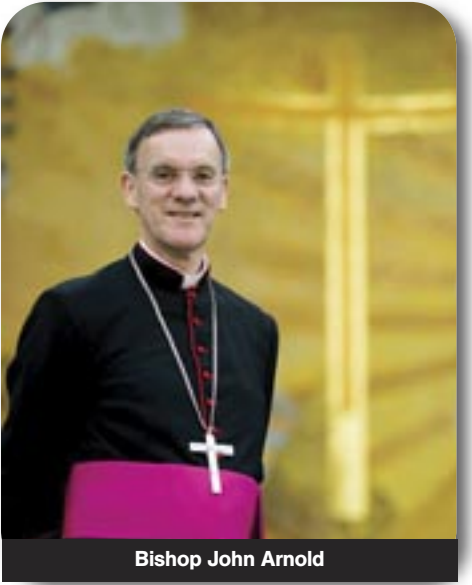
The letter points out the moral responsibility in making a strong commitment:

"Climate change affects humanity at the deepest level, raising profound questions about our relationship with the living world. As faith leaders in the UK, we know this especially because of our engagement with the poorest communities here and around the world who are already suffering most. We must all try to find the moral courage to confront these questions, and to transform ourselves and our society."

"Faith groups in the UK are already taking urgent climate action, with thousands of places of worship switching to renewable energy and religious groups divesting from fossil fuels and reinvesting in measures to protect the environment."

Download the letter here: www.cbcew.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/11/NDCs-Faith-Leaders-Letter.pdf

ICN 8th November 2020



Bishop John Arnold

Congratulations to Fiona Bruce M.P.



With file picture of Fiona Bruce (right), appointed Prime Minister’s Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, standing next to her predecessor, Rehman Chishti MP, at last year’s Parliamentary launch of Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) (UK)’s ‘Persecuted and Forgotten? A Report on Christians oppressed for their Faith’.

The UK head of a leading Catholic charity for persecuted Christians has warmly welcomed the appointment of Fiona Bruce MP as Prime Minister’s Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB). Neville Kyrke-Smith, National Director of Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) (UK), said that in her 10 years as an MP, Mrs Bruce had shown “consistent care and compassion” for people suffering religious freedom violations, especially Christians.

Mr Kyrke-Smith said: “Fiona Bruce has proved herself time and again to be a doughty defender of religious freedom and she has been a trail blazer in speaking up in Parliament about persecuted Christians. “In doing so, she has helped pave the way for the progress already made on FoRB. “Few people in Parliament can boast a similar record to Fiona in terms of consistent care and compassion for Christians and all those who suffer human rights violations because of the faith they profess.”

Mr Kyrke-Smith said that for many years ACN has worked closely with Mrs Bruce on parliamentary debates in which she has highlighted the findings of ACN reports, notably the charity’s series ‘Persecuted and Forgotten? A Report on Christians oppressed for their Faith’.

Stressing the many challenges ahead, he added: “In our troubled world, there is so much more to do and Fiona has both the skill-set and the passion to make change happen for the good of those whose rights are trampled on because of their religious beliefs.”

He said the UK is well placed to respond to FoRB developments because of the close cooperation between charities and other NGOs as seen in last year’s Bishop of Truro’s Independent Review for the UK Foreign Secretary on Foreign and Commonwealth Office Support for Persecuted Christians. He went on to pay tribute to Mrs Bruce’s predecessor as special envoy for FoRB, Rehman Chishti MP, emphasising how he has continued to champion the cause of persecuted Christians since he resigned from his role in September. Mr Kyrke-Smith said: “The huge energy and engagement Rehman showed in driving forward the Bishop of Truro Review recommendations is a source of great hope to persecuted Christians all over the world. “Now we are in a position to do so much more to ensure that both Christians and other faith minorities are assured of their rights.”

Source: - Aid to the Church in Need Website
December 2020



FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Dear Members

This has been the strangest year. However, in spite of all obstacles, UCM have managed to keep quietly going on. Whether it is by Zoom meetings, streamed masses on certain days, helping at food banks, telephone calls or just doing shopping for neighbours. Many have acted as volunteers /stewards at churches who were able to be open for mass. The committee have received reports from you about these activities in the dioceses.

So, what has been happening nationally, the Walsingham committee are in constant touch with the Shrine staff, the Daily Mass Scheme has been sent out, Val Ward has managed to put together enough news for the paper, a big thanks Val. We do not have an update on the Triennial Mass yet. National Secretary Kate has been sending out monthly messages from WUCWO.

We may have not met together physically but we are united by our faith.

I hope and pray that by the time this paper comes out this pandemic will have started to show signs of easing off.

As we enter the Easter season here is a short prayer taken from St Joseph's people's prayer book Easter Prayer.

Lord, the resurrection of Your Son has given us new life and renewed hope.

Help us to live as new people in pursuit of the Christian ideal.

Grant us wisdom to know what we must do, the will to want to do it, the courage to undertake it, the perseverance to continue to do it and the strength to complete it.

Stay safe and take care.

God bless.

**Margaret McDonald,
National President**

NATIONAL VACANCIES

In order for The Union of Catholic Mothers to continue, we need members to put their names forward for National Office. Without these roles being filled the work of The UCM will be in jeopardy. None of these tasks are onerous and help and support is always available. Thank you.

All National Officers

- Attend National Committee Meetings
- Attend National Council & Annual General Meeting and Autumn Meeting
- Attendance at the Annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham is appreciated
- Attends adhoc meetings as required

National Vice President – 2 posts – shared responsibilities Elected office

- closing date 10th March 2021

National Welfare Officer Appointed Office

- closing date 10th March 2021

National Media Officer Appointed Office

- closing date 10th March 2021

National Public Service Officer Appointed Office

- closing date 10th March 2021

**All nomination/recommendation
must be proposed by their home diocese,
seconded by another diocese and sent
together with a copy of the candidate's CV
by 10th March 2021**

To the National Secretary: Kate Moss

**For information in relation to any of the
advertised posts please contact the National
Secretary ucmnatsec@yahoo.co.uk**

A Bible Project for schools

Joanna Bogle recommends a worthwhile project

As 2021 opens, my thanks go to people who, from the 1950s onwards, supported a group called the Order of Christian Unity. Rather an odd name: was it a religious order, and if so, who joined, and why?

Well, it wasn't a religious order in the sense of people taking vows or living together in community – instead, the name was adopted by a small group of people in Hampshire who wanted to pray and work for Christian Unity. No Catholics were involved at that stage.

The group – Anglicans, Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists – just met for prayer, and adopted a badge which showed a handshake, across the foot of a Cross. The group was rather overtaken by events – by the late 1960s, ecumenical prayer was becoming popular, and people could understand that it was important not to let the barriers created in the Reformation years become fossilised. It seems that the small Hampshire group was rather dwindling in numbers. Enter a remarkable Catholic – Antonella Lothian.

Lady Lothian was then editor of a magazine for the Union of Catholic Mothers. In 1970 she was approached by the small Hampshire group to see if she might take on the chairmanship of their small Order of Christian Unity and do something to turn it into something more effective. Lady Lothian galvanised the group, and over the next years it grew and flourished. It ran conferences and seminars on religious education, on marriage and family issues, on pain relief and opposition to euthanasia, and more. I became involved when it was decided to form a young people's section – we called it the Youth Working Party of the OCU and I chaired it with an Anglican friend, Frances Tulloch.

A major concern was religious education: we were approached by a number of concerned people who could see that RE in many schools was neglecting Christianity or offering a very bleak,

watered-down version. We organised a major conference for RE teachers and found that there was in fact, at that stage, widespread support for offering children a chance to learn the basic facts of Christ's life, death and resurrection, and to understand the importance of the Scriptures and of Christianity in the history and culture of Britain. From this grew the plan for a nationwide project for school pupils: it has now been running for over 30 years and is known as the Schools Bible Project.

The OCU has taken, for working purposes, the more practical name Christian Projects. Lady Lothian was succeeded in due course by Bishop Maurice Wood, former Anglican Bishop of Norwich and it was he who gave a real boost to the Bible Project and saw it flourish.

There's more to the story, but the main thing is this: the brochures announcing the 2021 Schools Bible Project have now gone out to all secondary schools in Britain. Please help and encourage schools in your area to participate. The concept is simple: pupils have to imagine themselves present at one of the major events in the life of Christ and write about it: full details are available from www.christianprojectsocu.org or by sending a stamped addressed envelope to: Christian Projects, 24 Neville Avenue, New Malden KT3 4SN.

When I look back, I am so grateful for the leadership of Bishop Maurice Wood, and his encouragement and enthusiasm. Opening a committee meeting with prayer, he would often take out the small New Testament that he had carried with him during the D-Day landings. It was a link with a different Britain. But we can still teach the Christian faith that has shaped our country for centuries. Do help today's school pupils to know about it.

Joanna Bogle

Original article in the January 2021 edition of 'The Portal' – the monthly review of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

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Video Lecture by Rosa Maria Letts on THE RAPHAEL CARTOONS

In anticipation of the reopening in the V&A of the Raphael Cartoons Gallery, which has been under restoration for over a year, we narrate the story of the seven Cartoons commissioned in 1515 by Pope Leo X Medici, for Tapestries to be hung in the Sistine Chapel. This was the Pope's Chapel, used during the most important religious, political and social events of a Pontificate.



Raffaello, Feed My Sheep: Gouache on Paper, Raphael Cartoon Gallery, Victoria & Albert Museum, London

Their design had to be dramatic, imposing, unique but rendered by the Tapestry Maker chosen, in this case Pieter van Aelst from Brussels, "The Tapissier du Roy" (the Kings' Weaver) used by all European Kings, Emperor, aristocrats of the 16 C.

Inspired by the Acts of the Apostles and created during the summit of Raphael's artistic career, he was able to see their realisation in December 1519. He died three months later.

Joshua Reynolds wrote "the most considerable and most esteemed works of Raffaello, are his Fresco Pictures in the Vatican and his Cartoons in England...", Discourses 1778 and John Pope Hennessy described as "the main scenes in the History of early Christianity interpreted by one of the world's greatest artists in his full maturity." London 1959

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CONGRATULATIONS

Blessed Sacrament Parish, Liverpool Archdiocese, celebrated 75 years of the founding of UCM in the Parish.

DIAMOND WEDDING

Janet and Roy HATTON, Our Lady & St. Walstan Foundation, East Anglia Diocese
Liz and Bryan DENT, St. Joseph's Tilehurst Foundation, Portsmouth Diocese
Ann and Paul HARRISON, St. Dominic's Foundation, Dursley, Clifton Diocese
Maureen and John O'DONNELL, St. Dominic's Foundation, Dursley, Clifton Diocese

GOLDEN WEDDING

Syd and Richard GWYER, St. Dominic's Foundation, Dursley, Clifton Diocese
Moya and Frank RUSSELL, Blessed Sacrament Foundation, Liverpool Archdiocese
Cath and Harry RILEY, St Mary's Foundation, Woolton, Liverpool Archdiocese
Mary and John CURTIS, St Peter's Foundation, Northampton Diocese

90th BIRTHDAY


Betty CHAMBERLIN, Our Lady & St. Walstan Foundation, East Anglia Diocese
Anna SZOKALO, St. Dominic's Foundation, Dursley, Clifton Diocese
Susan JOHNSON, St. Dominic's Foundation, Dursley, Clifton Diocese
Marie MELIA, St Philomena's Foundation, Liverpool Archdiocese

80th BIRTHDAY

Angela MURPHY, St. Edward & St. Mark's Foundation, Portsmouth Diocese

70th BIRTHDAY

Evelyn PEREIRA, St. Edward & St. Mark's Foundation, Portsmouth Diocese



Mary and John Curtis

Baptism in the River Jordan

For the first time in 54 years, a Mass will be celebrated 10 January 2021 on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, at St John the Baptist Chapel on the Western banks of the Jordan River.

The almost 100-year-old church and monastery were vacated in 1967 at the outbreak of war between Israel and some of its Arab neighbors, including Jordan, just across the Jordan River. The area was laid out with land mines and it became a fenced military zone, off limits to pilgrims. The landmines are now gone and the church will be refurbished, under the supervision of the Franciscan custody of the Holy Land. Bullet holes will be left as a reminder of the violence of war.

According to Christian tradition, John baptised Jesus in the Jordan River. Typical of the region's conflicting land claims, both Jordan and Israel maintain the New Testament baptismal site stands on their soil, and the sites face each other on either side of the Jordan. On the Israeli-controlled side in the West Bank, the

site is called Qasr al-Yahud, Arabic for "Castle of the Jews" or "Crossing of the Jews". In Jordan, it is called al-Maghtas, or "Baptism Site". The Qasr Al-Yahud location is also revered by Jews as the crossing place along the Jordan River of the Biblical Israelites into the Promised Land after having wandered the desert for 40 years. The Bible describes the river, which flows south from the Sea of Galilee into the Dead Sea, marking the border shared by Israel, Jordan and the West Bank, as "overflowing". Today, most Christian pilgrims who visit Israel immerse themselves in the fresh waters of the Jordan river at Yardenit, a modern-day baptismal tourist site near the Sea of Galilee, 100km upstream.

Israel's Qasr al-Yahud site is the third most sacred place for Christians, after the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City. Christians believe that Jesus' spiritual birth took place here after his physical birth in Bethlehem. Yet, when pilgrims have occasionally been allowed to the spot their jaws often drop.



al-Maghtas, Baptism Site - Wiki image

The Pope's Prayer intentions for 2021

JANUARY

Intention for evangelization - Human fraternity
May the Lord give us the grace to live in full fellowship with our brothers and sisters of other religions, praying for one another, open to all.

FEBRUARY

Universal intention - Violence against women
We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.

MARCH

Intention for evangelization - Sacrament of reconciliation
Let us pray that we may experience the sacrament of reconciliation with renewed depth, to taste the infinite mercy of God.

APRIL

Universal intention - Fundamental rights
We pray for those who risk their lives while fighting for fundamental rights under dictatorships, authoritarian regimes and even in democracies in crisis.

MAY

Universal intention - The world of finance
Let us pray that those in charge of finance will work with governments to regulate the financial sphere and protect citizens from its dangers.

JUNE

Intention for evangelization - The beauty of marriage
Let us pray for young people who are preparing for marriage with the support of a Christian community: may they grow in love, with generosity, faithfulness and patience.

JULY

Universal intention - Social friendship
We pray that, in social, economic and political situations of conflict, we may be courageous and passionate architects of dialogue and friendship.

AUGUST

Intention for evangelization - The Church
Let us pray for the Church, that She may receive from the Holy Spirit the grace and strength to reform herself in the light of the Gospel.

SEPTEMBER

Universal intention - An environmentally sustainable lifestyle
We pray that we all will make courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, rejoicing in our young people who are resolutely committed to this.

OCTOBER

Intention for evangelization - Missionary disciples
We pray that every baptized person may be engaged in evangelization, available to the mission, by being witnesses of a life that has the flavour of the Gospel.

NOVEMBER

Universal intention - People who suffer from depression
We pray that people who suffer from depression or burn-out will find support and a light that opens them up to life.

DECEMBER

Intention for evangelization - Catechists
Let us pray for the catechists, summoned to announce the Word of God: may they be its witnesses, with courage and creativity and in the power of the Holy Spirit.
Vatican, 31st January 2020 Francis

Expecting to see the raging clean river described in the Bible, they come upon a sewage-laden trickle. The river is greatly diminished at this spot and the water is very dirty.

Over the past five decades, Israel, Jordan and Syria have diverted about 98 percent of the Jordan River and its tributaries for drinking water and agricultural use. In addition, political deadlock between governments sharing the river and its tributaries has exacerbated the water shortage. Israel and neighbouring Arab countries have complained about each other's projects to divert shared water sources for their own needs. The Jordan River is the main source of water for the Sea of Galilee, the largest freshwater lake in Israel and the source of much of Israel's drinking water. In years past Israel has threatened to send fighter jets into Lebanon to bomb even seemingly small-scale efforts to

divert waters from the tributaries that flow into the river. Palestinians living in the Jordan Valley have very limited access to the Jordan river. They also face many restrictions on access to resources and services. Meanwhile, Israel exploits the resources of the area and generates profit by allocating generous tracts of land and water resources for the benefit of Israeli settlers.

Christians around the world have an investment in seeing plentiful and clean water run through the site of the baptism of Jesus. Also, in working for peace in the region, which will involve a more equal sharing of the resource of water. The Feast of the Baptism can help us turn our attention to the issues surrounding the Jordan River.

Ellen Teague

Independent Catholic News 10th January 2021

A Precious Memento

"Keep the joy of loving each other to end of life. God bless you"

These words were written to me and Tony, my husband-to-be, in 1974 by Mother Teresa.

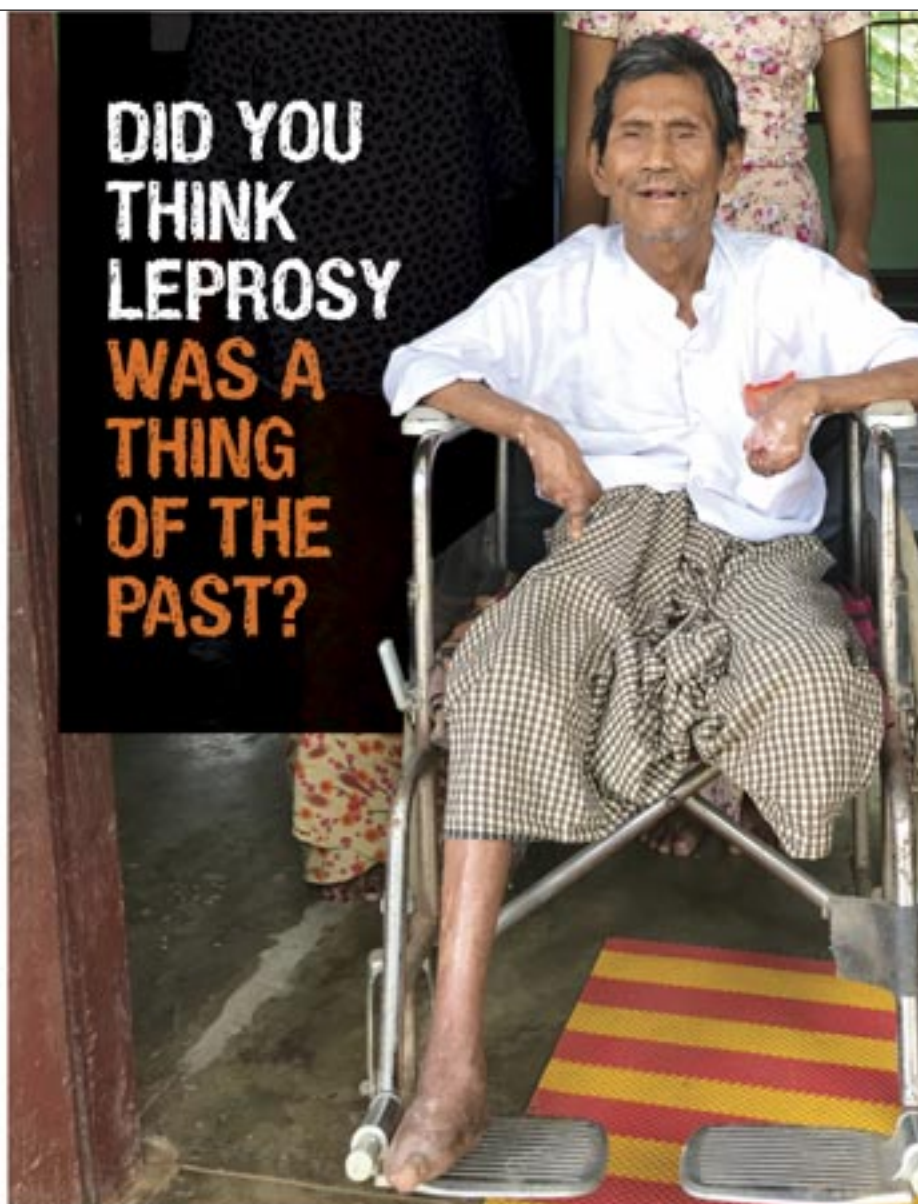
It just so happened that Tony and I were discussing wedding rings before I went off to hear Mother Teresa speak at the Newman Hall in Bristol. Tony said he didn't want a wedding ring but would rather we make a donation to Mother Teresa instead. During the evening Mother Teresa shared many inspiring words of wisdom as she talked about her life and the work of the Order she founded, the Missionaries of Charity. As people left the Hall afterwards, she stood in the foyer to greet us. I gave her our donation explaining that it was instead of a wedding ring for Tony. She called me back, and taking one of her prayer cards, she wrote on it those lovely words which mean such a lot.

My beloved Tony died in March 2020 and her words are still a comfort. They encourage me to keep alive in my heart the joy of loving, and being loved by, him. I am trying to focus on happy memories and let go of the sadness.

Thank you, dear Saint Mother Teresa.

Molly Atkin, St. Joseph's Foundation, Portishead, Clifton Diocese

DID YOU THINK LEPROSY WAS A THING OF THE PAST?



Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have all been learning to live with the fear and anxiety caused by a virus that we cannot see; one which has had devastating consequences for people in almost every country of the world.

Just as Covid-19 has become the 'plague' of our times, leprosy has been the

scourge of poverty-stricken communities across the globe for thousands of years. No one knew how it was transmitted and there was no known cure. Even a few decades ago, more than five million people every year were still suffering severe disability and their lives were being destroyed physically, emotionally and socially because they were too late to

receive an accurate diagnosis and effective treatment.

Leprosy is curable

Since 1995, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has made multi-drug treatments freely available and around 16 million people have been cured of the disease. Yet more than 200,000 new cases of leprosy are still being reported to WHO every year – and this doesn't include all those that are going undetected in isolated communities where people have little or no access to healthcare.

Early detection can stop leprosy in its tracks

St Francis Leprosy Guild has been working to end leprosy for the past 125 years and we truly believe a leprosy-free world is now within sight. In order to stamp leprosy out for good, we need your support to train local healthcare workers who can reach people in poor and remote communities. By supporting regular

monitoring, early detection and immediate treatment - before the disease takes hold - you can help to prevent avoidable suffering.



A leprosy-free world is now within sight

If you are able to send a donation of just £30 today, you will help us support ongoing health initiatives, such as the Bombay Leprosy Project. This is training local healthcare volunteers to work both in the slums of Mumbai and surrounding rural areas, so they can monitor people for early symptoms and provide prompt medication.

Help to beat leprosy for good

St Francis Leprosy Guild is working with around 30 partners to detect and treat leprosy in remote and marginalised communities across Asia, Africa and South America. You can help by sending £30 today using the form below. Alternatively, you can donate online at www.justgiving.com/stfrancisleprosyguild. Together, let's seize the opportunity to create a leprosy-free world and help put an end to people's suffering.

I WANT TO SEE A LEPROSY-FREE WORLD. HERE IS MY GIFT TO HELP.

Donate at www.justgiving.com/stfrancisleprosyguild

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

First Name

Surname

Address

Postcode

Email

Telephone

Here is my gift of: £30 ☐ £60 ☐ £100 ☐ Other £

DA2036

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Card no.

Issue no. (Maestro only)

Expiry date

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/ / (3 digits on the back of your card, 4 on front of Amex)

THANK YOU!

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Date / /

Please return this form with your gift to:
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London W10 6EJ.

SFLG ST FRANCIS LEPROSY GUILD

Please fill in your name and address. We will never pass on your details to any other organisation and will treat them with respect. We will use the personal information you have provided to process your donation and to contact you with news of our work. If you would prefer not to receive further communications please tick this box ☐ or you can call us on 07754 592240 to let us know which communications you would like to receive. To read more about how we value your privacy, visit www.stfrancisleprosy.org

Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King

The Cathedral is the mother church of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Liverpool and the seat of the Archbishop of Liverpool, the spiritual leader of the whole Northern Province of the Catholic Church in England.

The Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King is a dramatic icon of faith, architecture, and human endeavour. An awe-inspiring landmark on the Liverpool skyline that you will not want to miss. In the centuries of persecution following the English Reformation, West Lancashire remained a stronghold of the Catholic faith. Resistance to the new ways centred on the great Catholic landowners who gave shelter to itinerant priests.

Liverpool at that time, was only a small town with very few Catholic inhabitants, only later in the eighteenth century did it become a major port. The first Catholic chapel in the port was established by the Jesuits in the 1740s.

What is now the Archdiocese of Liverpool was part of the Lancashire District, under the care of a Vicar Apostolic. Catholic Emancipation in 1829 removed the remaining disabilities of Catholics, and paved the way for the Restoration of the Hierarchy in 1860.

Liverpool became one of the new dioceses, with the Vicar Apostolic, George Brown, as its first Bishop. Its boundaries stretched from the coast in the west to meet the diocese of Salford in the east, and from the Mersey in the south to the border of Cumberland in the north.

From the first, the Catholic population of the new diocese was hugely increased by the flood of immigrants fleeing from the Irish famine, and in the latter part of the century a spate of new churches, schools and charitable institutions arose. In 1911, it was elevated to the status of Archdiocese, and in 1924, its territory north of the Ribble became part of the new diocese of Lancaster.

The striking design of the present Cathedral is actually the fourth attempt by the Catholic Church in the North West of England to build a

mother church for the Liverpool diocese – and the culmination of a story that stretches back over a century. The commission to design a Catholic Cathedral for Liverpool was entrusted in 1853 to Edward Welby Pugin (1833-1875). The design was a bold one dominated by a massive central steeple. Within three years a usable portion of the building was completed in the form of the Lady Chapel. There it stood for over a century, serving as the church of the local parish of Our Lady Immaculate until the 1980s, when, weather-beaten and structurally unsafe, it was demolished.

Sixty-six years later the idea of a Cathedral was reborn. A suitable site seemed to suggest itself on Brownlow Hill. The Poor Law Institution, or Work House there, had been a shelter for Liverpool's destitute from 1771 until 1928. In 1929, Sir Edwin Lutyens, (1869-1944) was commissioned by Dr Richard Downey, to design a cathedral to contrast with the Gothic gem of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott which was rising at the other end of Hope Street. At the suggestion of Pope Pius XI, the new Cathedral was to be dedicated to Christ the King. Building of the Crypt went on apace until 1941 when the war years brought the cessation of building. But the grandiose Romanesque super-structure, was now costed at an impossible £27 million! Once again the dream was threatened.

Dr William Godfrey, himself Liverpool born, became Archbishop of Liverpool in 1953. It fell to him to make the decision to reduce the project to realistic proportions. But the project met with heavy criticism and before work could begin Archbishop Godfrey had been transferred to the See of Westminster and John Carmel Heenan succeeded as Sixth Archbishop of Liverpool. Archbishop Heenan soon recognised that the mighty project was unachievable and he decided to scrap the plans and to start again. The problem was to be thrown open to competition. Of 300 entries from all over the world, Sir Frederick Gibberd's (1908-1984) design was chosen, and building began in October 1962. Less than five years later, on the Feast of Pentecost, 14 May 1967, the completed Cathedral was consecrated. The long waiting was suddenly over.

Archbishop Malcolm McMahon is the ninth Archbishop of Liverpool and the third to be installed in this Cathedral, and is the Head of the Northern Province of the Catholic Church in England. As you probably know, the cathedral is often referred to as "Paddy's Wigwam", because of its unique shape and the strong Irish connection with Liverpool. The major elements of its construction are a circle of concrete side walls separated by panels of stained glass, surrounded by an inverted funnel shape of supporting struts, going from ground level, to the central tower of brightly coloured stained glass, topped with a circle of spikes.

In sunlight the coloured stained glass gives a dappled display around the Cathedral, and at night the light shines outward like a beacon. As you come up the hill along Mount Pleasant, towards the Cathedral, we are met with the iconic facade. The Cathedral entrance is approached by climbing 56 wide steps, flanked on either side by numerous fluttering banners. Looking upward you will see the ornate doors slid to either side of the entrance, and above the Cathedral bells, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Nestling at the base of the steps, on the right as you face the building is the shop and Piazza tea-room. The Cathedral can also be accessed via the underground car park, where there is a lift or stairs to the foyer.

The Foyer is light and airy and displayed around the walls are photographs and information about the history and building of the Cathedral. As you enter the Cathedral itself, you will see the central circular sanctuary, with the sculptured Crown of Thorns above, the choir stalls and organ, as well as the large seating area, which in normal times would accommodate a congregation of 2300, the largest in Britain.

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As you wander around the outer circular aisle, you will notice the variety of stained glass panels separating the side chapels. Also, the



tapestries hanging on the walls, made in the Cathedral Art Studio, and depicting the other dioceses of Northern England who are under the care of Liverpool Archdiocese, namely Hexham and Newcastle, Middlesbrough, Lancaster, Leeds, Hallam and Salford.

If you turn left as you enter the cathedral you will soon reach the Children's Chapel, which Liverpool UCM has helped to create by providing the "Baby Memorial", a candle which burns continually in remembrance of "ALL BABIES WITH NO KNOWN RESTING PLACE". This obviously includes miscarried and stillborn babies, who were traditionally buried maybe with an unknown older catholic person, who had died recently, as well as all victims of abortion. This was donated as the Liverpool UCM's Millennium project, and the Archdiocesan Committee, take turns to supply fresh flowers for the Memorial. The UCM also collected and published an anthology of moving prayers, thoughts and poems in a little booklet called "Forever in Our Hearts", which is available alongside the candle. People can also put their own flowers at the base if they wish.

When the UCM was approaching its centenary in 2013, it was suggested that a prayer tree be added to the Children's Chapel, for visitors to write their own prayers. This has been greatly appreciated, as in the past five years, over 40,000 prayer cards have been written and hung on the tree. When you leave the Children's Chapel and continue your path, opposite the main entrance is the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, always reserved for private prayer. Daily Mass is celebrated here.

Moving further round past the Processional ramp leading to the sacristies, is the glazed atrium giving access to the Crypt and the Treasury. The windows in this passage are etched with the names of individuals, families and groups who made donations to the construction of this particular project. The Crypt was built by Lutyens, in his original design, which would have had a dome bigger than St Peter's in Rome.

Unfortunately, after WW2 there was not the funding for such an expensive construction, as mentioned earlier. The Treasury has a dazzling collection of sacred vessels and vestments, all of which are on display and available to view. (in normal times) Even further round and you will see the Golden Book, in which are inscribed the names of many who gave donations for the whole Cathedral building project. Just before you return to your starting point, you will see the Baptistry, with its central font.

I hope you have found this summary interesting and are looking forward to visiting the Cathedral, hopefully at our Triennial Mass, Covid regulations permitting, if not, then possibly in the not-too-distant future.

Margaret Kerbey
National Treasurer

Craigmyle Lecture - 2020

The Catholic Union's annual Craigmyle Lecture was delivered by the Scottish composer Sir James MacMillan CBE with the title "Music, Faith and Politics".

The lecture was delivered by video conference on account of coronavirus restrictions, with Sir James addressing Catholic Union members and supporters from his home in the Ayrshire countryside.

Sir James has composed concertos, operas and symphonies among other works, as well as composing music for the opening of the new Scottish Parliament and Papal visit in 2010.

In normal circumstances when Sir James is allowed out, as it were, he travels to conduct concerts in various places internationally. His world revolves around music but he is also a practising Catholic and that has a bearing on the nature of his music sometimes. Sir James said his religion is known about in the world of culture, and most of the time it doesn't present any problems, though for some it can indeed be a bone of contention.

Sir James went on to speak of the number of contemporary composers who also have deep faith. "Far from being a spent force, religion has proved to be a vibrant, animating principle in modern music and continues to promise much for the future.

In an increasingly secular world, Sir James felt music had an increasingly important role in bringing the sacred into people's lives and "offering a window into God's divine love with humanity"

Sir James said that expressing faith through music was fundamental to freedom of worship, which

so many Christians around the world still do not have, and he said that expressions of faith in music were needed more than ever in today's world.

Catholic Union Director, Nigel Parker, commented: "We were most grateful to Sir James for agreeing to give the lecture and for his uplifting and inspiring words. This was the first time in the history of the Craigmyle Lecture that it had been delivered online. He was delighted that so many people were able to take part and have these dark days illuminated by the joys of music and faith".

The transcript of Sir James's talk can be found on the Catholic Union website (catholicunion.org.uk) under CRAIGMYLE LECTURE 2020.

Maureen Woodward
National Vice President

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LIVERPOOL

Happy Memories

Looking back to Monday July 4th 2016, on a beautiful sunny day at a photo of a coach party of happy pilgrims on our way to Walsingham. It shows many of our officers, national and diocesan, both past and present, and UCM members, with Fr David Potter, Liverpool Spiritual Adviser, and Fr Aidan Prescott. I remembering saying the rosary, singing hymns with gusto, hard quizzes and not forgetting bingo. We pray that we will be back celebrating at Walsingham with all our friends this year.

Madelaine McDonald
Media Officer
Liverpool Archdiocese



St Martha, the Other Sister

Looking through my trusty UCM Diary in July, I noticed that the 29th was the Feast Day of St Martha, sister of Mary and Lazarus. I have always been pleased that she has a Feast Day all to herself and is not coupled with her sister. Do you, like me, often feel that she had a raw deal when Jesus said that Mary chose the better part listening to Him instead of helping with the household chores? (Luke 10:38). But what would we have done? I feel sure that we would have loved to listen to Jesus but wouldn't we have felt guilty about not preparing the food, or waiting upon Him?

How often have we felt undervalued when we have done everything and not been appreciated for it? Which would you have been - a Martha or a Mary? However, we hear of Martha again in St John's Gospel (chap. 11). When Lazarus had died Martha was the first to go out to greet Jesus, saying "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died, but even now I know that God will grant whatever you ask of Him". Then Martha was the recipient of one of Jesus' most important pronouncements - "I am the Resurrection; Anyone who believes in Me, even

though that person die, will live, and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die". How wonderful for Martha to hear those words and then to have her brother Lazarus brought back to life. So, Ladies if we do not feel appreciated right now, perhaps our time will come in another place and at another time.

Madelaine McDonald
Media Officer
Liverpool Archdiocese

Condolence

The President, Committee and all the members of the Liverpool Archdiocese of the Union of Catholic Mothers wish to offer our sympathy and condolences to our National President Margaret McDonald and her husband Brian on the very sad loss of their daughter Kathryn Conway. We pray that our Blessed Mother will place her loving arms around them to bring them comfort. To you, Margaret, we offer all our support as you have supported so many members of UCM over many years. We will come in another place and at another time.

Madelaine McDonald
Media Officer
Liverpool Archdiocese

CLIFTON

84 Hymns for 84 Years

I have been St. Dominic's Church organist for over 50 years and have decided it is time to retire. To mark this milestone, I have set myself a challenge to play 84 hymns (in four hourly sessions), on the organ, one for each year of my life! The aim is to raise money for our Parish Charity in 2020, Clifton Refugee Sponsorship. It is a worthwhile government backed scheme to help individual Syrian refugee families settle in the UK. More details can be found on the website at: <https://www.cliftonrefugeesponsorship.co.uk/> I should be so grateful for your support in this venture. Donations can be sent via https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/stdominicsdursley?utm_id=1&utm_term=m38QW7Q5N or if you prefer cheques should be made payable to M.P. Uglow and marked CRSS on the back. Many thanks. PAT UGLOW, ST. DOMINIC'S DURSLEY FOUNDATION, CLIFTON DIOCESE/VICE PRESIDENT, CLIFTON DIOCESE Footnote Pat has raised the magnificent sum of £2477 as at 16.11.20



BIRMINGHAM

Ubi Caritas Award

The Ubi Caritas Award was presented to Elaine Yates, a member of the UCM Foundation at St Ambrose Parish, Kidderminster on Wednesday 30th September by Bishop David McGough. This award was in recognition of her services to Catholic Education over many years. Elaine has been a Foundation Governor at Hagley Catholic High School for 32 years, during which time she has been Chair of Governors for 23 years. Elaine said, "I've just felt very privileged to have the opportunity to be part of Catholic Education and I've always done my best".

Miriam Cunliffe
St Ambrose Foundation, Kidderminster



EAST ANGLIA

New Members Enrolled

There has been a UCM Foundation in St Joseph's Parish, St Neots for 30+ years now, while the neighbouring parish of St Hugh at Buckden has had a CWL Section for a similar length of time. When the parishes were combined in 2010, the two groups continued to operate, with open invitations to attend each other's meetings and events and some ladies, myself included, opting to formally join the other group and further cement the relationship. This worked very well, but early in 2020 it became clear that the CWL Section was starting to decline, due not so much to reducing numbers, but more to that all-too-common reluctance to take office, with some existing officers having held their positions for many years. The idea was mooted that they close the Section and join the UCM, with the vast majority voting in favour of this change. So far, so encouraging. Plans were made for how this would work across the 2 locations (5 miles apart) - but then along came Covid and, like most other things in life, such plans were 'scuppered'. However, the communication continued and, just after lockdown 2, Fr Krzysztof was able to celebrate a special Mass at St Joseph's, where existing members renewed their

Commitment and 2 of the potentially 12 new members were enrolled. It was a happy occasion as Foundation President Ann McDermott welcomed Cynthia Brown and Joan Van Leuwen to the UCM and looked forward to a future date, hopefully not too far ahead, when more new members will be enrolled. By then it is hoped that all members will be 'unmasked' and able to celebrate afterwards with that essential tea and cake.

Anne Emblem
Diocesan President



Submitting copy for next issue

The deadline for articles and photos for the next edition of the UCM News is
Tuesday 1st June 2021

Please send copy to catholic.mother@yahoo.co.uk

Thank you
(GDPR) General Data Protection Regulation

Anyone sending photos to be published in The Catholic Mother newspaper, it is your responsibility to make sure you get permission from all in the photos.

MIDDLESBROUGH

Nothing makes you smile more than the sense of achievement

Having been asked 'Are you doing anything this year as a challenge?'

Fr. Bill Serplus, our Diocesan Spiritual Advisor, decided upon a sponsored coastal walk from Whitby to Redcar, a challenging walk of 25 miles.

Following days of wind and rain, in answer to prayer, on the day of the walk clouds and rain had disappeared and the coastal views were fantastic. The parishioners who had been encouraging and sponsoring him certainly appreciated the photographs which he sent during his walk to the parish What's App. One person using the sunrise for her Christmas cards.

The sponsorship raised a magnificent total of £2500 for York Mind; This at a time when it will be most welcome. Everyone at this time is under some kind of mental stress and we all need support, which Mind give so generously. At a time when people's financial concerns are heightened the amount raised was really amazing.



St Aelred's Foundation

The St. Aelred's UCM have managed to have a pretty full programme of activities during the past few months. We have had UCM when possible and members either were in church or on Zoom.

Following Mass, the ones present gravitated to the Community Centre and a socially distanced meeting was held. Fr. Bill moved the Lap Top into the centre so the people at home could join us on Zoom. No refreshments of course! You can see that we have been busy, apart from the usual activities. Our weekend Parish Masses have continued since restrictions were lifted and members have helped with the reading, music by Zoom and assisting with the stewarding for the church to be open for private prayer twice a week and in conjunction with the SVPs have helped distribute a number of meals for the elderly and housebound. We have also had talks from various members.

Julie Couttie, spoke about her research in the

subject for her degree on "The Kinder Transport " when Jewish Children were transported out of Germany in 1939-40.

Betty East, gave a very enlightening talk on her work in Timbuktu. Betty was out there working for International Services. Betty told us about village life and one memorable occasion when she had to travel in the back of a truck with an armed guard who was suffering from Malaria.

Mary Callan, gave a stimulating talk on King David's wives especially Abigail. We need to read the book of Samuel to understand more.

We had a poetry reading evening where 3 members had been asked to choose and read 3 poems and then the members were asked to vote for their favourite one. The winner being:-

'The Soil Never Sleeps' by Adam Horowitz. Read by Barbara Cookson.

New Member



In December we were delighted to welcome Betty East as a new member to the UCM Fr. Bill Serplus enrolled Betty East during Mass and all the other Members renewed their commitment to the Union of Catholic Mothers either in Church or on Zoom.

99 years celebrated with '99' ice creams

Members of the Holy Name of Mary Foundation were extremely pleased to have reason to celebrate. On 18th November, one of our members, Jo Allan was 99 years young. Jo is a great, great grandmother and her large family were not going to allow the coronavirus and a lockdown to stop them giving her a day to



remember. They arranged a socially distanced celebration with the residents at the apartments in Linthorpe where she lives, some of whom are UCM members.

The first highlight was a visit by Mikey's Ices, who served 99 ice creams to Jo and her neighbours. This was paid for by a local Thornaby resident, who had heard about the occasion and insisted on sponsoring the 99's.

The second highlight was a visit by the Middlesbrough Mayor, Andy Preston, who heard about the event and wanted to offer his birthday wishes to one of the town's oldest residents.

Jo should have been joined in celebrating by her 12 children, 36 grandchildren, 43 great- grandchildren and 2 great- great- grandchildren, but the pandemic put paid to that.

She was born in 1921 when George V was King and David Lloyd-George was Prime Minister and during the Second World War, she worked in a munitions factory. Later, as well as raising her large family, she found time to work as a products demonstrator in local shops, including, Newhouses (now Debenhams) and then as a Housing Officer for Middlesbrough Council.

In her long retirement, she joined the Union of Catholic Mothers and has been a loyal and well-loved member for 30+ years. Jo remains a member of the Holy Name of Mary UCM and was involved in our events well into her nineties. She recently reported on Facebook that she missed our meetings and was looking forward to them starting up again. A wonderful lady and member of the UCM. We are so proud of her.

Another of our ladies Marcelle Keeley celebrated her 97th birthday on the same day as Jo. Marcelle is housebound and celebrated her birthday quietly at home.

PORTSMOUTH

Les Hanois Lighthouse Boat Landing Stabilisation

Following the significant storms in the South West in 2013/2014, the boat landing at Les Hanois lighthouse was noted to be in a vulnerable condition. Following this discovery, Trinity House, the custodians of the lighthouse, put out a 'Design and Build' tender to fix the landing. Early 2015 Geomarine were awarded the contract and after much preparation the works commenced on site mid-April

2015 and were finally completed late September 2015.

The design was to pin the main structure back to the rock beneath with 3m-6m long rock anchors both horizontally and vertically in a three-dimensional grid, re-pointing and mass grouting to fill any voids creating a solid structure to act monolithically with the rocks. The degraded concrete elements

including the steps were completely removed and re-cast and new stainless steel straps installed.

The site is 3km offshore and due to its remote location the works were immensely challenging. A great deal of ingenuity was used to overcome simple problems made complex just by being offshore. The solution was designed around what could be safely achieved in this location to create a more streamlined operation once on site, with a diversity techniques employed and specialist equipment selected.

Site access was heavily weather dependant and hence the works that could be safely achieved were hindered by interrupted access. This problem was one very apparent to Trinity House in their field of work, so with an open tender brief and negotiable risk sharing options, the project was able to progress in a more forward thinking, collaborative approach, which was very successful.

This project reminded us of why we are Civil Engineers. On the good days there was no better place to work; though on the tough days our creative thinking was stretched and determination tested against the forces of nature; all in the name of providing the human world with an uninterrupted infrastructural service.

Jenny Giles, Civil Engineer.



Guernsey UCM



I am Shelley from our UCM community in Guernsey. Unlike you, with your many restrictions at the moment, and possibly due to get worse, we are luckily able to meet up regularly. I have enclosed a couple of pictures of our get togethers that we have had recently.

The first one was about The Hanoi's lighthouse which is off the coast of Guernsey. One of our members has a daughter, who is an engineer who worked on it.

The second picture was taken at our annual garden party which takes place every year. It is always a very jolly affair, with many cups of tea downed and sandwiches, and cakes eaten with relish! We were joined this year by Our Deacon Mark Lightly.

We send you all our best wishes and prayers that you will soon be able to live normally once again.

Shelley Greenfield

WESTMINSTER

Westminster are sending out Verses and Bible extracts to everyone every week to encourage prayer, and reflection and getting to know the bible more. It also means that each foundation and member knows that U.C.M. is thinking about them in these troubled times. We are encouraging foundation presidents to make them available to their friends, families and lonely and housebound parishioners. I have sent them to the department of evangelization (the coordinator is our Deacon) because I sometimes feel that U.C.M. is thought of as a bit archaic and not very relevant to people of today.

Jan Woodford.

Well, here we are in the New Year 2021 and I hope and pray that you all had a good Christmas, the best way you could have, and a good new year and I hope that 2021 will be a good year for all of us. Now that they have started giving the vaccine to a lot of people, we pray that things will change and we will get back to some kind of normality. Please find something below called "Finding God in London" from Janette Woodford. She first heard it recited by Mary Watford, one of our past Presidents, at a Social evening at National but Janette has adapted it a bit. I thought it would be nice to start the New Year with a smile on our faces!

Finding God in London

Our Father, who art in Hendon, Harold Wood be thy name,
Thy Kingston come, Thy will be done in Ealing as it is in Hendon.
Give us this day our Dollis Hill, and forgive us our Westminster
as we forgive those who Westminster against us.
Lead us not into Thames Station but deliver us from Earl's Court.
For Thine is the Kingston, the Poplar and the Golders Green,
For Erith and Erith, Amen.

We can find Him everywhere! So, if this makes us smile it should also make us seek Him in these places and the places where we live, and if we cannot find Him perhaps, He is asking us to take the knowledge of Him to those outside our own circle and outside our "safe" environments. Everyone needs to know of His Love for humanity. Hurrah, we ARE redeemed, let's tell others and make them feel safe too.

They will know we are Christians by our Love. Let us truly be God's Love – in action – through us.

**Iona de Souza, Archdiocesan President
Westminster**

Recognition of Long Service and Enrolment of 3 Members in Hounslow UCM

The "Impossible became Possible" by the grace of God Most High in our parish of SS Michael and Martin Catholic Church, Hounslow on 8th December 2020 the feast of the Immaculate Conception on which day we usually go on our Christmas break. This was a "lockdown" period but the impossible became possible when our Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Augustine Nwosu, CSSp., in the presence of the Church almost filled to its capacity of 220 parishioners plus our UCM Mums in admirable number with our Elders in the front, the recipients behind them and the other Mums, behind, performed the following: -

- 1) He recognizes the Elders who were hailed by the parishioners.
- 2) Brenda Sylvester was presented with a certificate of 30 years long service in the union----- the parishioners clapped for joy.

3)The enrolment of 3 new members--- Beatrice Brodie Mends; Venicia Cardoso and Peggy De Silva----- more rounds of clapping from the parishioners.

4) We then renewed our UCM vows crowned with the Mass.

It was just as our Mother Mary said "The Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is His name". We give thanks to God Almighty through our Lord Jesus Christ and to our Mother Mary who stood by us and we thank each other for our courage to be present on that blessed day. We thank our Fr. Austin and our parishioners for their encouragement and patience and the President and all members of the UCM in the Archdiocese of Westminster.

May God bless us all in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Ave Maria.

**Clara Giwa-Amu, President
Hounslow Foundation**



SOUTHWARK

The Walderslade UCM under Lockdown 2020

This year has been and continues to be a challenge for everyone, for our little group at Walderslade as much as anyone else. A number of our ladies have been shielding right from the beginning, and to be honest, have hardly set foot outside since the end of March! Thanks, in many ways, to their devoted families, who have helped them they stay safe. Our monthly meetings became zoom affairs quite quickly, with yours truly struggling to make sense of this hitherto unknown phenomenon! We continue to say our UCM prayer at the start of each meeting; there is something quite special about hearing each other say the prayer in that funny staccato, out of sync way!! We also make a list of special intentions each month, saying the Hail Mary for all those mentioned. After that, it is great to chat with everyone. As we are a relatively small group it hasn't been too difficult.

Our summer & Christmas social evenings included a glass of wine, wishing each other good health! In September, we decided to try & meet together in a local park, socially distanced of course! However, a change of rules got in our way and we had to abandon the plans! Such a shame, we were so looking forward to it. We did manage, though, to organise our Anniversary Mass in October, which was attended by about 6 of us in person, and several on livestream.

Our usual practice of raising funds has been very much thwarted this year, however each of us has collected for charity in their own way. For example, one member has been knitting red hearts for those seriously ill in hospital. Another has collected anything from beer caps to crisp packets, sending them to a variety of charities. A third has cleared out the garage of unwanted tools and donated them to charity. A calendar produced with & for the NHS is also being promoted by a member of our Group. For the Christmas season a plan was made to collect £10 from each of us in lieu of sending each other

cards. We then sent a cheque to Crisis at Christmas. Prayer has continued to be a big part of our UCM lives. When not able to attend a socially distanced mass, we are able to take part in the livestreamed events. Our parish also offers weekly zoomed & online Rosary recitations. One of our members revealed that she & her husband are finding solace in praying the Rosary together.

Throughout this difficult time all our members have been supporting family & friends as best they can. Despite the difficulties, with several ladies having to repeatedly self-isolate, we are all very upbeat, sending silly messages on our WhatsApp group to keep us entertained. It is a wonderful thought that we are all here for each other and will continue to be throughout everything that is thrown at us.

**Helen Appleby, President
Walderslade Foundation**

NORTHAMPTON

St Peters Foundation

St Peters Foundation, Rushden have not been meeting up during the pandemic and many of our members are not comfortable in this digital age in using computer technology. Much happier with a phone call!

A lovely couple, Fiona and Martyn from our parish have set up a Rosary Link through Facebook which is said every evening at 6pm and has been a great comfort. They also do a live link through Facebook for our Sunday Mass.

One of our long-standing members and previous Foundation President, Mary Curtis, has celebrated her Golden wedding Anniversary. Mary and John

St Hilda's UCM Tottington celebrate 70th anniversary

This year, 2021, St. Hilda's UCM Tottington will celebrated their 70th anniversary; their first meetings were held in a St. John's Ambulance hut in Tottington in March 1951.

Because of Covid_19, March 2020 we haven't held any UCM meetings. Our diary was full, we had organised, speakers, crafters, trips to Blackburn flower festival, a day out at Gorton Monastery, a local pilgrimage to Hollymount cemetery but sadly the whole year was cancelled.

To keep our group together, our secretary Teresa organised a WhatsApp group for those ladies who wanted to keep in touch and successfully we did and continue to do so. A lifeline for some. Just before the March lockdown we decided as a group to take up a challenge from the Lalley Centre at Collyhurst, Manchester (a food bank, based at St. Malachys school), asking everyone to collect 40

non-perishable food items (40 days of Lent), which we would take to the centre after Easter.

Also, another challenge from me was to attend a virtual mass everyday of Holy week anywhere in the world.

The food items were collected but with restrictions, maybe not as many items as we would normally have contributed, but a great team effort all the same.

When we are eventually able to meet as a group, we will discuss how far we virtually travelled for Holy Mass and which church we would like to visit in person.

Through the virtual masses we did attend, two of our members Carol and Joanne spotted Canon Peter Stanley. He had been ordained at St. Hilda's church in 1983, by Bishop Derek Worlock. The UCM arranged the flowers in church, yellow and white fuchsias (Papal Colours) and also created his celebration buffet, I contacted him and he emailed over some photographs. So lovely looking back on such a great occasion.

He wrote "Never upset the mum's in the Parish, especially those in the UCM, and especially don't upset the President". Yes, that did bring a smile to my face.

We haven't planned our 2021 programme yet, as I sit writing this, we have entered another lockdown, so will take everything week to week

Let's prayer and hope we will get the vaccinations we all need, our churches can be fully open, we can travel on our pilgrimages and we can meet and socialise once more with all our family and all our friends.

Stay safe and God Bless

**Marianne French
Media Officer
Northampton Diocese**

**Kim Fletcher
UCM President**



2020 in stitches

Stitchery of various kinds has always played a big part in my life. My mother taught me to knit and do embroidery (fancywork, as she called it) as a small child and hence I can't remember a time when I haven't had some project on the go. First it was dolls' clothes (I had the best-dressed dolls in town) and it wasn't long before I moved on to make clothes for my sister and myself, as well as for anyone else who was prepared to pay me to supplement my pocket money. As time went on, other activities beckoned, but needlework always remained at the forefront, a source of enjoyment and relaxation as well as a well-stocked wardrobe.

Not surprisingly, 2020 provided opportunities to hone my skills and develop new ones, so here is a selected run-through of my year in stitches.....

First-up, in February when Covid was but a flu virus in some remote Chinese city, I made a skirt & matching scarf in Harris Tweed, as modelled here by 'Griselda'. Griselda is my dress-making mannequin, exactly the same size as I am, but there the similarity ends as she never utters a word. I've since made several other skirts, dresses etc. but won't bore you with a fashion parade.

The Jacobean Embroidery panel came via a former work colleague, Caroline, who was clearing out her parents' house and came across several pieces of linen with traced designs, unworked. I couldn't get all the correct crewel wools but managed to reproduce the desired effect. According to the booklet which came with it, Jacobean embroidery

flourished in the late 1660s as an antidote to the sombre black-and-grey, no-decoration-allowed days of the Cromwellian period. It seems that the new mood was 'the more elaborate the better'. I framed this one myself, although I used a specialist company to accurately cut the frame and mounts as these skills are beyond me.

Another 'find' in the hoard of treasure from Caroline was several pieces of rug canvas and a veritable jumble of cut pieces of wool. I spent a happy afternoon sorting out the wools, planning my design on graph paper and calculating how many pieces of wool I needed, only to find that there wasn't enough of any colour. As the wool was at least 30 years old, I figured the chances of getting the same colours was remote. However, a lovely lady at Readicut came to my rescue by offering to match them for me if I sent her what I had. What fantastic service and here you see the finished result, my first-ever hook-and-latch rug. Obviously, no one is allowed to step on it.

Another new venture for me was upholstery and here is one of my parents' 1930s chairs with a new seat insert. I did this at a one-day upholstery course with a teacher who is passionate about restoring items using the original materials rather than modern equivalents, including in this case twill weave jute webbing and real horse-hair stuffing.

Tapestry is very relaxing pastime and here you see a warty, probably unlovable toad and a cheeky squirrel. I'll have the squirrel professionally framed once my local shop opens again, but I decided to do something different with the toad and make a mount out of stiff

felt in a mossy green colour to replicate his likely habitat. The rest of my offerings are patchwork & quilting: two out of a set of 4 cushions for my niece, who has her whole house decorated in colours of chocolate and cream, a cheery bed quilt for Fr Antony (hence the A in the centre) as a parting gift when he left the parish in August and a selection of the many sets of oven mitts I made as Christmas gifts for friends and relations, especially those we couldn't visit. The duck cushion is a patchwork representation of a real (stuffed) duck on display in a country sports shop in Spalding. Henry photographed it, I printed it in black & white to show up the light & dark elements and then reproduced them using in some cases very small pieces of fabric, all machine-stitched together using blanket stitch. The border of yellow Prairie points is just me showing off that I've succeeded in teaching myself how to do this technique. The whole thing took hours to accomplish, but was great fun and who needs to worry about time anyway?

And what of 2021 so far? Bernina and I have just started a large bed quilt, while Henry continues to admire from a safe distance, offer opinion when asked and never ask when we might be having lunch, or tea, or dinner.....

All of this serves to keep my fingers and brain in working order and give me a lot of pleasure, so my final words must be to say 'Thank You Mum', for having the forethought and patience all those year ago to instil in me a love and enjoyment of all things stitched.

Anne Emblem

Shrewsbury Sister Elizabeth Prout on path to sainthood

Source: Diocese of Shrewsbury
Pope Francis has declared a Shrewsbury-born religious sister to be Venerable, putting her a crucial step closer to final recognition as a Saint.

The Holy Father authorised the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to promulgate a decree on January 21 formally recognising that the Servant of God Mother Elizabeth Prout lived a life of heroic virtue. The announcement means that the Catholic Church has concluded its theological and historical investigations into the life and work of the so-called "Mother Teresa of Manchester". It will now seek two miracles as supernatural signs from God that Mother Elizabeth is a Saint. The first will lead to her beatification, when she will be given the title "Blessed" and the second will lead to her canonisation.

The announcement was welcomed by the Most Rev Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool and leader of the archdiocese in which Mother Elizabeth is buried and where her sainthood cause was opened in 1994. The Archbishop said he would like to see her shrine in St Helens become a place of prayer for her canonisation. The Rt Rev Mark Davies, the Bishop of Shrewsbury, who has repeatedly called for prayers for the progress of Mother Elizabeth's sainthood cause, also welcomed the announcement by the Holy See. He suggested that Mother Elizabeth's heroic service to poor people who were afflicted by outbreaks of cholera and typhoid served as fine example in the contemporary age benighted by the coronavirus pandemic.

Archbishop Malcolm McMahon said: "I am delighted that the Holy See has further recognised the holiness of Mother Elizabeth Prout, foundress of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion. Her contribution to the Church and people of England and further afield in the education and healthcare through the institutions she founded and the Sisters of the congregation continues to show the care of the Catholic Church for those in need. My prayer is that the shrine at Sutton will be a place of prayer for her eventual canonisation."

Bishop Mark Davies said: "It was with great joy that we received the news today that Elizabeth Prout, an Englishwoman born in Shrewsbury, is advancing towards being recognised as a Saint. "The Church has declared her Christian life and virtues worthy of

our veneration. It seems appropriate this announcement came during the pandemic when we can look to Elizabeth's example and ask the help of her prayers as a woman who helped many during the epidemics which swept the industrial communities of Victorian England." Passionist Sister Dominic Savio Hamer, author of Elizabeth Prout: A Religious Life for Industrial England, said: "This is wonderful news for Congregation of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ. "She loved Our Lord so much and also knew so much suffering in her own life and was conversant with the bad social conditions in which so many people lived in Manchester that she will be an ideal person to pray to in our difficulties today."

In a homily at a Mass in Shrewsbury Cathedral to mark the bicentenary of her birth on September 2nd 1820, Bishop Davies had earlier described Mother Elizabeth as an "educational pioneer" who founded schools for the industrialised poor and refuges for factory girls as she "dedicated her life to the service of the most abandoned".

He said she was inspired by her Catholic faith to confront "the most degrading situations with the confidence of the revolution which flows from Christ's command: 'Love one another as I have loved you'."

The Bishop expressed the hope that Mother Elizabeth would be recognised for her witness to the inviolable dignity of all human life, which he described as the "labour of her life".

(Homily by Bishop Davies about Elizabeth Prout: www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org/about-us/homily-preached-at-mass-to-mark-the-icentenary-of-the-birth-in-shrewsbury-of-the-servant-of-god-elizabeth-prout-2nd-september-2020)



New Abbot of Ampleforth elected

Source: Ampleforth
Dom Robert Igo has been elected ninth Abbot of Ampleforth, the largest Benedictine community in the UK. The election took place at Ampleforth on 5 January, in the presence of Abbot Paul Stonham OSB, delegate of the President of the English Benedictine Congregation, the Right Rev Christopher Jamison OSB. Dom Robert takes on the role of Abbot with immediate effect and replaces Abbot Cuthbert Madden, whose eight-year term of office had come to an end. The new Abbot will now hold overall responsibility for the monastic community and its works.

Fr Robert was born and educated in Manchester and worked at Manchester Royal Infirmary as a Student Nurse for three years in the 1970s. He was ordained priest in the Anglican Church in 1980 and served in parishes in Sunderland and Hartlepool. He was received into the Catholic Church in 1987 and joined the monastic community at Ampleforth in August 1988. He was ordained a Catholic priest on 27 June 1993 and three years later joined a small group of Ampleforth monks in Zimbabwe, at the monastic foundation established by the Ampleforth community in 1996, the Monastery of Christ the Word in Macheke. Since 2005 he has been Prior at the Monastery of Christ the Word.

The blessing of the new Abbot will take place at a special ceremony presided over by Bishop Terence Patrick Drainey of Middlesbrough, on a date to be arranged.

Independent Catholic News
7th January 2021

St Thomas Becket - Reflection by Cardinal Vincent Nichols

Source: Archbishops House

Cardinal Vincent issued this reflection on 29th December 2020

Today, as we mark the 850th anniversary of the death of St Thomas Becket, I recall the moment when the four knights who came to do him great harm actually made him a saint.

What does this martyrdom mean for us today?

First, it has its roots in his decision to embrace with radical seriousness his nomination and consecration as Archbishop of Canterbury, much to the shock of the King. In this decision he turned his back on ways of life which focus on possessions, style, fashion, calculations based on power, ownership and popularity. His focus now was to be only on fidelity to Christ as the measure and motivation of his words and actions. This is of relevance to every disciple of Jesus, for Thomas' decision, and the life and death which followed, shows us the true "cost of discipleship", a cost never to be resented but always to be embraced.

I think immediately of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his great work of that title. I think of Archbishop Oscar Romero and the intensity of dedication that his call to the office of Archbishop effected in his life. We know that the 20th century is probably the century of the greatest flowering of Christian martyrs: across Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, Vietnam, in communist regimes in Latin America and other places too. Now the twenty-first century is following a similar pattern in other parts of the world: The Middle East, parts of Africa, Pakistan. This moment of prominence for St Thomas Becket helps us to remember and focus on this fruitfulness of courage and faith which is always the seed of the Church.

Martyrdom is a much-used word. But we should be clear: no Christian ever seeks martyrdom. The Christians purpose is the faithful following of the Master in works of truth and love. Martyrdom is not sought. For the Christian it is always a death imposed by others. Yet the same Christian never shirks death, if that is what is required. We both love life and embrace death, when it comes, however it comes.

For some Thomas died a traitor, betraying the loyalty they believe he owed to the King. For others he died a martyr, put to death for his defence of the things of the Lord, in this case the honour and rights of the Church.

So, a key reflection today is on the relationship between the role and powers of the state on the one hand, and the role and commitment of the Church on the other. This is never an easy one. It is always a point of tension, a daily struggle in conscience and in public debate. But Thomas' martyrdom reminds us what can happen

when the state seeks to dominate religious belief and reshape it to its own ends. Today this conflict is often cast in terms of values - the state wanting the Church to observe and confirm its own selection of values. When observance of those particular values becomes absolute requirement then we are on a path of confrontation. The example of Thomas Becket stands before us as a reminder to every age that the point may come where there is no longer any space left for that religious freedom, such a basic human right, which permits the holding and expressing of religious belief in word and action in the public forum.

The tensions that can lead to that point were well delineated in the speech given by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010 when he spoke in Westminster Hall. He said:

'Each generation, as it seeks to advance the common good, must ask anew: what are the requirements that governments may reasonably impose upon citizens, and how far do they extend? By appeal to what authorities can moral dilemmas be resolved. These questions take us directly to the ethical foundations of civil discourse. If the moral principles underpinning the democratic process are themselves determined by nothing more solid than social consensus, then the fragility of the process becomes all too evident - herein lies the real challenge for democracy.'

Pope Benedict went on to argue that ethical norms are accessible to right reason, and that religious faith, rather than see itself supplying those norms, can illuminate and deepen the perception and appreciation of them. He proposed a 'corrective role' for faith in the application of reason noting, and I quote, 'that this corrective role is not always welcomed partly because distorted forms of religion, such as sectarianism and fundamentalism, can be seen to create serious social problems themselves. And in their turn, these distortions of religion arise when insufficient attention is given to the purifying and structuring role of reason within religion.'

Pope Benedict called modern democracies, including our own, to engage in constructive dialogue which brings together faith and reason, affirming that 'religion is not a problem for legislators to solve, but a vital contributor to national conversation.'

These words are surely more relevant to our situation today than they were when spoken in 2010. As we try to fashion a new future in this time of great challenges it is crucial that this dialogue between secular authorities and communities of faith is strengthened and deepened. Solutions will be found only when working together, from a presumption of trust and within our traditions of mutual respect. Thankfully this is the strong tradition of our land.



The challenge we now face is that of broadening the embrace of this dialogue without losing the specific Judeo-Christian sources of our strength and inspiration, sources which indeed need to be nurtured and not marginalised. Today we must be confident in this task. Multiple and complex identities and loyalties have to be brought together, not separated out, if we are to meet the draw the best of our society into a better future.

Thomas was a stalwart champion of Christ: may we too be inspired today by this Saint whose memory we venerate and whose intercession we seek.

X Cardinal Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Westminster

Independent Catholic News 30th December 2020



Submitting copy for next issue

The deadline for articles and photos for the next edition of the UCM News is

Tuesday 1st June 2021

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Philippines: Christmas letter from Preda Foundation

Fr Shay Cullen writes:

We are sharing with you some of the highlights of the work of Preda Foundation in 2020. We at Preda wish you all a blessed Christmas.

Many children saved...

As many as a hundred children have been saved and recovered at the five Preda homes for abused children in 2020, a happy record of healing and empowerment. One of the important highlights during 2020 is that all the children and the staff have thankfully remained free of Covid-19. The protective measure implemented and strictly maintained has made this possible. During the last year, we were able to receive in our homes 41 girls, rescued and saved from sex abusers, human traffickers and from sex slavery. At present, there are 43 children in the homes for girls. The youngest is three years old. They were welcomed, given affirmation, support and all their personal needs as soon as they arrived. This year, several were reintegrated.

Healing and empowerment

Grace,13 years old, was raped by her biological father. Her mother held her down while she was raped. A horrific heinous crime. She was threatened not to tell. But she bravely told her sister who told a neighbour. It got to the police and she was rescued and referred to the Preda home. She is now safe and has begun to heal and recover from the trauma she experienced. With the other children, Grace joined many activities and volunteered to take Emotional Release Therapy. In the padded therapy room, she cried and shouted out her pain and anger at her abusive parents. The children slowly emerge from their fear and trauma, feeling free and begin to smile for the first time in years.

Many convictions of abusers in 2020

Legal action by the healing and empowered children in Preda homes has been very successful in 2020 despite the lockdown and closure of the courts for several months. In 2020 the children, assisted by Preda, succeeded in winning 16 convictions against their rapists and traffickers. In one major case, a young trafficker and pimp that sold two young girls to a foreign paedophile many times to be abused received two life sentences in Angeles City. The US national was able to escape. The family tried to abduct the child witness from

Preda to stop the case but failed. In 2019, the children won 20 convictions and most of the convicted received life sentences so they will not be able to rape any more children. There are many more cases filed by Preda children pending to be resolved by the prosecutors and others are stuck up in the court judicial system waiting for a court hearing, some since 2014. For the first time in our history, the children participated in court hearings online, a more child-friendly way than appearing in the court room with the abuser present.

Saving boys from sub-human jails

The Preda Foundation has two homes for male children in conflict with the law (CICL), one in Zambales and one in Cebu. We rescue the boys from filthy, abusive and sub-human government detention centres and jails. They are frequently subjected to abuse and even torture by older inmates and abusive guards. In 2020, Preda rescued more than 30 boys and brought them to start a new life in the Preda home for boys in conflict with the law in Zambales. In Cebu, we rescued 15 boys and they are recovering in the Preda New Dawn Home in Liloan.

Commission on Human Rights investigates

In Preda, the children, some as young as 10 years old, told their stories of torture and abuse in government detention jails. Preda reported it to the Philippine Commission on Human Rights and with help from international supporters, the Philippine CHR was encouraged to open an investigation. The investigators confirmed and verified the torture and they are taking measures to monitor and prevent more such torture. Preda contributed to the drafting of a new anti-trafficking ordinance in Olongapo City and conducted the first rescue of 18 trafficked women, among them four minors, at a beach resort in Barangay Barretto. The minors were referred to Preda home for healing.

Preventing changes in law, releasing children

In 2020, Preda Foundation continued and increased its lobbying with other NGOs to stop the changing of the child protection law to reduce the age of criminal liability to 12 years old and succeeded to maintain it at 15 years of age. Then, we campaigned during the pandemic for the release of children from detention centres and as many as 350 children were released by the authorities to their parents. Some children were

rescued by Preda social workers. However, many more minors with pending cases remain in jails.

Helping Indigenous Children and Families

On 4 December 2020, the Preda Foundation turned over six laptops and installed a full CCTV system in the St. Francis Learning Centre in Subic town for the use of indigenous Aeta children of Zambales. The learning centre is an excellent boarding and day school exclusively for indigenous children run by the Franciscan Sisters that gives them a peaceful environment to learn together without the discrimination, bullying, racist remarks, teasing and exclusion that some lowland children inflict on the indigenous children. These drive them to drop out of other schools. The laptops were donated by Paul Gorrie of The Navigator Network.

Buying Mangos and Sharing Relief Food

Preda has worked with 361 Aeta subsistence farmers in Zambales and provided them with relief food packages consisting of ten kilos of rice and mixed groceries, for four times in 2020. Also, similar food relief packages were distributed to 320 poor families and snacks, candies and toys for their children in Olongapo City area three times in 2020. Preda bought at higher fair-trade prices the internationally organic-certified Pico 21 tons and Indian mangos 35.50 tons from the 77 Aeta families out of 10 communities that have mango crops this year. Preda Fairtrade shared out bonus payments of Php140,000 to the Aeta families. The mangos are made into organically-certified mango puree.

Mango Sapling Distribution

Also, with the help of the Columban Fathers and Merry Year Foundation in South Korea, we provided the Aeta with 2,000 mango saplings. The Aeta families planted them over the mountains of Zambales to help them reforest and strengthen their claim to their ancestral lands and preventing mining companies and grabbers stealing their lands. In Mindanao, the Preda bought 659 tons of Fair-Trade mangos from the members of our small farmers Fair Trade association. The mangos are all for export as dried mangos and conventional purees to World Shops in Germany and the UK. Preda accreditation and higher standards. The Preda Foundation is a DSWD-licensed and accredited social welfare and development



agency, founded in 1974. It is accredited by local government and it has now reached the highest status and standard of excellence. It has been accredited in 2020 by the Philippine Council for NGO Certification (PCNC) and as a result it has been certified by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) as a "Donee Institution" since 9 November,2020. Philippine donors are exempted from paying the 30 percent donor's tax. All donations will go to the children, none to administration. New Partnership with UN agencies The United Nations Anti-trafficking and Anti-slavery agencies have recognized Preda as a high standard organization for helping trafficked, enslaved and abused children and has granted partial funding for 2020 and 2021.

Awards marked

In November, Preda marked the anniversary of the awarding of the prestigious International Martin Buber Plaque Prize for defending children's rights. In January 2021 Preda will mark its fourth nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. Preda was nominated by the German Human Rights Commissioner Dr. Barbel Koefler. It was endorsed by several members of the German Parliament. That makes the total number of international awards for defending human rights 17. Despite the spread of the Covid-19, lockdowns and economic downturn the work of the Foundation has succeeded and will continue in the years ahead with your support and help. View the latest video: <https://youtu.be/G0fFNmHSYic>

Contact Preda Foundation at predainfo@preda.org and www.preda.org Independent Catholic News

Forgiveness

As we approach the Holy season of Lent, let us learn to forgive others as we have been forgiven. Nothing destroys relationships like resentment. The road to freeing ourselves from anger is forgiveness. Yet to forgive someone who has hurt us may be one of the hardest things we ever do.

Myths about Forgiveness

Fr. Jean Monbourquette, Canadian priest and psychologist, debunks the myths associated with forgiveness in his classic work, 'How to forgive': Forgiveness does not mean condoning the offence, forgetting the hurt or necessarily reconciling with the other person. The other party may not wish to be reconciled, or the relationship might be a harmful one, which it would be unwise to renew.

Why Forgive?

Harbouring anger towards those who have hurt us keeps us in their power. Resentment blocks grace, impeding our personal and spiritual growth. Anger can lead to a desire to hurt back: through words, ignoring, destroying reputation, or force. We may take our anger out on those who remind us of the original offender, causing problems in professional or romantic life. St Paul counsels, 'Do not let the sun go down on your anger' (Eph. 4:26). The wise among us have a sense of perspective, and have learned to let go. Forgiveness breaks the cycle of revenge-taking. We cannot expect wars to cease until we learn to practise love within our families, churches and workplaces. When we love others, we receive God's mercy: Of the woman who anointed His feet, Jesus said "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much".

Steps towards forgiveness

1. Fr. Monbourquette advises acknowledging all the feelings associated with the original experience. Anger is a secondary emotion, often arising from anxiety, disappointment, hurt, or shame.
2. I may need to consider how I have hurt the other, though this is not always the case. Maybe I need forgiveness too.
3. Next I recognise how much I have been forgiven by God. Saint Teresa of Avila realised painfully how much her sins had offended God. We each need to come to this personal insight, without which the Cross has no meaning. St Ignatius encouraged retreatants undertaking his Spiritual Exercises to pray for the grace to see their sin and its effects on others. Dare we make this growth-giving prayer? Contemplate Jesus on the Cross. He is there because of my sins. To nurse my grudge, is to emulate the ungrateful servant who, having been released and forgiven his debt by his Lord, then seized his fellow servant by the throat, saying, 'Pay what you owe' (Mt.18:23-35).
4. Jesus teaches us from the Cross: 'Forgive them Father. They don't know what they are doing'.

Those who hurt us do not fully understand the impact they are having. We recall that usually, others have hurt them.

5. We don't have to wait until we feel loving – forgiveness is an act of the will. We need to pray for the grace to forgive: this is not something we can do on our own.
6. We will then need to discern whether to be reconciled, and if so whether to acknowledge the difficulties or draw a line under them. Forgiveness may be shown simply by interacting with kindness. Forgiveness is both a decision and a process. It takes time.

Joyce Meyer, an American evangelist, forgave her father who had sexually abused her, and before he died, he became a Christian. Leonard Wilson, Anglican Bishop of Singapore, and prisoner-of-war, baptised the Japanese prison officer who had tortured him.

We have the daunting power to set our neighbour free from the crippling burden of guilt. Lord, give us the grace to use it.

Editorial from The Catholic Voice of Lancaster, December 2014

A Lenten prayer

written by Trappist monk Thomas Merton.
From: - Thoughts in Solitude (1958)

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.

I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that, if I do this, You will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

New virtual marriage preparation resource launched by Marriage Care

As it enters its 75th anniversary year, Marriage Care’s support for marriages and relationships continues despite the impact of the coronavirus pandemic having put ‘normality’ on hold.

All face-to-face services are now operating online using effective webcam technology, including most recently its marriage preparation course for couples marrying in the Catholic Church.

Preparing Together Anywhere

One of the positive benefits to emerge from lockdown has been the careful revision of Marriage Care’s resource Preparing Together to ensure the integrity of its Imprimatur into a format suitable for facilitated webcam delivery to small groups of engaged couples.

Preparing Together Anywhere is facilitated by two trained volunteers via webcam with 6-8 couples attending three 90-minute sessions over 3 weeks.

Session 1
Building a Relationship

Session 2
Conflict, Resolution and Forgiveness

Session 3
To Love and to Cherish

The course aims to help couples think about relationships in general, and their own in particular, increasing their understanding of what will be required to cultivate a life-long faithful loving marriage. Additional resources enable couples to explore their relationship and reflect more deeply on the commitment being entered into. Alongside encouraging couples to develop

their understanding of the Church’s teaching on the sacrament they also support them to consider how it will be lived out in their daily lives.

When asked what difference the course made, couples said:

“It has made us aware of things in our relationship that we didn’t recognise before and has provided ways to manage issues in a relationship”, “A huge amount – we want to re-read all we learnt again at Christmas!”, “A very positive difference, I would strongly recommend the course”.

Whilst wedding plans may be delayed or on hold, couples need not put their preparation for marriage on hold. Preparing Together Anywhere and/or FOCCUS sessions skilfully guide couples towards the conversations that matter and an understanding of the marriage covenant.

FOCCUS stands for Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study. It’s a personalised consultation developed by FOCCUS Inc – an apostolate of the Archdiocese of Omaha.

These two programmes complement one another: whilst Preparing Together Anywhere looks at the tools needed to build a strong secure enduring marriage, FOCCUS allows the couple to delve deeper into their own unique relationship. Together these resources enable the couple to build strong foundations well ahead of their wedding day.

Book

Courses are now available and parish priests can simply direct couples to Marriage Care’s website to book their place.

Source:CBCEW

What the Magi teach us

Five lessons offered by the wise men from the East.

Among the tenured professorial skeptics, few Gospel episodes have been sliced, diced, and tossed to the dissecting room floor as “mythology” more often than the story of the Magi: the “wise men from the East [who] came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and have come to worship him’” (Matthew 2:2). In Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives, Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, who avoids the unfortunate academic habit of treating ancient texts with haughty suspicion, takes a different view. The Magi, he writes, are not mythical figures in “a meditation presented under the guise of stories.” Rather, “Matthew is recounting real history,” but “history theologically thought through and interpreted.” That is why the Magi story helps us to “understand the mystery of Jesus more deeply.”

What do the Magi teach us?

First, they anchor Jesus in the human drama, in a real time and place, by putting these exotic pilgrims in contact with Herod the Great, about whose brutal reign we know a lot; the reference to Caesar Augustus in Luke 2:1 performs the same “anchoring” function. At the very beginning of the Jesus story, Matthew and Luke tell their readers (or more often in their day, their listeners) that Jesus of Nazareth is not a figment of someone’s fevered religious imagination. Jesus is as real as real gets.

Secondly, the Magi’s protean accomplishments – they were philosophical sages, priests, and astronomers – have a meaning beyond credentials. They remind us, Benedict XVI notes, that “religious and philosophical wisdom” can be “an incentive to set off in the right direction” in life: which is to say, human wisdom can, for those with open minds and hearts, eventually lead to Christ. As men of a profound if unfulfilled openness to the divine, the Magi are “successors of Abraham, who set off on a journey in response to God’s call.” As philosophers, though, they are also “the successors of Socrates and his habit of questioning above and beyond conventional wisdom toward the higher truth.” Thus, these mysterious figures (depicted in colourful, polka-dotted raiment in the Basilica of St. Mary Major, Rome’s “Bethlehem”) are “forerunners, preparers of the way, seekers after truth, such as we find in every age” – at least among those with the humility to reject a cramped, materialistic view of the world and ask, “Is that all there is?”

Third, the fact that the Magi were not Jews suggests that the mission ad gentes, “to the nations,” is embedded in the reality of Jesus, the long-awaited Jewish messiah, from the beginning. That the first of these gentile “others” to recognize the “newborn king of the Jews” were men of intellect and science teaches another important lesson: all truths lead to the one Truth. Every authentic human religious impulse, Pope Benedict asserts, “involves a search for truth, a search for the true God and hence ‘philosophy’ in the original sense of the word” [love of wisdom]. Wisdom purifies “scientific knowledge,” because wisdom does not permit “science” to remain rationally introspective: wisdom reminds science that there is more to truth than equations, formulas, and data.

Fourth, the Magi “from the East” – the locus of dawn – are emblems of new beginnings. As such, they are timely visitors at the end of a terrible year in which history seems to have lost its moorings. Pope Benedict again: The Magi “represent the journeying of humanity toward Christ,” in whose life, death, and resurrection the human story begins anew. The Magi “initiate a procession that continues throughout history...they represent the inner aspiration of the human spirit, the dynamics of religions and human reason toward him” who alone can make “all things new” (Revelation 21:5) – even amidst pandemics and the politics of the culture of death.

Finally, the Magi anticipate St. Paul’s teaching that Jesus Christ is lord of the cosmos as well as lord of history. The early Church, Pope Benedict writes, had

to deal with the challenge of all sorts of “astral divinities” thought to be in charge of the universe and of our lives – not unlike the challenge posed today by a widespread credulity about horoscopes. Matthew’s theological crafting of the story of the wise men thus makes a crucial point: in Benedict’s words, “it is not the star that determines the child’s destiny; it is the child who directs the star.” God is in charge: not the stars, the planets, or other impersonal forces.

So welcome again, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. Our confused age needs you.

Catholic World Report



George Weigel
George Weigel is Distinguished Senior Fellow of Washington’s Ethics and Public Policy Center, where he holds the William E. Simon Chair in Catholic Studies. He is the author of over twenty books, including Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II (1999), The End and the Beginning: Pope John Paul II–The Victory of Freedom, the Last Years, the Legacy (2010), and The Irony of Modern Catholic History: How the Church Rediscovered Itself and Challenged the Modern World to Reform. His most recent book is The Next Pope: The Office of Peter and a Church in Mission (2020), published by Ignatius Press.





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Holy Year in Santiago de Compostela

On Thursday, 31 December, the Bishop of the city of Santiago de Compostela, in Galicia-Spain, will open the Holy Door of the Cathedral of Santiago. This event will mark the beginning of the Holy Year or Xacobeo 2021.



Pilgrims from all over the world are invited to visit the tomb of the Apostle Saint James and obtain the plenary indulgence from the Catholic Church. The Cathedral of Santiago and its spectacular Pórtico de la Gloria after many years of restoration are now ready to receive all pilgrims. The first Holy Year was established by Pope Callisto for the year 1126. The Holy Years are celebrated when the feast of Santiago (July 25) falls on a Sunday. As a general rule, these years occur in a sequence of five, six and eleven years.

To obtain forgiveness of sins, pilgrims must:

- Make confession and communion, before the fifteen days before or after the visit of the Cathedral.
- Visit the Cathedral of Santiago.
- Pray for the Pope's intentions (for example, an Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.)

To obtain the plenary indulgence, it is not necessary to make the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, although it is a good excuse to make a trip on one of the different Camino de Santiago routes, and become imbued with the spirit of the Camino de Santiago.

To obtain the certificate of La Compostela issued by the Archdiocese of Santiago de Compostela, it is necessary to prove at least that you have walked the last 100 km on foot or 200 km if you go by bike.

Independent Catholic News
27th December 2020

Plymouth: Bishop O'Toole's message for start of national lockdown

My dear brothers and sisters,

The one piece of 'good news' in the advice issued by the Government, following the Prime Minister's address last night, was that people can still attend public Mass. This present 'lockdown' will, therefore, be different to what we experienced between March and June of last year. It is a blessing that people can still visit Church, and that we are able to continue to celebrate Mass publicly. We know this is not the case in some other places.

We are grateful to the Government for recognising the central place that places of worship have in the life of our country. They are vital for our spiritual and personal wellbeing, and our worship of God, in turn, is a source of strength and spiritual energy for our continued service of others. We know we must observe the protocols around 'Hands-Face-Space' with an increased vigilance, given the virulence of the latest strain of the virus.

I am aware within myself - and I imagine within many of us - of a certain weariness. It does not help that we are in the depths of winter, and the normal familial, and friendship supports, are not easily accessible to us. It is also clear that life will not return to any kind of 'new normal' for several months yet. COVID will continue to exercise its power, limiting so many aspects of our lives.

I believe each of us must 'dig deep' within ourselves, and in our faith, in these months. Tomorrow we will celebrate the great Solemnity of the Epiphany, when we recall the visit of the wise men and the homage they came to pay to the Infant King. They brought the gift of

Myrrh, used to anoint those who die, recognising that this child would participate fully in the reality of our human mortality. He, too, would experience death. As we reflect on that 'painful gift' let us continue to work with those close to death, to give them and their loved ones, hope in a time of darkness. The wise men also brought Gold, a sign that Jesus is King; a reminder to us that we need to put our countries resources in these months, at the service of those most in need.

Their third gift was Frankincense - a reminder that this child they were greeting was also their God and deserving of their worship and prayer. We need to continue to pray deeply; to find silence to be with God, who makes sense of all our struggles. It is vital, in order to be in touch with the life of Jesus and His Holy Spirit which He has poured into our hearts.

In that vein, I am reminded of a maxim of St John of the Cross which gives a direction, and to me, a certain consolation:

"Enter within yourself and work there in the presence of your Lord who is always there loving you."

So often we do not see the fruits of our prayers or of our labours, and this seems acutely so in the time of COVID. Yet every faithful thing we undertake in this time, for the love of God and of our neighbour, will bear fruit in ways beyond our understanding. I am sure of this, even if the reality of that is 'hidden with Christ in God', at least to us. In these months, then, let us look to Him, who brings light to our eyes and strength to our weary limbs.



In this year of St Joseph, the great protector and defender of Jesus and Mary, in a time of crisis, it is to Him that I entrust us all, and I ask your prayer for me. God bless you.

**Yours devotedly,
+Mark O'Toole
Bishop of Plymouth
Source – Diocese of Plymouth
Independent Catholic News**

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OBITUARIES

Kathryn CONWAY, aged 52, Daughter of National President Margaret McDonald, Liverpool Archdiocese
Veronica BIRBECK, Mary Mother of God Foundation, Bradford, Leeds Diocese
Christine CONNELL, Mary Mother of God Foundation, Bradford, Leeds Diocese
Joan BULLEY, Tolworth Foundation, Archdiocese of Southwark
Nan COSTELLOW, Holy Cross, Whitwick Foundation but latterly an Independent Member, Nottingham Diocese
Pam CURTIN, formerly St. Edward & St. Mark Foundation, Windsor, Portsmouth Diocese
Rita WILLIAMS, St. Joseph's Tilehurst Foundation, Portsmouth Diocese
Maureen HANSON, St. Joseph's Tilehurst Foundation, Portsmouth Diocese
Lya TURNER, St. James Foundation, Reading, Portsmouth Diocese
Betty WILSON, St. Aelred's Foundation, York, Middlesbrough Diocese (The article about Betty and her memories on VE Day was in the last edition of the UCM News)
Josephine HYNES, Holy Name of Mary Foundation, Middlesbrough Diocese
Mary WRIGHT, Independent Member, previously a member of English Martyr's Foundation, York. Mary was a member of The UCM for 64 years and held the positions of Parish President, Diocesan Treasurer and Assistant to the National Treasurer, when she was in charge of all the UCM stock. Many members will remember her from National Council meetings.
Patricia HEENAN, Independent Member, formerly of Our Lady of the Visitation Foundation, Greenford (now closed) Westminster Archdiocese
Rosaline EGAN, St. John's Wood Foundation, Westminster Archdiocese

Stefania WOLANSKA, St. Michael & St. Martin's Hounslow Foundation, Westminster Archdiocese
Lorna NEWMAN, St. Michael & St. Martin's Hounslow Foundation, Westminster Archdiocese
Rita CLARK, St Mary's Foundation, Woolton, Liverpool Archdiocese.
Dorothy FOX, St Wilfred's Foundation, Widnes, Liverpool Archdiocese.
Marie CULLERTON, St Wilfred's Foundation, Widnes, Liverpool Archdiocese
Marilyn MURPHY, St Aidan's Foundation, Winstanley, Liverpool Archdiocese
Mary KILBANE, St Helen's Foundation, Crosby, Liverpool Archdiocese.
Sheila OWENS, St Oswald's Foundation, Liverpool Archdiocese
Joan CORNER, St Margaret Mary's Foundation, Liverpool Archdiocese
Lucy SCOTLAND, Our Lady of Compassion Foundation, Liverpool Archdiocese
Monica GAMBLE, St Anne's Foundation, Ormskirk, Liverpool Archdiocese
Kay HOLLAND, St Aidan's Foundation, Winstanley, Liverpool Archdiocese
Joan SINCLAIR, St Thomas of Canterbury Foundation, Waterloo, Liverpool Archdiocese
Pauline HOLCROFT, St Helen's Foundation, Crosby, Liverpool Archdiocese
Margaret SANDERSON, All Saints Foundation, Liverpool Archdiocese.
Maureen FISHER, All Saints Foundation, Liverpool Archdiocese.
Gill WOODS, St. Joseph's Foundation, Portishead, Clifton Diocese
Muriel BURKE, St. Vincent's Foundation, Sheffield, Hallam Diocese
Betty KENDAL, St Marie's Foundation, Rugby
Catherine RIORDON, Holyrood Foundation, Barnsley, Hallam Diocese

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord

Your memories linger, Your smile that cared , Your listening ear Your goodness shared. In God's deepest love. In God's gentlest care This is my prayer.

Anne Gallagher, Past UCM National Secretary



The Sheppey Foundation have been greatly saddened by the loss of one of our long term members, Anne Gallagher who died on 21st January 2021

Anne has been unwell for some time with Alzheimer's disease. In her last few years she was cared for in a local Nursing home. Her loving and supportive husband, of 64 years, Pat died only

weeks before her.

Anne was our Past Foundation Secretary and President, serving the Parish for many years, and also served as UCM Diocesan Secretary, Walsingham Secretary, then UCM National Secretary.

In the course of all her secretarial duties Anne was instrumental in dragging the National UCM correspondence into the world of hi tech by the use of emails, thus saving a fortune in postal charges.

Anne was also our "go to" member for catering of any kind in the Parish. She was very organised and very professional in this field. She produced many Cordon Bleu standard buffets and meals for various celebrations. And her flower arrangements were of the same standard.

In recognition of all her work both in her Parish and nationally for UCM, Anne was awarded the Bene Merente Medal. This was presented to her on 7th July, 2009 at the National UCM Walsingham Pilgrimage...very fitting. Her husband Pat managed to keep any hint of it from her, so she was totally surprised and overcome. This was a double first for Sheppey and the National UCM.

Our Foundation are going to pray a decade of the Rosary together spiritually if not bodily, for Anne, at our next Zoom meeting. It would be fitting if all foundations could arrange do something similar in their own time in recognition of her work at so many levels.

RIP Anne and Patrick

A Lenten Inspiration The Children in the Primary School

(A story read by my friend Barbara in La Croix whilst she was living in France)

A Christian Brother wanted to help the children in his primary school class to live Lent effectively. He talked to them about simple acts of penance which – he suggested – they could offer up to Jesus. They would ask him to use these for someone whom they didn't know, but He knew: someone who was far away from God.

He invited the children to bring a bean into class each day for any act of kindness or sacrifice they had done for this intention; they would put these in a jar at the foot of Jesus' cross. As Lent went on the jar filled up.

On the Wednesday before Easter, as they broke up for the holidays, the Brother thought they should have a little ceremony to bring all this to an end. So they stood around the Cross and reminded Jesus that he could use these little acts of sacrifice to help someone He knew who was far away from God.

One little boy suddenly asked what they should do with the beans. What did they think? They should throw them up to Jesus! So they went out into the playground, and the teacher threw the beans in the air, as the clock struck 3pm and set them free to run off home.

On the first day back after Easter, as he passed through the Staff Room, the Brother caught sight of a letter in the La Croix on his desk. The title of the letter was: Sit down there! He ran back to the classroom and read it out loud to his assembled class. It read:

I feel someone has been praying for me, and I want to thank them but do not know how. I write in the hope that they may read this letter.

It was the Wednesday before Easter, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. I was standing outside a church in Paris watching people going in and out. They emerged with such light steps I wondered what was going on inside. So I went in, and saw on the side of the church people going into a sort of box, one by one.

As I watched, a man in black emerged from the box, took me by the arm, walked me into a room and said: Sit down there!...Forty Years of sin – Forgiven! I, who was so far away from God! Merci! Merci!

As a result of this experience, the teacher and the children started a group who would pray to Jesus for people known only to Him, but who were far away from God. That group still exists today.

A Ritual Blessing

Receive the mind of Christ.
May you be renewed with His peace.
Receive the vision of Christ.
May you see God's presence in the world around you.
Receive the Word of Christ.
May your ears be opened to the transforming Word of God.
Receive the prophetic challenge of Christ.
May your lips be opened to proclaim God's love and justice to all.
Receive the courage of Christ.
May your heart be broken open with compassion for God's people.
Receive the healing touch of Christ;
May your hands radiate God's healing mercy to all you touch.
Receive the passionate service of Christ.
May you walk humbly with the Lord in service to all humankind.

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Message of the WUCWO President General for February 2021

Working together for a culture of care

Dear friends,

we begin this year with a strong and tender call from the Holy Father: "I ask everyone to [...] become a prophetic witness of the culture of care, working to overcome the many existing social inequalities. This can only come about through a widespread and meaningful involvement on the part of women, in the family and in every social, political and institutional sphere. [...] Promoting a culture of care calls for a process of education. The 'compass' of social principles can prove useful and reliable in a variety of interrelated contexts. Let me offer a few examples:

- Educating people to care begins in the family, the natural and fundamental nucleus of society, in which we learn how to live and relate to others in a spirit of mutual respect. Yet families need to be empowered to carry out this vital and indispensable task. [...]
- Once more I encourage all those engaged in public service and in international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, and all those others who in various ways are involved in the areas of education and research, to work towards the goal of a 'more open and inclusive education, involving patient listening, constructive dialogue and better mutual understanding'." This message for the World Day of Peace of January 1, 2021 deserves our reading, reflection and prayer.

When I spend time praying and reflecting on how we can apply the magisterium of Pope Francis in WUCWO, I clearly discern that we can only end the globalised culture of indifference and move to a culture of care if we work more in a network, helping each other as organisations and deepening our formation.

Obviously, the starting point is our intimate union with Jesus, hand in hand with Mary, to grow in faith, hope and charity. Moreover, we must be convinced that to move forward in responding to the call to holiness today, the pastoral conversion of our organisations is an indispensable requirement.

Why not reflect together, during this special WUCWO Anniversary Year - extended to the whole of 2021 because of the unexpected pandemic - on what it means for us, the women of WUCWO, to have an integral ecological conversion that promotes a culture of care, as the Pope has asked us to do?

"This exercise – encountering one another aside from all legitimate differences – is the first step towards any change that can help generate a new cultural and consequently economic, political and social mentality. For you will never be able to undertake great things solely from a theoretical or individual perspective, without a spirit that drives you [...] to personal and communal activities"

(Video Message of Pope Francis, "Economy of Francesco," 21 November 2020).

I propose that we receive our formation in the months of February and March 2021 with full awareness of our resilience as Catholic women, taking advantage of the fact that during the Covid 19 emergency we have learned how useful digital media can be for us. In this, we will be supported by two Dicasteries: the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life (DLFL) and the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development (DPIHD).

In February, we will present the platform for achieving the Laudato Si Sustainable Goals, to be developed over the next seven years, as the Pope requested, starting from the local level. The Dicastery for Promoting Integral Development has chosen us as a worldwide Catholic association to initiate the pilot experience together with them. Those responsible for the Ecology sector will be in charge of these webinars.

We will offer four webinars, different according to languages and time zones, exclusively for women members of our organisations and their ecclesiastical assistants. In February: on Tuesday 16 in Spanish, Thursday 18 in English (2) and Thursday 25 in French. We hope you will not miss this opportunity. Taking this first step hand in hand with the Dicastery is crucial to start the process in the right direction.

In March, we will continue to form ourselves to be protagonists of the culture of care, in one of its fundamental aspects. With the support of Prof. Linda Ghisoni, Subsecretary of the DLFL, who accompanied us to Dakar for our General Assembly, we will present our recent publication on the prevention of abuse in families and schools. In addition, in these webinars we will launch WUCWO's Special Anniversary Year, so we will provide a brief presentation of several projects of various of our member organisations.

The March webinars will be open to special guests. I recommend inviting leaders of other Catholic organisations who are interested in getting to know WUCWO. In addition, I suggest you invite your family members. It is important that we understand that we are co-responsible and that we will get out of this crisis only if we are united.

I leave in your hands, dear friends, the dissemination of these unique events, which will help us to grow, share and serve better in our commitment to evangelisation and integral human development, collaborating with the gestation of a culture of care.

I wish you a fruitful Lent 2021!

Maria Lia Zervino, Servidora
WUCWO President General

Holy Land: Ancient olive tree remains a sign of hope



This massive olive tree outside Bethlehem is said to be one of the oldest in the world, dating back several thousand years. Abu-Issa stands in front. Photos: Annelies Wiebenga/WCC

This ancient 13-meter olive tree was here in the time of Jesus. Standing just north of Bethlehem, its umbrella of branches extends over the al-Walaja hills. Said to be one of the oldest tree in the world, it dates back several thousand years. While its exact age may be unknown, there is no doubt about the tree's deep spiritual significance for the surrounding communities.

"This tree is the most important in Palestine and it is sacred. God honoured this olive tree. As Palestinians we take this tree as our symbol. It has stood strong against all the natural and the human factors that can affect its existence," local farmer Abu-Issa explains.

Many people come to pray under the tree, receiving blessings and collecting the fallen leaves as keepsakes. Abu-Issa was elected by his family to be the third-generation caretaker of the tree. No one is able to visit it without him, yet he is eager to invite people of all faiths to enjoy the blessings of the tree.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic hit, the tree receives very few visitors. Abu-Issa is eager to invite more visitors once Covid-19 restrictions allow: "This tree is as important as the Church of the Nativity and the

Aqsa Mosque. All the nations should take care of the tree because it is a blessing from God," Abu-Issa reflects.

The tree is also an important source of income for the local community and is described as a "treasure" - as it provides a large amount of olives and oil of the highest quality. The multiple ancient trunks leak olive oil-scented sap, a living tribute to both the age of the tree and how it is brimming with life.

A stark contrast to the beautiful scenery in al-Walaja, the separation barrier bisects the hillside, cutting off residents of al-Walaja from most of their land: "As residents of al-Walaja we have experienced the loss of land. In 1948 we lost thousands of dunums which were mainly used for agriculture with 25 water springs. Nowadays the separation barrier is surrounding the village and on the lands of al-Walaja there is the settlement of Har Gilo, which is expanding," says Abu-Issa.

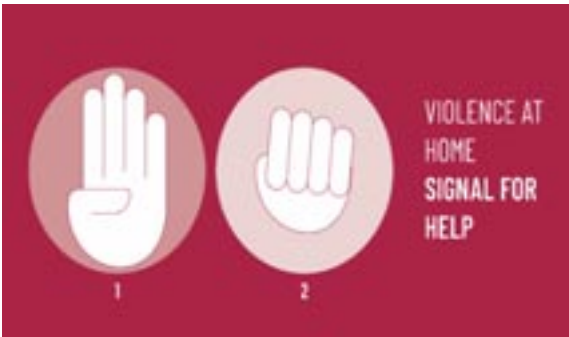
Residents are also worried that their land will be annexed and become part of 'Greater Jerusalem.' There are 70 demolition orders on houses in al-Walaja and a recently approved plan to expand the nearby settlement will certainly contribute to the pressure that the residents feel.

Many Palestinians across the West Bank face a similar threat, with settlers regularly destroying olive trees and harassing the harvesters. When asked about settler harassment, Abu-Issa explains that it has not happened here yet, but the old olive tree is perilously close to the separation barrier, only 20 meters, and could be vulnerable to future attack.

The tree remains a sign of both hope and resilience for the local communities and when asked about its future Abu-Issa replies: "It is all in God's hands. We are staying here and we hope for the best and pray for peace in the Holy Land. This land is God's land. One day he will bring justice for all nations."

Learn more about the WCC olive harvest initiative 2020: www.oikoumene.org/events/olive-harvest-initiative

Independent Catholic News
13th November 2020



WUCWO PRAYER INTENTION 2021

(This is the signal designed for victims of domestic violence to ask for help in these times of isolation at home while they are on a video call with someone that could help them. Watch: <https://youtu.be/AFLZEQFm7k>)

PRAYER FOR RESOLUTION #3:
LET US ELIMINATE VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN.

Dear Lord,

We pray for all touched by the evil of violence:

For the victim survivors;

For children who have experienced or witnessed violence;

For the family and friends of those abused;

For those who could have intervened but did not;

For the abusers;

For those lost to violence.

Please let them know that You, God, are with them at all times, even in their darkest hours. Give the women of WUCWO the opportunity and courage to be educated and to educate about this issue, to know the resources available, and the path to follow to help those in situations of violence, and the courage to act.

Guide all Your children to cultures of peace where the dignity of each person is respected. Where cultural or legislative change is required, grant us to collaborate and work to achieve this change.

Please give all women the strength, wisdom, compassion, and grace to know and bring Your message of love and hope to our families, our communities, our countries, and our world.

We ask this through the intercession of Our Lady, Queen of Peace.

Amen.