

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi and the peace of the Christ Child now and forever. Amen.



UCM News

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The Newspaper of the Union of Catholic Mothers

Winter 2021



Liverpool's 'third cathedral' reopens
- Page 6



COP26: Catholic lobby for Climate Justice at UN Summit
- Page 11

Cafod Anniversary Project 2022

In 2022 CAFOD will be celebrating sixty years of service to development on behalf of the Catholic community in England and Wales.

To mark the anniversary, The UCM and NBCW are collaborating to support a CAFOD project over the next year, both by raising funds through a Just Giving page (details at the end of this article) and by becoming more closely involved with the project through talks and progress reports, and so learning more about how CAFOD works, and how it supports women's empowerment. A prayer card has been produced in thanksgiving.

Details of the project: -

Building skills and resilience of vulnerable Lebanese and Refugee women in South and Mount Lebanon

Total investment: £40,000

Country: Lebanon

Duration: 12 months

This project, also located in Lebanon, targets women, Lebanese and Syrian, living in two marginalised areas (South and Mount Lebanon) where there is a lack of projects targeting women, and opportunities to live with dignity are diminishing due to poverty and poor living conditions. The situation of women and girls in these areas is of particular concern due to elevated gender-based violence in

confinement situations, their important role in the provision of health care and other social work, as well as their dependence on informal and insecure sources of income that have become inaccessible due to mobility and physical distancing measures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

By supporting this project, you can help our partner, Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) to ensure that vulnerable Lebanese and refugee women living in Mount Lebanon and in south Lebanon are empowered to access informal skills trainings opportunities (language and vocational courses) as well as information and awareness sessions.

With a contribution towards this project, you can support:

- 1) Training for 20 women in home and community health care work, giving them the chance to find work in healthcare
- 2) Vocational (e.g., Soap making, embroidery on canvas, make up, photography) and language training for 90 women
- 3) Information and awareness raising sessions for 90 women, covering topics such as How to cope with stress during COVID 19
- 4) The establishment of three women's committees to give information and support within their communities.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/lebanonprojectnbcwucm>

CAFOD Catholic Agency for Overseas Development



A prayer for CAFOD during our 60th year and for the women who founded us:

The Catholic Women's League, the National Board of Catholic Women and the Union of Catholic Mothers

Loving God,

You created and formed each one of us.
We give you thanks and praise.

For the women at the heart of our beginnings and our work, we give you thanks and praise.

For the women who respond to the need for care and compassion both near and far, we give you thanks and praise.

For our sisters who act for justice, stand in solidarity, speak the truth to power and reach out with a loving hand, we give you thanks and praise.

Loving God, we ask you to lift the women who face hardship, violence, rejection, and isolation.

Send out your spirit on all women this year.
May we remember the wonderful things that they have done, continue to do, and will do from this time forward through your grace.

Amen.

no one beyond reach

CAFOD is a charity registered in England and Wales. No. 1042010. Registered office: 100, Broad Street, London W1P 3JF. CAFOD is a member of the Christian Aid network.

Pope Francis on Thought for The Day

Source: BBC

His Holiness Pope Francis has given the following Message on BBC Radio Four's Thought for the Day this morning.

Dear BBC listeners, good morning!

Climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic have exposed our deep vulnerability and raised numerous doubts and concerns about our economic systems and the way we organize our societies.

We have lost our sense of security, and are experiencing a sense of powerlessness and loss of control over our lives.

We find ourselves increasingly frail and even fearful, caught up in a succession of "crises" in the areas of health care, the environment, food supplies and the economy, to say nothing of social, humanitarian and ethical crises. All these crises are profoundly interconnected. They also forecast a "perfect storm" that could rupture the bonds holding our society together within the greater gift of God's creation.

Every crisis calls for vision, the ability to formulate plans and put them rapidly into action, to rethink the future of the world, our common home, and to reassess our common purpose.

These crises present us with the need to take decisions, radical decisions that are not always easy. At the same time, moments of difficulty like these also present opportunities, opportunities that we must not waste.

We can confront these crises by retreating into isolationism, protectionism and exploitation. Or we can see in them a real chance for change, a genuine moment of conversion, and not simply in a spiritual sense.

This last approach alone can guide us towards a brighter horizon. Yet it can only be pursued through a renewed sense of shared responsibility for our world, and an effective solidarity based on justice, a sense of our common destiny and a recognition of the unity of our human family in God's plan for the world.

All this represents an immense cultural challenge. It means giving priority to the common good, and it calls for a change in perspective, a new outlook, in which the dignity of every human being, now and in the future, will guide our ways of thinking and acting.

The most important lesson we can take from these crises is our need to build together, so that there will no longer be any borders, barriers or political walls for us to hide behind.

Some days ago, on 4 October, I met with

religious leaders and scientists to sign a Joint Appeal in which we called upon ourselves and our political leaders to act in a more responsible and consistent manner. I was impressed by something said by one of the scientists present at that meeting. He told us: "If things continue as they are, in fifty years' time my baby granddaughter will have to live in an unliveable world".

We cannot allow this to happen!

It is essential that each of us be committed to this urgent change of direction, sustained by our own faith and spirituality. In the Joint Appeal, we spoke of the need to work responsibly towards a "culture of care" for our common home, but also for ourselves, and the need to work tirelessly to eliminate "the seeds of conflicts: greed, indifference, ignorance, fear, injustice, insecurity and violence".

Humanity has never before had at its disposal so many means for achieving this goal. The political decision makers who will meet at COP26 in Glasgow are urgently summoned to provide effective responses to the present ecological crisis and in this way to offer concrete hope to future generations. And it is worth repeating that each of us - whoever and wherever we may be - can play our own part in changing our collective response to the unprecedented threat of climate change and



Pope John Paul I

the degradation of our common home.
Producers: Helen Grady and Julian Miglierini
Sound engineer: Philip Bull
Voiceover: Joseph Barderrama
(The recording is available on: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0b113ly)

Source: Independent Catholic News
30th October 2021

**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,
at ucmnatsec@yahoo.co.uk**

Deadline extended for first part of synodal process

Source: Vatican News

The General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops has extended the deadline for the first phase of the synodal process by four months, in order to "provide a greater opportunity for the people of God to have an authentic experience of listening and dialogue".

In a statement on Friday, the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops said that it has extended "the deadline for the presentation of the synthesis of the consultations by the Episcopal Conference,

the Oriental Catholic Churches sui iuris and other ecclesial bodies" to 15 August 2022.

The statement notes that extension comes in response to numerous communications from various quarters in these first weeks of the synodal process requesting an extension of the duration of the first phase.

These communications, the statement says, "are truly an encouraging confirmation of those in the Church who are committed to celebrating the first phase of the synodal process... constituted by the consultation of the People of God."

Further explaining the decision to extend the deadline, the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops notes that it evaluated the requests, always seeking the good of the Church, "aware that a synodal Church is a Church that listens, and considering that this first phase is essential for this synodal path."Pope Francis officially launched the two-year synodal process, themed "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission," on Sunday, 10 October.

A week later, on 17 October, the diocesan phase was kicked off in dioceses across the world. The

initial deadline for the presentation of the synthesis on the part of the Synods of Oriental Churches and the Episcopal Conferences was April 2022 but this latest decision from the General Secretariat extends the first phase deadline by four months.

A second, continental phase will take place from September 2022 to March 2023, while the third, universal phase will begin with the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2023.

Source: Independent Catholic News
31st October 2021

700th Anniversary of Dante’s death

This year we celebrate the Year of Dante, marking 700 years since the poet’s death on September 14, 1321. It is fitting that Dante died on the day when we commemorate the triumph of the Holy Cross, as he narrates the drama of salvation as it plays out concretely over the course of life, showing its eternal significance.

The unparalleled achievement of his Divine Comedy stands as one of the greatest artistic and cultural achievements of the whole Christian tradition. Dante truly deserves the epithet of the “supreme poet” as he weaves classical literature, Catholic theology, and medieval culture into a complete and seamless vision of life. Splendor of Light Eternal – Pope Francis fittingly used these words to begin his apostolic letter, marking this year’s centenary: “Dante knew how to express with poetic beauty the depth of the mystery of God and love.”

The Pope invites us to read Dante’s Comedy as “an epic journey, indeed, a true pilgrimage, personal and interior, yet also communal, ecclesial, social and historical,” inasmuch as “it represents the paradigm for every authentic journey whereby mankind is called to leave behind what the poet calls ‘the threshing-floor that maketh us so proud’ (Par. XXII, 151), in order to attain a new state of harmony, peace and happiness.” Francis picks upon the heart of Dante’s poetic journey through hell, purgatory, and heaven as representing conversion – his own, as he began lost in the woods, midway through his life, and also ours, guiding us to reflect on the eternally lasting consequences of our choices.

Joining a chorus of papal praises, Francis certainly was not the first pope to point us to Dante. The great Florentine has always been considered a master of the Christian imagination, translating the Church’s theology into powerful, poetic images. Pope Benedict XV spoke of his great glory in being “a Christian poet, to have sung with almost divine notes those Christian ideals that he so passionately contemplated in all their splendor and beauty.”

St. Paul VI reminded us that “Dante is ours! Ours, by which we mean to say, of the Catholic faith, for he radiated love for Christ; ours, because he loved the Church deeply and sang her glories.” If it is true

that Dante belongs to us, as part of our great patrimony, we need to lay hold of his verses, allowing them to uplift us and inform our own imaginative meditation.

St. John Paul II points us to the ultimate reason why we should read Dante. We can follow along with his transcendent pilgrimage, allowing him to guide us in moving our hearts toward heaven: “Trasumanare: to pass beyond the human. This was Dante’s ultimate effort: to ensure that the burden of what is human would not destroy the divine within us, nor that the greatness of the divine would cancel the value of what is human.

For this reason, the poet rightly interpreted his own personal history and that of all humanity in a theological key.” Pope Benedict XVI agreed that Dante can guide us to contemplate the eternal, bringing us before the origin and end of all things: “The cosmic excursion in which Dante, in his ‘Divine Comedy,’ wishes to involve the reader, ends in front of the perennial Light that is God himself, before that Light which is at the same time ‘the love that moves the sun and the other stars’ (Par. XXXIII, v. 145). Light and love are one and the same. They are the primordial creative powers that move the universe.”

Adding to this powerful testimony from the popes, I would urge you, before the Year of Dante ends, to start reading the Divine Comedy! There are many translations available, although I would recommend Anthony Esolen’s (The Modern Library), as he understands Dante’s theological and artistic vision and provides helpful notes on Dante’s many literary and historical references. Some readers complain that Dante wrote too much about his own contemporaries and the political intrigues of Florence in which he was entangled. Yet, it is in these details that we find his great cultural penetration. He could draw on the classical tradition, with Virgil as guide, alongside of the Catholic faith, and use both to penetrate the dynamics of human relationships, society, and

politics, showing just how intertwined they are with the next life. In the Divine Comedy, the supreme poet sets out on a pilgrimage, not just to visit the afterlife, but to save his own soul, finding a path through the “dark wilderness.” He finds many people he knew along the way – in torment, purification, and glory – who teach him the importance of human choice in shaping our eternal destiny. Dante’s poetic genius humanized theology to awaken an imaginative vision that could see into the soul to read the transcendent stakes of our choices. For that reason alone, we should enter his verse, to gain greater insight into our souls and to penetrate there the direction of our own pilgrimage through this dark wilderness of life.

Dr. R. Jared Staudt, Associate Superintendent for Mission and Formation for the Archdiocese of Denver and Visiting Associate Professor for the Augustine Institute.

Source: Catholic World Report, 14th September 2021



Dante Alighieri shown holding a copy of the "Divine Comedy" next to the entrance to Hell, the seven terraces of Mount Purgatory, and the city of Florence, with the spheres of Heaven above, in Domenico di Michelino's 1465 fresco. (Image: Jastrow/Wikipedia)

Bishop of Salford sends climate message to world leaders: the eyes of the world are watching

Tamala Ceasar, Sep 3rd, 2021

On Friday 3rd September, the head of the Catholic Church in Manchester was joined by Salford parishioners and members of the Union of Catholic Mothers to unfurl a large green eco banner. The Bishop of Salford, the Right Reverend John Arnold, walked the large 'Eyes of the World' banner decorated with wide-open eyes into Salford Cathedral, where a special service was staged live. The 'Eyes of the World' banner service was to send a message to the UK government that there are high expectations for the outcomes of the climate talks (COP26) in Glasgow, in November, to tackle the climate crisis.

Environment spokesperson for the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Bishop John said: "The world leaders at COP26 must be real 'leaders'. They must not stand back from urgent decisions that they might feel will be unpopular. They must make the difficult decisions and be sure to follow with the actions required. They must stand together, making a global response, where every nation and every person is included. There must be no empty rhetoric or claims that this is someone else's problem.

"We have come to a moment of reckoning- climate change is having a more radical and damaging impact sooner than many of the climate scientists had been predicting. While even here in Europe we have seen record temperatures, droughts, floods and wildfires, the impact of climate change is so much greater in the poorest countries of the world."

During the service there was a reflection on Pope Francis's Encyclical on the environment, Laudato Si, which states: "...unless citizens control political power - national, regional and municipal - it will

not be possible to control damage to the environment..." Bishop John's clarion call comes as the Catholic Church celebrates the Season of Creation during the month of September - a month dedicated to action and prayer for the protection of creation. The parishioners of Salford are united on the need for real urgency in acting on the climate crisis.

"We all need to be aware of the damage being done to our earth, and the 'Eyes of the World' campaign is promoting that knowledge so that we can all understand what is happening. "It is so important that we all understand that each and every one of us has a part to play and this is a matter of real urgency," said Bishop John.

Kathleen Henderson a member of the Union of Catholic Mothers attended the Live streamed service at the Cathedral. "World leaders have a duty of care to support those in need across the world, and they need to work together to stop temperatures rising beyond a disastrous 1.5 degrees," she said. Henderson continued: "The climate is in crisis, and it affects us all. Each of us has a part to play and we all have a responsibility to care and protect our planet and people, and ensure a greener, more resilient future for us all."

CAFOD's representatives for the Manchester region, Simon Holleron concluded: "The parishioners of Salford, Bishop John Arnold and members of The Union for Catholic Mothers inspire us by showing that when we work together, we can raise awareness, get our voices heard and bring about change. With people across the UK taking part in the Eyes of the World campaign, we hope that together our voices are heard which the UK government and world leaders cannot ignore."

Unveiled on the opening day of the G7 summit in Cornwall, in June the stunt began as a giant artwork comprised of thousands of eyes, handcrafted by children from St Mary's primary school in Falmouth.

It has now morphed into a banner, which has already travelled to Blackpool Tower, the Welsh Assembly, Brighton Old Pier, the White Cliffs of Dover, Oxford Radcliffe Camera and the Houses of Parliament. Its destination will be the Scottish Event Campus in Glasgow at the UN climate conference, COP26.

Overseas development charity, CAFOD, have coordinated the journey of the banner, and hopes that as COP26 draws closer, thousands more school children, young people and adults will get involved in the Eyes of the World banner campaign.

For more information on the Eyes of the World campaign, visit: Eyes of the world campaign resources for children | CAFOD



Photo: Holly Jones, Diocese of Salford



FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Hello everyone,

Good news, we are starting up meeting with each other. The first UCM foundation I went to in September was so lively, everyone catching up with news, planning future activities, the atmosphere was great.

As I write this article, COP26 is taking place in Glasgow and we are all waiting for the outcome. Some parishes have started a Laudato Si living simple group and I know members are getting involved. In their newsletter they ask parishioners to pledge a different weekly action, i.e. walk to church and leave the car at home.

We are about to enter Advent, which means "coming". Some see it as new beginnings, there is great anticipation in families awaiting the birth of a baby. Christians around the world are waiting to celebrate the birth of Christ.

In churches the Advent wreath appears. This is a circle symbolising God's unending love. Within the wreath there are four candles caring the advent message, 1. Hope.

Peace. 3. Love and 4 Joy. A 5th candle is lit on Christmas Day welcoming baby Jesus.

On behalf of the National Committee, I would like to wish you and your families a Happy and Holy Christmas.

Lord God, may we your people who look forward to the birthday of Christ, experience the joy of salvation and celebrate the feast with love and thanksgiving.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

**Margaret McDonald,
National President**

More than 60 Peers speak out against Assisted Suicide Bill

Source: Lord Alton/Right to Life

The Assisted Dying Bill had its Second Reading in the House of Lords today, after more than seven hours and speeches from over 60 Peers opposing the Bill.

Lord Alton writes: "Given the Bill does not have Government support, it is very unlikely to be given the time in Parliament to be debated in the House of Commons and have any chance of becoming law. "The very large number of Peers who spoke against the Bill signifies that assisted suicide and euthanasia are strongly opposed by a large proportion of the House. The content and the quality of their speeches also demonstrated beyond any doubt that this Bill is unsafe and should not pass into law. "It is clear that many within Parliament robustly oppose this Bill."

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, officer of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Dying Well and a Professor of Palliative Medicine, said: "Peers have today demonstrated a powerful opposition to this bill. Many vulnerable people are unaware of the dangers in going down this road, as this bill has hidden dangers, unsafe qualifying criteria, and potentially opens the door to even wider legislation. "Instead, the focus should be on pressing the Government to do more to ensure good palliative and end-of-life care for everyone, everywhere in this country."

Baroness Campbell of Surbiton, Founder of Not Dead Yet UK and long-term campaigner on disability equality and human rights, said: "Passing this law would be a dark day in our nation's history.

It would run counter to our duty to protect those in the most vulnerable situations, and would exacerbate their fears, through insidious pressure, of being regarded as an expendable burden. As has happened elsewhere, the Bill would doubtless be extended. "No major disability rights group in the UK supports legalising assisted suicide. What they support is immediate and sustained improvement in their care. Now is not the time to abandon them to the desperate temptation of an assisted suicide under the guise of compassion."

Baroness Grey-Thompson DBE, Crossbench Life Peer and one of Britain's greatest Paralympic athletes, said: "The legal, medical and social implications of the Bill for disabled people are enormous. They need to know that doctors are obliged to do all they can to help everyone to live a good life. The current law keeps unconscious discrimination and social bias towards disabled people in check."

Right to Life said in a statement: "The assisted suicide lobby would likely have pushed for a vote at Second Reading if they felt they had the numbers to win a division. However, it looks like they realised that they would be unlikely to have sufficient support to win a vote today.

"In the House of Lords, at Second Reading, a Bill does not need to win a vote for it to progress to the next stage in the Lords, but Baroness Meacher could have divided the House in the hope of winning the vote to demonstrate support for introducing assisted suicide from the House of Lords. If she had won this division, it would have helped give additional momentum to the assisted

suicide lobby's campaign to introduce assisted suicide.

"The Bill will now to proceed to Committee Stage, but is unlikely to be given time in Parliament to be debated in the House of Commons and become law, given that it is not supported by the Government."

Source: Independent Catholic News
23rd October 2021

LINKS

Lord Alton's speech -

www.davidalton.net/2021/10/22/good-to-stand-

[and-speak-with-62-peers-today-opposing-the-meacher-bill-assisted-suicide/](https://righttolife.org.uk/news/meacher-assisted-suicide-bill-debate?utm_source=SUBSCRIPTION+LIST&utm_campaign=0ab076d3aa-meacher-bill-failed&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_9297ae5f15-0ab076d3aa-151642353)

See more speeches and videos from today's debate: https://righttolife.org.uk/news/meacher-assisted-suicide-bill-debate?utm_source=SUBSCRIPTION+LIST&utm_campaign=0ab076d3aa-meacher-bill-failed&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_9297ae5f15-0ab076d3aa-151642353 and Faith leaders warn of risks of Assisted Dying Bill - <https://rcdow.org.uk/cardinal/news/faith-leaders-warn-of-risks-of-assisted-dying-bill-to-vulnerable/>



Submitting copy for next issue

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

10th January 2022

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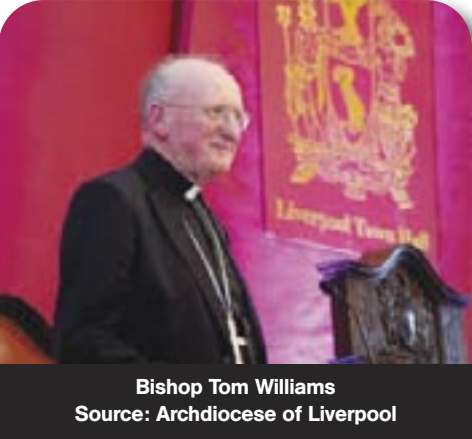
GOLDEN WEDDING
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David and Julia TAYLOR, St. Ignatius Foundation, Ossett, Leeds Diocese
Ros and Arthur GEDDES, St Peter's Foundation, Birmingham Archdiocese
Monica and Trevor CARRINGTON, St Peter's Foundation, Birmingham Archdiocese
Sue and Ron MEESE, Past Diocesan President, St. Francis Foundation, Ascot, Portsmouth Diocese
Rosemary & Paul KING, St. Aelred's Foundation, York, Middlesbrough Diocese

90th BIRTHDAY
Sheila LYONS, St Peter's Foundation, Birmingham Archdiocese
Pam GREEN, St Mary's Foundation, South Wigston, Nottingham Diocese
Joyce POTTER, Our Lady & St. Walstan's Foundation, Costessey, East Anglia Diocese
Margaret TILL, St Mary's Foundation, Liverpool Archdiocese

80th BIRTHDAY
Monica CARRINGTON, St Peter's Foundation, Birmingham Archdiocese
Bernadette KENT, St Peter's Foundation, Birmingham Archdiocese
Maureen BROWNE, St. Francis Foundation, Ascot, Portsmouth Diocese
Eileen BERKELEY, St. Francis Foundation, Ascot, Portsmouth Diocese
Sue DOVET, St. Francis Foundation, Ascot, Portsmouth Diocese
Meriel CARROLL, Holy Name of Mary Foundation, Middlesbrough Diocese

70th BIRTHDAY
Mary POND, Selsdon Foundation, Southwark Archdiocese
Gillian TOMEI, Selsdon Foundation, Southwark Archdiocese
Mary CAMPBELL, Selsdon Foundation, Southwark Archdiocese
Maria HARRISON, St. Francis Foundation, Ascot, Portsmouth Diocese
Pauline KAZNOWSKI, President Cosham Foundation, Portsmouth Diocese

Liverpool's long-serving Auxiliary Bishop honoured



On Thursday 30 September, Bishop Tom Williams, Auxiliary Bishop of Liverpool, received the city's highest civic honour - the Freedom of the City of Liverpool - during a special ceremony at Liverpool's Town Hall.

The ceremony at the Town Hall began with a rendition of the 'Theme from Z Cars' - a nod to Bishop Tom's life-long support of Everton FC - and featured contributions from not only the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Mary Rasmussen, but also Deputy Mayor Jane Corbett and BBC Radio Merseyside broadcaster Roger Phillips.

Mark Bolesfield, Director of Regeneration and Economy from Liverpool City Council, read the resolution conferring the honorary freedom of the city on Bishop Tom. This was granted him in January 2020 but the pandemic meant the ceremony had been put on hold until now. Bishop Tom, who has served in the city for almost half a century, was born off Scotland Road and was ordained priest in the city's Metropolitan Cathedral in 1972. He has served at St Francis of Assisi in Garston, Sacred Heart on Hall Lane, Our Lady of Walsingham parish in Netherton, Our Lady Immaculate Parish in St Domingo Road and St Anthony's on Scotland Road.

His roles across the years range from early chaplaincy of Bellerive Grammar School through to governor and chair of governors in various archdiocesan primary and secondary schools. During nine years bridging the late 70s and early 80s, meanwhile, he was chaplain at both the 'old' Liverpool Royal Infirmary and the 'new' Royal Liverpool Hospital.

In 1997 he became chair of Project Jennifer, the scheme set up by parishioners and others in the Scotland Road area to work with the city council and businesses to regenerate the city's north end by delivering a new district centre.

He also worked with Matalan founder John Hargreaves to establish the NSPCC Liverpool Service Centre on the site of the former Great Homer Street market.

The Mayor of Liverpool, Mary Rasmussen, said: "You truly are a man of the people. Bishop Tom, you deserve to be an honorary freeman of the city of Liverpool. You're an inspiration, a guiding light, a listening ear and a community leader, speaking up for the area and actively helping make a difference to the lives of local people, and I'm so pleased this has been recognised. Bishop Tom Williams has dedicated his life to serving his parishioners and the wider community in and around Scotland Road and the Freedom honour is truly deserved." Deputy Mayor, Jane Corbett, said: "Tom is a man of the people but he's a priest of the people and he's a priest from the people and that - for the north end of the city as well as the south end - means a massive amount because you know that he's there for you and he understands where you're coming from and where you're trying to go as well."

Bishop Tom Williams said: "I am very surprised and humbled at this great honour. Five generations of my family have been part of this city and it has been a privilege to serve here for 49 years. This is truly home to me, and I will always be grateful for the support which I have received."

Source: Independent Catholic News 6th October 2021

Archdiocese of Birmingham divests from fossil fuels

Caroline Bletso, Sep 21st, 2021

The Archdiocese of Birmingham has divested from companies which extract fossil fuels with immediate effect, cementing its commitment to action in the climate emergency.

The Archdiocese has changed its policy to exclude investments in any company which derives more than 5% of its revenues from fossil fuels and is joining the ranks of all those who have committed to attaining net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. Divestment in fossil fuels is one of the first steps of many which we will take to ensure that we will not fund the industries which destroy God's creation and impact the poor.

We are pleased to be part of the global divestment announcement to be made by the World Council of Churches, the Laudato Si' Movement, Operation Noah, Green Anglicans and GreenFaith on October 25, joining four Catholic dioceses and many other faith organisations from around the world who have announced their commitment to ethical investment.

Fossil fuel divestment is a powerful act of faith that hundreds of religious institutions around the world have taken to respond to the climate emergency. It increases pressure on governments and financial institutions to end financing for the fossil fuel industry. Furthermore, an increasing number of faith investors are investing in solutions

to the climate crisis, and providing access to clean, affordable energy, including zero-carbon energy solutions for the 800 million people without access to electricity.

Archbishop Bernard Longley said: "Our commitment to divestment in fossil fuels is a response both to the cry of the earth and of the poor, taking us one step further towards its consolation.

"We join many other faith organisations who are making the ethical choice to 'shun companies that are harmful to human or social ecology... and to the environment', as Pope Francis calls us to do in the Vatican's manual Journeying Towards Care For Our Common Home. To see so many united in this aim gives me great hope for the future."

James Buchanan, Bright Now Campaign Manager at Operation Noah, said: "It is wonderful news that the Archdiocese of Birmingham has taken the significant step of divesting from fossil fuel companies - joining a movement of more than 200 Catholic organisations around the world. "As the UK prepares to host the crucial UN climate talks, COP26, later this year, we hope this will inspire more Catholic dioceses and religious orders to divest from fossil fuels and invest in solutions to the climate crisis."

Source: Independent Catholic News 22nd September 2021

Buckfast bees find home with Presentation Sisters

Sister Susan Reichert PBVM, Sep 23rd, 2021

In this Season of Creation, we are encouraged to do or take something on that will help our planet....

In our efforts to care more for our earth, we decided to invest in a bee hive. Our next-door neighbours, Julia and Eric, were a great help - they had a hive of bees AND a spare hive. Her son, Daniel and his wife are bee keepers and so our adventure started.

In late June, the hive was placed in an alcove in the church cemetery beside our house. Daniel took himself off to collect a swarm of bees from Buckfast. He had suggested these bees because they are gentle and had been bred as far back as 1919 (at Buckfast) so that they are more acclimatised to England. We were also conscious of the school children being next door and their playing field being on the other side of the hedge. The bees arrived and were put in the hive but unfortunately some had died on the way and the others were struggling.

Daniel, the beekeeper, got back onto Buckfast - they needed to know in case there was a problem being bred in the bees. Another swarm was brought up and housed in the hive. These are thriving.

We have planted bee-friendly bushes and flowers in our garden and in the graveyard. It is amazing to see them working in our garden and queueing to get into the hive to take back their nectar. As a side line - they are doing a great job pollinating our flowers and bushes. We are now collecting our empty jam-jars ready for the honey... ..

From cathedrals to candles, from vestments to the Easter Vigil Exsultet, the church honours, depicts, and implements honeybees into its representation of life offered for others. Common words, like the "cell" in a monastery, derive from the cells of a hive. It's a group of celibate worker bees, supporting one another for the survival of the whole. The high altar in St Peter's Basilica is covered in bees. St John Chrysostom once shared in a homily:

"The bee is more honoured than other animals, not because it labours, but because it labours for others."

Martin Marklin took up beekeeping as a sideline to his main business producing thousands of handcarved liturgical candles each year at the Marklin Candle workshop in Contoocook, New Hampshire. Beekeeping became its own vocation, however, and the more Marklin learned about the life of bees, the more he saw the ways in which the beehive reflects the early church. Martin has a five minute video called Be The Bee in which he parallels the bees and us as Church.

<https://youtu.be/ZxDesicz62g>

In the light of seeing the video, reflect on the following questions -

Martin Marklin says he became interested in beekeeping when he realized he "had no idea how the bees did what they did." What aspects of your work are you curious about?

How might exploring those areas open up your imagination? Is there any anxiety you need to overcome to do this?

Marklin says the bee community "is reflective of how the early church was." Do you see powerful metaphors for the church around you? In what ways do you "labour for others"?

Is that a useful mindset in your organization?

As a candle maker, Marklin derives joy from knowing that the work of his hands becomes "the light of Christ in the world." Do you see your work in that way? Could you?

Markin urges everyone to "be the bee" -- to find beauty and transform it into something even more beautiful. Are there places in your life and work where you can do that?

Finally, we invited the parishioners and schoolchildren to get involved, by donating some crocus bulbs helping to create a carpet of crocuses in the cemetery at St Joseph's - and provide food for our bees. We hope to get the children in St Joseph's school to plant the bulbs.

(This was first published in Faith & Leadership: www.faihandleadership.com

Source Independent Catholic News 24th September 2021

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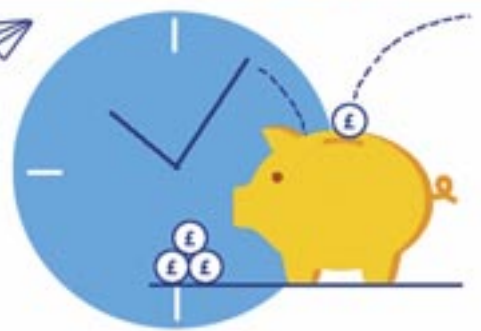
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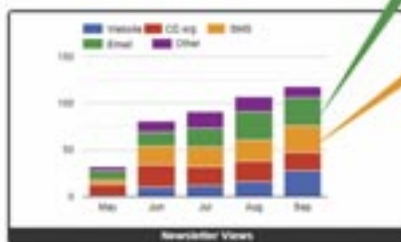
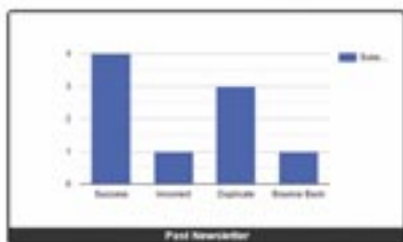
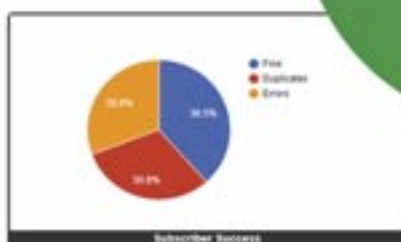
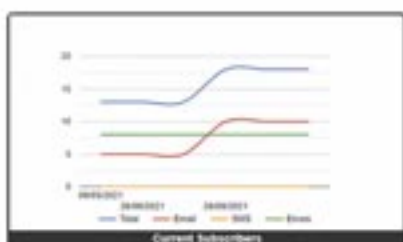
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Liverpool's 'third cathedral' reopens after lockdown with new exhibition

Source: Archdiocese of Liverpool
Peter Heneghan, Oct 7th, 2021

Following 18 months of closure, one of Liverpool's architectural hidden gems has reopened its doors. The Lutyens Crypt is launching a brand new exhibition, co-curated by the local community and developed through lockdown.

The Crypt, buried deep under the Metropolitan Cathedral, is all that remains of towering plans for a cathedral for Liverpool, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens in 1930. It was due to become the largest cathedral in the world, but the project was abandoned after the Second World War.

With four vast neo-classical halls featuring intricate brickwork, leadlight windows and vaulted ceilings, the Crypt is an unexpected and ambitious contrast to the striking, modernist cathedral that now sits above it. The dramatic space is often referred to as 'Liverpool's third cathedral'. Members of the public can once again visit the atmospheric Lutyens Crypt - which now includes a permanent exhibition exploring its fascinating story and the cathedral-that-never- was. Co-curated by members of the local community Secrets of the Crypt takes visitors back through hundreds of years

of history to discover the people and stories behind this astonishing space, including:

- Apprentice bricklayer 19-year-old Arthur Brady, who was the only man left working on the crypt when his colleagues were called up to fight in WWII. Once he was called up, construction came to a standstill for 15 years.
- The crypt as a focal point for celebration and sadness in the city. It became an air-raid shelter for local people during WWII; and later saw more than 1 million people turning out for the visit of the Pope in 1982 and an outdoor Mass for more than 9,000 people on 16 April 1989, the day after the Hillsborough disaster.

The exhibition forms part of the National Lottery Heritage Funded Metropolitan Perspectives project, which connects members of the local community with heritage and creative professionals to create a range of exciting new visitor experiences within the Grade II* listed Cathedral.

Volunteer and local resident Debi Eastwood says: "I'd not visited the Cathedral before starting this project, but I've loved learning about its fascinating history. As part of the project, we attended workshops and training days, and spent time in the Cathedral archives. It's amazing to think that things we discovered have made it into the



Atmospheric Metropolitan Cathedral Crypt

final exhibition. I've made friends and learned so much thanks to this project."

The second phase of the project - a brand new immersive audio tour of the Cathedral - will launch in mid-October.

Entrance to the Crypt also includes access to the Crypt's glittering Treasury, which contains a priceless collection of church artefacts and sacred vessels - the largest of such kind in the North West.

The Lutyens Crypt is open Monday - Saturday 10am - 4pm. Tickets are priced at £5 and can be purchased from the Cathedral welcome desk. For more information visit: www.liverpoolmetrocathedral.org.uk or email enquiries@metcathedral.org.uk.

Source: Independent Catholic News 8th October 2021

Everything you need to know about the miracle of liquefaction of the blood of Saint Januarius

Naples, Italy, Sep 18, 2021 / 10:38 am (CNA).

On Sept. 19, the Catholic Church celebrates the feast of St. Januarius, bishop, martyr, and patron saint of Naples, Italy. Traditionally, on this day and on two other occasions a year, his blood, which is kept in a glass ampoule in the shape of a rounded cruet, liquifies. According to documentation cited by the Italian media Famiglia Cristiana, the miracle has taken place since at least 1389, the first instance on record.

Here are the key facts:

1. The blood is kept in two glass ampoules.

The dried blood of St. Januarius, who died around 305 A.D., is preserved in two glass ampoules, one larger than the other, in the Chapel of the Treasury of the Naples Cathedral.

2. The liquefaction is a miracle

The Church believes that the miracle takes place in response to the dedication and prayers of the faithful. When the miracle occurs, the mass of reddish dried blood, adhering to one side of the ampoule, turns into completely liquid blood, covering the glass from side to side.

3. The blood traditionally liquifies three times a year.

The saint's blood traditionally liquefies three times a year: in

commemoration of the transfer of his remains to Naples (the Saturday before the first Sunday in May); on his liturgical feast (Sept. 19), and on the anniversary of the eruption of nearby Mount Vesuvius in 1631 when his intercession was invoked and the city was spared from the effects of the eruption (Dec. 16).

4. The liquefaction can take days.

The liquefaction process sometimes takes hours or even days, but sometimes it doesn't happen at all. Normally, after a period that can range from two minutes to an hour, the solid mass turns red and begins to bubble. The ampoules, which contain a dark solid mass, are enclosed in a reliquary that is held up and rotated sideways by a priest to show the blood has liquified. This is usually done by the Archbishop of Naples while the people pray. According to the Italian Catholic magazine Famiglia Cristiana, the reliquary with the ampoules remains on view for the faithful for eight days, during which they can kiss it while a priest turns it to show that the blood is still liquid. Then it is returned to the safety vault and locked away inside the Chapel of the Treasury of the Cathedral.

5. The faithful venerate the relic every year.

With the exclamation: "The miracle has happened!" the people approach the priest holding the reliquary to kiss the relic and sing the

"Te Deum" in thanksgiving.

6. There is no scientific explanation.

Several investigations have already been conducted in the past to find a scientific explanation that answers the question of how something solid can suddenly liquefy, but none has been satisfactory so far.

7. The liquefaction does not always occur.

When the blood doesn't liquefy, the Neapolitans take it as an omen of misfortune. The blood did not liquefy in September 1939, 1940, 1943, 1973, 1980, nor in December 2016. The relic also remained solid the year Naples elected a communist mayor, but it spontaneously liquefied when the late Archbishop of New York, Cardinal Terence Cooke, visited the St. Januarius shrine in 1978.

8. The blood has liquefied in the presence of some popes.

In 2015, while Pope Francis was giving some advice to the religious, priests, and seminarians of Naples, the blood liquefied again. The last time the liquefaction occurred before a pontiff was in 1848 with Pius IX. It did not happen when John Paul II visited the city in October 1979 or in the presence of Benedict XVI in October 2007. Catholic World Report 19th September 2021

Cardinal Parolin: World needs women's leadership and skills



Source: Vatican News
Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin delivered a video message on behalf of Pope Francis on Monday, to participants at the Women's Forum G20 Italy discussing the theme 'A She-covetry for all, Uniting Power with purpose for a new Inclusive Leadership.'

Cardinal Parolin welcomed the meeting, saying the world needs women's partnership, leadership, and skills to face the monumental challenges of today. The meeting participants are gathered in Milan for a two-day meeting focusing on the theme of 'A She-covetry for all, Uniting Power with purpose for a new Inclusive Leadership' that aims to raise awareness on the critical role women play and the positive

impact on social and economic recovery efforts. Cardinal Parolin acknowledged the great challenges the world is facing due to the pandemic and the huge efforts needed to recover and assist those most affected, many traumatised and in dire situations. He noted how Pope Francis has often underscored "the irreplaceable contribution of women in building a world that can be a home for all", and in particular how they are "concrete and know how to weave life's threads with quiet patience."

In the face of today's global social, economic and climate challenges, he noted the role women play in promoting a sense of "selflessness", especially needed today in order to rise above short-sighted interests that only look to immediate profitability. Underscoring the vital importance of participation and cooperation of all members of society, Cardinal Parolin said all are called to embrace the common vocation to be active builders of better world. He added, a renewed sense of humanity and the profound dignity that characterises every human person will go a long way in contributing to these efforts.

In conclusion, he recalled Pope Francis' strong encouragement that every girl and young woman everywhere may have access to a quality education in order to flourish and dedicate themselves to the development and progress of cohesive societies.

Source: Independent Catholic News 19th October 2021

Bishop Mark O'Toole becomes Member of the International Council for Catechesis

The Bishop of Plymouth, the Right Reverend Mark O'Toole, Chair of the Bishops' Conference's Department for Evangelisation and Discipleship has been named a member of the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelisation's International Council for Catechesis.

The Council has the aim of "studying the most important issues in catechesis and encouraging the sharing of experiences between experts in the field, on the one hand, and the Apostolic See and the Episcopal Conferences, on the other."

The Council has recently assisted the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelisation's work in preparing the new Directory for Catechesis and the establishment of the Ministry of Catechist. Pope Francis has appointed fifteen new Members to the Council.

About the appointment, Bishop Mark O'Toole said: I was surprised and humbled to receive the notification that I have been appointed a member of the International Council for Catechesis. Pope Francis has consistently stressed the vital role that catechesis plays in the New Evangelisation. This is close to my heart. I experience this appointment as an invitation to deepen my own encounter with the Lord, to invite others who do not know the beauty of this, to come to know Jesus, and to help all Catholics witness to the wonder of our encounter with Him.

Source: CBCEW 4th November 2021

Recycle news – easy ways we can help



BLISTER PACKS

I discovered recently that Superdrug will take used tablet blister packs providing the Superdrug has a pharmacy on site. (Not just the shops) Why is this kept quiet? I think most people will engage with simple acts which can make even a small difference. My parish has a box at the back of church and I am constantly amazed at how quickly it fills up and every pack returned is one less in landfill.



SELECTION BOXES

So much plastic for very little chocolate this Christmas. Please think about just how much plastic we go through for just one day. Total weight 89g and that includes the plastic! priced from 89p to £1.25.

CRISP PACKETS

Calling all crisp lovers!
Did you know it takes 80 years for a crisp packet to decompose? Did you know that 150 of them can be ironed together and turned into a survival blanket for a homeless person which will help to keep their sleeping bag dry and insulated? The Iron Man are collecting crisp packets and will be making these blankets. If you can collect them between now and Christmas, we would be happy to take them off your hands. (Preferably washed first in warm soapy water. Postal Address is 37 Marley's Way, Frome, Somerset, BA113NG. For more information: - <http://www.facebook.com/ironmanfrome/>



MASCARA WANDS

Ladies, please do not throw away your used mascara wands. Instead, it would be fantastic if you could clean the wand with warm soapy water, place them in a Ziploc bag and post them to Linjoy Wildlife Sanctuary and Rescue (Midlands). Postal Address 15 Lincoln Road, Stapenhill, Burton -on-Trent, Staffs, DE15 9HP. These little wands are able to be upcycled to clean away oil, larvae, fly eggs, mites, infections, mud and other contaminants from wildlife.

Do you know of any other unusual items which are being recycled in your area? Please let the Editor know and we can share this information with all our members. Let us all try to do our share in caring for the earth entrusted to us by God.

Princess Royal visits amazing Canvey Island project

Sep 27th, 2021

The Princess Royal has visited members of a unique group of charities who collectively provided over 400,000 meals to people in need on Canvey Island, Essex, during the pandemic. The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) of Canvey Island were also presented with the Canvey Island Town Council's Community Group of the Year Award.

Local SVP group president Tony Roche, who was presented to HRH Princess Anne at an event organised to celebrate the group's remarkable achievement, said: "This was a lovely way of saying thank you to all the people who have had a hand in this amazing operation." The coordinated effort began before the pandemic struck in March 2020, when Tony realised that the local foodbank would be closed during Christmas. A small group of charities was formed to address this situation and provide food for those in need on Canvey Island. The group included international volunteering charity the SVP, and Yellow Door, an independent charity supporting young people. However, when the pandemic hit, the small group had to supercharge their efforts to provide meals for the growing need on the island.
From his spare bedroom, Tony, who himself had to shield during the pandemic, began the task of galvanising the group of charities to feed the many vulnerable families on the island. Local patient transport charity Wyvern Community Transport provided the logistics to move food around from local supermarkets, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, the Co-operative and One Stop, who provided tonnes of food every week for the initiative.

The food project gathered pace as local people and groups gave their support, including local school, St Joseph's Roman Catholic School, which has an active SVP Mini Vinnies group, the Salvation Army, which provided food parcels and support, St Nicholas C of E church, and the local Baptist church, from where the SVP distributed food parcels.
There was also support from Omnino Restaurants whose outlets in Leadenhall Street and St Paul's in London had to temporarily close under Covid restrictions. Restaurant owner Ruth Cezar and husband, chef Eduardo Barsotti, cooked over 700 hot meals in the family kitchen at her house on Canvey Island. Ruth said: "It was an honour to cook meals for the community from March to June during the first lockdown. We served around 700 hot meals in partnership with the SVP."
SVP Brentwood Central Council President Elaine Heyworth commented on the reception for the Princess Royal: "It was just wonderful to see people who have worked so hard for the last 18 months to support their local community get recognised at the very highest level."
"This group of people has done a fantastic job. They have found amazing ways to help their community. They brought four charities together and had a massive impact."
Following the lifting of Covid restrictions in July, the multi-organisation, multi-faith group has scaled back the operation slightly, however the SVP still coordinates the food donations programme on Canvey Island which sees in excess of three tonnes of food per week delivered by the newly acquired SVP van to the St Vincent's centre in Southend-on-Sea where it is sorted into food parcels and



A pupil from St Joseph's RC School Mini Vinnies presents a bouquet of flowers to HRH the Princess Royal - Image Mike Lewis

delivered around the local area and taken back to Canvey Island to be distributed to those in need.
The Princess Royal left the event after being presented with a bouquet of flowers by Tony's granddaughter Amelie Merrick of St Joseph's Roman Catholic School Mini Vinnies.
Tony's wife, Frances, said: "I can't tell you how much of a unique operation this was and how proud I am of this group, everyone was incredible. To see the whole operation laid out before the Princess was a fantastic moment."

SVP President Helen O'Shea concluded: "This group lead by the wonderfully humble Tony Roche has come together in the most incredible way to feed those in need in their community. By working together, charities, religious groups and residents of the island, they have achieved something quite remarkable, and quite beautiful."
Source: Independent Catholic News 28th September 2021

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ARUNDEL AND BRIGHTON

Pilgrimage at the Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation



With great joy on Wednesday 8th September A&B UCM gathered on Pilgrimage at the Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation at West Grinstead joined by members of the KSC.

We arrived to be greeted with coffee/tea, hellos and hugs from members we hadn't seen for almost 2 years, meeting old friends, and making new ones. We then gathered in the church to be greeted by our Spiritual Director Canon Tom Treherne, who gave us a most inspiring talk urging us to pray to Our Blessed Lady and not to forget the part St Joseph played in the Holy Family. In preparation for Holy Mass at noon we had the opportunity for the sacrament of Reconciliation with Fr Tom and Fr David Irvine (a retired priest from Westminster) who lives nearby. With members of the local community joining us for Mass, with hymns accompanied by Mrs Susan Goddard, we were almost 100, the capacity of the church.

We then enjoyed our picnics in the grounds in beautiful sunshine and more time to socialise. We later gathered in Church for UCM & KSC prayers and then divided, the more able to follow the Rosary Way in the gardens led by Fr Tom and Judy Harkins (A&B Secretary), while others stayed seated in church with the rosary led by Anne Ager (A&B President) and Sean Harkins (KSC). We



concluded a very spiritual day with Adoration and Benediction, a beautiful prayerful day in a very special place with friends old and new. The area has been a place of prayer since before the Reformation, owned by the catholic Caryll family, who during the persecution installed a priest disguised as a stockman in a "cottage" with a secret chapel in the hayloft and a "priests' hole" in the staircase. Holy Mass was said and many priests given shelter on their travels to and from France including Fr Francis Bell who was later

martyred at Tyburn in 1643. In 1863 Mgr. Denis was installed as Parish Priest and built a church alongside the house which had been enlarged, it became a shrine church in honour of Our Lady in thanks for the restoration of the faith and that Mass had been celebrated without a break during the 300 years, and the title "Our Lady of Consolation of West Grinstead" was granted by Pope Leo X111. The painting of Our Lady is based on one in Turin, but the actual shrine is the small statue above the altar.

BIRMINGHAM

Welcome back Mass

St Marie's Foundation, Rugby met on Monday 26th July for our first welcome back mass together followed by lunch. 11 mothers came 2 didn't.

Iris Edwards



PLYMOUTH

Getting together again - June 2021

After more than a year of restrictions due to Covid-19 we are at last able to meet up – albeit in the open air! Exmouth Foundation have continued to meet on Zoom during the restrictions imposed during this pandemic and supported each other and shared news, etc. throughout. Additionally, phone contact has been an essential part of our support network. Now at last we are able to celebrate meeting together in person. One of our favourite venues – our local garden centre, owned and run by a parish family – has been our new meeting place. Here we are able to sit down in groups and share tea and cakes – something we have not done in so long. A simple pleasure and much appreciated by all those who attended. Here we are at our latest coffee morning on 15th June – a lovely sunny morning. We look forward to the time when we can meet up indoors – especially as the autumn and winter are ahead of us. Let's all get through the summer in celebration by meeting up with our friends and fellow UCM members.

Liz Johnson



The year of St. Joseph Prayer

We are now in the final months of the Year of St. Joseph. There was quite a media reaction when the year was announced and when it kicked off, but it has sort of fallen off the radar for many of us. Lest the Year of St. Joseph fizzle out or fade away let us ask his

intercession in our lives.

To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our afflictions, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also.

Through that charity which bound you to the

Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by his Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities.

O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ; O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us

in our struggle with the power of darkness.

As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven.

Amen.

PORTSMOUTH

75th Anniversary Celebrations

Fareham Foundation celebrated their 75th Anniversary of its foundation on 17 June 2021. As the COVID situation did not really allow for a “free” get-together, the party was deferred until Our Lady’s Birthday on 8 September. Please find selected moments from the Mass beautifully and thoughtfully celebrated by Canon John Cooke, the Parish Priest. The group of 5 Members are 5 of the more recent 6 Foundation Presidents. Sheelagh Pickard was remembered for her time as President

and was prayed for during the Mass. At the moment, Fareham has 16 members of whom 12 are regular attenders. We were fortunate to have been able to welcome Marjorie Killen (Diocesan Treasurer), Sue Meese (Diocesan Deputy President), as well as Officers from Waterlooville and Cosham to the Mass and light lunch which followed.

Sarah Davis
Fareham



From L to R Ann Price, Carol Willis (now Diocesan President), Sarah Davis (now Diocesan Secretary) Lorne Fry (current F President) and Pat Kemp (former Diocesan President)

80th Anniversary Celebrations

On Wednesday, 13th October The Sacred Heart and St Peters, Waterlooville celebrated their UCM's 80th anniversary. Fr. Jeremy and Fr. Jozef concelebrated Mass and Carol Willis presented President Jean Hartnell with their certificate. Afterwards we went to the Parish Centre for a delicious buffet lunch and a long awaited catch up.

Pauline Kaznowski
Diocesan Media Officer



Sacred Heart members

EAST ANGLIA

Our Lady & St. Walstan's Foundation, Costessey

We had our first meeting at the beginning of September with 10 members and 1 guest. (A good turnout!). We discussed the situation about the UCM and had several ideas put forward. A presentation for Joyce Potter on the occasion of her 90th birthday was made, a pot plant and card.

Diocesan Meeting

On Saturday 16th October 2021 a very successful meeting was held at St. Jude’s R.C. Primary in Fareham. The meeting opened with our UCM Prayers and Fr. Jozef celebrating Mass.

Reports were given by the Officers from the various Foundations and a brief summary of activities that had taken place, if any during the pandemic.

The future of the UCM was discussed with various proposals being put forward. It was agreed that unless we had volunteers to take office we could not carry on. Fortunately, Isobel Flynn (Maidenhead) was elected Diocesan President, Sue Meese (Ascot) as Treasurer and Lorne Fry (Fareham) with

effect from 2022. All were proposed and seconded. Pauline Kaznowski agreed to carry on as Media Office for one more year. There was a lot of discussion from the members regarding the future of the UCM with no clear solutions. It was agreed that the role of the UCM had changed over the years and it was very difficult to recruit new members. Several Foundations had restarted meetings which was encouraging.

The meeting closed with a prayer and everyone was wished a safe journey home. All agreed that it was so lovely to be able to meet again.



Left to right current Diocesan Officers: Marjorie Killen Treasurer, Carol Willis President, Sarah Davies Secretary

MIDDLESBROUGH

Sisters of Mercy

There was a leaving celebration for the Filey Sisters of Mercy held at the Norbertine Priory, Muston, North Yorkshire.

It was in 1946 that Endsleigh Convent opened in Filey.

At that time Religious Sisters did not

go home to visit their families. Those who were based at Endsleigh Teacher Training College in Hull came to Filey for their holidays.

Over the years the Convent has been a “House of Hospitality” for Sisters from different Convents for Retreats, Days of Recollection, those parishioners from the West Riding & beyond who needed a change of scene & a place where they could relax, enjoy good food & plenty of fresh air.

St Mary’s Filey & St. George’s Eastfield have been blessed by the Sisters quiet presence.

Since the Pandemic, the Convent has not been able to take guests. Requirements for en-suite accommodation has meant no guests.

The Parish has continued to receive the help & encouragement until August when the Convent has sadly closed after 75 years.

The Sisters will be sadly missed.

Judith Quirk Filey Foundation



Act now to end sexual violence against Christian women

Source: ACN

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) has launched a petition calling on the UK government and the United Nations (UN) to take action to tackle the epidemic of sexual violence against Christian women and girls. The petition highlights the threat Christian women and girls, and women of other religious minorities, face of abduction, rape and forced conversion.

Neville Kyrke-Smith, National Director ACN (UK), said: "At Aid to the Church in Need we receive so many disturbing reports about sexual violence against Christian women, often involving forced conversions following abduction and rape.

"In a significant number of countries - particularly Pakistan, Egypt and Nigeria - Christian women, and women of other minority faith groups, are extremely vulnerable because of their religious beliefs; predatory men take advantage of their social vulnerability, whilst the authorities or local governors often appear complicit."

The petition pre-empts the launch on #RedWednesday (24th November) of ACN's report Hear Her Cries: The kidnapping, forced conversion and sexual victimisation of Christian women and girls, which investigates the global problem of women forced to convert, often under pain of death.

On, 25th November, the day after #RedWednesday, the United Nations marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and there has been criticism that UN statements promoting the day ignore the particular suffering endured by religious

minority women and girls. Urging people to back the #RedWednesday petition, Mr Kyrke-Smith said: "We believe that the international community fails to understand how religious belief acts as a motivator for egregious sexual abuse against women of the 'wrong' faith.

"We have launched this petition to call on the UK government and the UN to do much more to stamp this out. All of us must hear the cries of these suffering women."

Backing the petition, Baroness Cox, who will chair a presentation of ACN's Hear Her Cries report in the House of Lords, said: "I ask that everyone who has a heart for women and girls who suffer in this way to sign this petition. The UK government and the UN need to take more effective steps to stop this problem.

"This should include robust legislation that is actually enforced to the letter of the law, security improvements and cultural changes that make it easier for women and girls to be protected from these abuses." Sir Edward Leigh MP said that cases such as Christian Pakistani Maira Shahbaz, abducted aged 14, raped, forced to convert to Islam and marry her abductor, illustrated the danger Christian women face.

Sir Edward added: "As Maira's case shows, Christian women and girls are stripped of their rights as human beings - they are rendered helpless in the face of their captors' lust. It is as if the women's Christian faith gives their abductors the licence to treat them as slaves. We must speak up for these innocent people who suffer in a disgraceful way.

"We in this country have been outraged by atrocities committed



Christian women and girls in Nigeria are at risk of being abducted, forcibly converted and falling victim to sexual violence. © ACN/Jaco Klammer

against vulnerable women in the UK - we should have the same level of contempt for acts of violence committed against other women far from our shores, at risk because of their faith."

Sign ACN's #RedWednesday petition to the UK government and the UN: www.acnuk.org/petition

Source: Independent Catholic News 27th October 2021

LIVERPOOL

Annual Mass 2021 and AGM

Our first annual Mass was celebrated at Liverpool's Cathedral of Christ the King on Saturday 26th June this year. The main celebrant was Archbishop Malcolm McMahan OP and our Archdiocesan Chaplain Fr David Potter and Monsignor John Buchard concelebrated. The Mass was very well attended and we were delighted to meet up with friends we haven't seen for almost 2 years from across the whole of the Liverpool Archdiocese. It was a fine day with the sun streaming through the Lantern Tower, accentuating the colours of Piper and Reyniens' beautiful stained glass. The Reader was Mrs Sue Bickerstaffe, and the UCM prayers were led by the Archdiocesan President, Mrs Maureen Finnegan. Archbishop Malcolm delivered a thoughtful, uplifting homily. Members renewed their commitment to UCM objectives



Chaplain's address

Father David for the first time bought visual aids. Three statues of Our Lady. As a general rule the older a particular devotion to Our Lady is the more likely the statue will be Our Lady together with the child Jesus, in the 19th century statues of our Lady on her own began to appear. Both types of statue have something to say to us about Our Lady, two aspects of which we encounter in the Feast of the Assumption which we celebrate tomorrow "a woman adorned with the sun, standing on the moon and with 12 stars on her head for a crown", holy and powerful in her own right but then a little later straight down to earth again "pregnant and in labour, crying aloud in the pangs of childbirth" reminding us you can't think of Mary separately from her son Jesus. Mary owes her greatness to the role that God singled out for her in bringing his son into the world. That association of Mary with Jesus is really what the feast of the Assumption is about and the extent to which that union goes. We know that Jesus has risen from the dead and now lives in heavenly glory and we hope and pray that

one day we will join him there. We all belong to Jesus through our baptism, but Mary as his mother belongs to him in an even more intimate, even more special way than anybody else, for that reason when she died, she was given the unique privilege of being taken to heaven immediately in body and soul, living already in the Resurrection we all hope to live in eventually. It means Mary remains as ever, close to Jesus, wherever Jesus is Mary is there also as true in heaven as it was on earth. We all know the humility of Our Lady and that she would be the first to admit that the great honour she is held in is not due to her own merits, it is because God Our Father allowed her to share so closely in Christ's life and death and his ultimate triumph over death. We must always remember that Mary's humility is the reason that her prayers for us and any intentions we commend to her are so powerful and so reliable. We should always be confident in asking for Mary's prayers day in and day out so that we might follow where she has gone before us.

AGM

We held our AGM in August this year instead of the customary April due to Covid. Fr David allowed to us his parish Hall for the meeting as our usual meeting room was not in use. The meeting was well attended and it was followed by Holy Mass celebrated by Fr David and our seminarian James Finnegan provided the music.

CLIFTON

Prayer of the Woods

I am the heat of your hearth on the cold winter nights
The friendly shade screening you from the summer sun
And my fruits are refreshing draughts quenching your thirst as you journey on.
I am the beam that holds your house.
The board of your table, the bed on which you lie
And the timber that builds your boat.
I am the handle of your hoe, the door of your homestead,
The wood of your cradle and the shell of your coffin.
I am the bread of kindness and the flower of beauty.
Ye who pass by, listen to my prayer,
Harm me not.

Rita Daws from the Foundation of St. Peter & Paul, Clifton Diocese found this poem at the entrance to a beautiful wood on the outskirts of Vancouver.

WESTMINSTER

Tea party celebrations

We, in the Westminster Archdiocese, thought that it would be a nice idea if we could celebrate our Lady's Birthday on 8th September by having a Tea Party in each Foundation. As it was our first meeting back for some Foundations, we thought it would be nice to start with a celebration!!

CELEBRATION OF MOTHER MARY'S BIRTHDAY IN STYLE VIA ZOOM BY HOUNSLOW UCM FOUNDATION ON 8th SEPTEMBER 2021
It was a Quiz Fun night when the Mums of the UCM of SS Michael and Martin's Catholic Church Hounslow celebrated the birthday of Our Mother Mary on 8.9.2021 on LINE!
With pen and paper at hand, the Mums worked out the answers to the quiz set out by Mrs. Verna Robertson who also was the Compere. We learned a lot from it.
3 winners emerged with surprised lovely gifts.
Happy birthday Mother Mary was sung and 3 cheers of AVE MARIA was echoed by all.
We had a fun-filled night. Thanks to God. Mother Mary, please pray for us. We love You Mary.

Clara N. Giwa-Amu
President Hounslow Foundation

COP26: Catholic lobby for Climate Justice at UN Summit

As the various faith Caminos and relays to Conference of Parties (COP) 26 converge on Glasgow this coming weekend they will be joined by official faith delegations. Prominent among them will be the Catholic lobby.

Pope Francis may not be going but he is likely to send a video message. His presence will be very influential, as it was at the Paris COP21 six years ago, just months after Laudato Si' provided the agenda for action on Climate Justice. It linked "the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor" and gave us the term "integral ecology" to connect the climate crisis with other concerns over biodiversity, water, and our "throwaway culture". Its call for "ecological conversion" was not new, but it gained a fresh prominence as a part of the mission of the Church. Pope Francis inspired humanity to save ourselves from ourselves, start valuing the whole interconnected web of life on Earth, and avoid catastrophic climate change.

The Vatican delegation to the U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow will be headed by its secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, an indication of the importance the Church attaches to the summit. Other members are likely to include staff of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, which has been preparing the Laudato Si Action Platform for the whole Church, to launch immediately after the summit. Also, Alistair Dutton, chief executive of Caritas Scotland's Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (Sciaf), which is a key local organiser and aims "to make sure that the voices of the Global South are heard clearly and are taken seriously". The head of Cafod, Christine Allen, will be there too, along with a team highlighting the impact of the climate crisis on poor communities in the global south.

Members of the delegation will be actively engaged in the so-called blue zone, which is the UN-managed space hosting the official negotiations with delegations from observer organisations and more than 190 government "parties" who signed the UN Framework Convention of Climate Change. They will also be contributing to side events in the green zone, managed by the UK government for the public to visit or watch online in order to promote dialogue, awareness and active commitments.

The Catholic bishops of Scotland and England and Wales will be well represented, particularly by Bishop William Nolan, the Bishop of

Galloway and President of the National Justice & Peace Commission of Scotland, and Bishop John Arnold of Salford, episcopal lead on the environment for the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and Chairman of CAFOD's Board of Trustees. An invitation-only COP Mass, organised by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland, will be celebrated on Sunday 7 November at St Aloysius Jesuit Parish. Churches throughout Glasgow and further afield are also hosting events and offering hospitality.

Many Catholic groups are coming together for '24 Hours for the Climate', a global live streamed vigil in a Glasgow parish 5-6 November for people of faith to pray and advocate for the success of COP26. There will be a focus on hearing from communities suffering from climate change, praying, and writing messages that will be delivered to COP26 negotiators. Among the organisers are the Missionary Society of St Columban, Justice and Peace Scotland, Cafod, Sciaf, Pax Christi International, Jesuit Missions, Don Bosco Green Alliance and Religious of the Assumption.

Live events in the parish will include Mass at 9am on the Saturday morning. The vigil will conclude with a setting off for the climate march in Glasgow for the International Day of Action on Climate on Saturday 6 November. Cafod is organising a similar march in London the same day, but events will also be held in many UK cities and globally. Ecumenical events in Glasgow include Green Christian and Eco-Congregation Scotland running daily talks and prayers, the Glasgow Quaker meeting house offering a programme of activities and an ecumenical service at Glasgow Cathedral.

All the Churches are celebrating their huge contribution towards divestment from fossil fuels, largely organised by Operation Noah, which just a few days ago announced the latest 72 faith institutions on six continents to promise divestment.

A 'Prayer for the COP26 Climate Talks' has been sent to every parish in England and Wales for use during the summit, produced by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and CAFOD. The 'Healthy Planet, Healthy People' Petition to world leaders meeting at COP has been promoted by many Catholic groups internationally, particularly the Laudato Si Movement. All hope to see bold new promises to drastically cut greenhouse gas emissions from the nearly 200 nations present and delivery on pledges already made at Paris in 2015 to give US\$100



Image: Iona Community

billion in aid annually to countries at the front line of climate disasters. And this is the first COP to give serious attention to nature-based solutions, which the Catholic development agencies support.

And what about the Catholic Media? Catholic journalists will be well represented, including myself - accredited with the Columban Missionary Society and the Messenger of St Anthony international magazine - and Jo Siedlecka of ICN, which will provide a daily blog and regular updates on ICN's social media. We intend to start off with meeting the climate pilgrimages walking through Glasgow on Saturday and joining the interfaith Vigil for COP26. Outside the summit we will cover the peace petition announcement on 4 November outside the Royal Concert Hall, demanding that military emissions be included in the final document.

And of course, we will report on the final agreement and the Catholic response to it. From 12 November we will all be in for the long haul of linking concern for climate justice with practical action as individuals and as Church communities.

Source: Independent Catholic News 28th October 2021



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Pope John Paul I to be beatified

Source: Vatican News

Pope Francis has authorized the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to promulgate the decree on a miraculous healing attributed to the intercession of Pope John Paul I.

On Wednesday, Pope Francis received in audience Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, and authorised his dicastery to promulgate the decree recognising a miracle attributed to the intercession of Albino Luciani or Pope John Paul I.

The Congregation's website says it is about the healing of an eleven-year-old girl who was diagnosed as terminally ill, with "severe acute inflammatory encephalopathy, a malignant refractory epileptic illness and septic shock". Her situation was very serious, characterised by numerous daily seizures and a septic state of bronchopneumonia. After the parish priest who served at the local hospital where the child was being treated, asked people to pray for Pope John Paul I to intercede for the child, she made a complete recovery.

Born on October 17, 1912 in Forno di Canale (today Canale d'Agordo), in the north Italian province of Belluno, and died on September 28, 1978 in the Vatican, Albino Luciani was Pope for

only 34 days, one of the shortest pontificates in history. He was the son of a socialist worker who had worked for a long time as an emigrant in Switzerland.

In a letter written to Luciani granting him permission to enter the seminary, his father wrote: "I hope that when you become a priest, you will be on the side of the poor, because Christ was on their side" - words that Luciani would put into practice all his life.

Albino was ordained priest in 1935 and in 1958, immediately after the election of John XXIII, who as the Patriarch of Venice knew him, was appointed bishop of Vittorio Veneto. Luciani took part in the entire Second Vatican Council and applied its directives with enthusiasm.

Pope Paul VI, who appreciated him, appointed him the Patriarch of Venice in 1969 and later made him a cardinal in March 1973, Luciani, who chose the word 'humilitas' [humility] for his episcopal coat of arms, is a pastor who lived soberly, firm in what was essential in the faith, open from the social point of view, close to the poor and the workers In his magisterium, he particularly insisted on the theme of mercy.

After the death of Paul VI, on 26 August 1978 he was elected in a conclave that lasted one day. The double name he assumed on his election was in

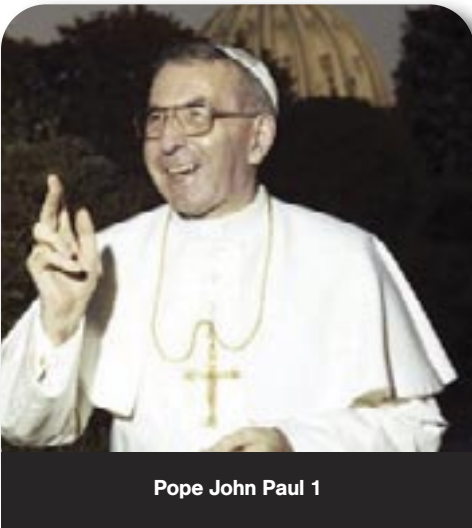
itself a programme. By combining John and Paul, he not only offers a tribute of gratitude to the Popes who wanted him as bishop and cardinal, but also marked a path of continuity in the application of the Council, barring the way both to nostalgic retreats into the past and uncontrolled leaps forward.

He abandoned the use of the royal plural, 'We', and in the early days refused to use the gestatorial chair, bowing to the request of his collaborators only when he realised that by proceeding on foot people who were not in the front rows had difficulty seeing him.

The Wednesday General Audiences during his very brief pontificate were catechetical meetings. He spoke without a written text, quoted poems from memory, invited a boy and an altar boy to approach him and talked to them.

In an impromptu speech, he recalled having suffered hunger as a child and repeated his predecessor's courageous words about the "people of hunger" who challenge the "people of opulence". He went out only once from the Vatican, in the sultry weeks of late summer 1978, to take possession of the cathedral of St John Lateran, of his Diocese of Rome as Pontiff. Pope John Paul I died suddenly on the night of September 28, 1978.

He was found lifeless by the nun who brought coffee to his room every morning. In just a few



Pope John Paul 1

weeks of his pontificate, he had entered the hearts of millions of people for his simplicity, his humility, his words in defence of the least and his evangelical smile.

The reputation of the holiness of Pope John Paul I spread very quickly. Many people have prayed and are praying to him. Many simple people and even the bishops of Brazil asked for the opening of his sainthood cause, a long procedure that has now concluded.

Source: Adapted from an article in the Independent Catholic News 14th October 2021

Shrewsbury Cathedral awarded culture fund grant to restore East Window

Shrewsbury Cathedral is one of the heritage sites across England to receive a boost of £35 million thanks to the Government's Culture Recovery Fund. Administered on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) by Historic England, 142 sites will receive support, bolstering local economies and supporting jobs across the country.

Money from the government's £2 billion Culture Recovery Fund is intended to open up heritage and the benefits it brings to everyone, helping to level up and improve life and opportunities for people in places that need it most.

At Shrewsbury Cathedral this funding will be used to repair and restore the East Window and surrounding stonework. The window was installed in time for the opening of the Cathedral in 1856, and is by the renowned Hardman & Co.-stained glass company. It is the first thing visitors see as they enter Shrewsbury Cathedral, and is the impressive backdrop to its sanctuary.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said: "From local churches to ancient buildings and landscapes, the UK's unique heritage makes our towns, cities and villages stronger, more vibrant and helps bring communities together.

"This latest funding – £35 million from our unprecedented Culture Recovery Fund – will help protect sites including Jane Austen's House and Hampton Court Palace for future generations and help them build back better from the pandemic."

Duncan Wilson, Historic England's Chief Executive, said: "Funding from the government's Culture Recovery Fund is hugely welcome at a

time when the people and organisations who look after our vast and varied array of heritage urgently need support to carry out essential repairs.

"Heritage is a fragile eco-system, with an amazing cast of characters who keep our historic places alive, with specialist skills that take time to learn and experience to perfect. These grants will protect their livelihoods, as they use their expertise to help our heritage survive."

Canon Christopher Matthews, the Cathedral Dean, said: "We are delighted to have received this grant enabling us to restore such a beautiful and important window in our Cathedral, protecting it for future generations to enjoy."

Money from the Heritage Stimulus Fund will also keep the country's nationally and internationally significant heritage assets in good condition and sustain the skilled craft workforce that looks after them.

The latest £35 million funding awards builds on £52 million already allocated from the first round of the Heritage Stimulus Fund, which has supported works at 800 of the country's treasured heritage assets. This includes Blackpool's iconic Tower Ballroom, the stunning Georgian landscape at Gibside in Gateshead and the tranquil Thornton-le-Beans Chapel in North Yorkshire. None of these historic places would have been able to carry out crucial repair work during the pandemic without this support.

Source: Shrewsbury Diocese website
(Photos courtesy of Paul Scott and Richard Keddie)



Faith leaders sign common declaration ahead of COP26

A declaration signed by leaders of all the UK's major faiths has been released ahead of the COP26 Conference in Glasgow. The document has been signed on behalf of the Scottish Catholic Bishops, by Bishop Brian McGee, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles and President of the Catholic Bishops' Committee for Interreligious dialogue and Sr Isabel Smyth of the Sisters of Notre Dame and Secretary to the Catholic Bishops' Committee for Inter-religious Dialogue: Glasgow Multi-Faith Declaration for COP26

Our faith communities are united in caring for human life and the natural world. We share a belief in a hopeful future, as well as an obligation to be responsible in caring for our common home, the Earth.

We recognise the opportunities that COP26 brings in addressing the urgent need for action in limiting the effects of climate change and the critical importance of decisions made in this conference to take forward the agreement made in Paris in 2015.

People have exploited the planet, causing climate change. We recognise that the burden of loss and damage falls most heavily

on people living in poverty, especially women and children.

We acknowledge the commitments made through the Lambeth Declaration in 2015. Now, because of the gravity of our situation, the impact of climate change around the world, and the inequality of its effects we seek to strengthen those commitments.

We commit to respond to this challenge by:

Reflecting deeply in prayer, meditation and worship to discern how to care for the earth and each other, and to encourage our respective communities to do the same.

Making transformational change in our own lives and in the lives of our communities through individual and collective action.

Being advocates for justice by calling on governments, businesses and others who exercise power and influence to put into effect the Paris agreement; to make the transition to a just and green economy a priority; and to commit to science-based targets that are aligned with a healthy, resilient, zero-emissions future.

We remind governments of their commitments made in Paris in 2015 to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, and of Article 17 of the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights to protect the

environment, the biosphere and biodiversity. We call upon them to take the urgent action needed to avert the loss, damage, and forced migration threatened by climate change.

We look to governments to work together and with others to create a positive vision for 2050 where addressing climate change is not just an opportunity to stop burning fossil fuels, but also: to achieve cleaner air and water; to reduce food wastage; to ensure a just and equitable sharing of the earth's resources; and to protect the habitats we share with all other life on whose health we also depend.

Across our doctrinal and political differences, we know that we must change our ways to ensure a quality of life which all can share, and we need to provide hope for people of all ages, everywhere, including future generations. To offer hope in the world we need to have confidence that those in power understand the vital role they have to play at the Glasgow COP26.

*Glasgow Multifaith Declaration 20/09/2021
Our collective energy and prayers will be with those working for a successful outcome.
Signed by: UK Senior Faith Leaders*

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Frank Cottrell-Boyce: Plugging into Frederic's network

Award-winning author, screenwriter and active St Vincent de Paul member Frank Cottrell-Boyce explains the significance of tiny acts of kindness and why Blessed Frédéric Ozanam would have loved WhatsApp...

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam would have really loved WhatsApp. He'd have wanted to create a global "network of charity" - to wrap the world in a kind of tapestry of acts of kindness. Ever since the pandemic started my local SVP Conference has used WhatsApp as a way of alerting members to who needs a visit or a bit of shopping. The kindness of posting the message, "this person needs some shopping", connects with the kindness of someone else saying, "I'm going to the shops anyway I'll do that."

Tiny acts, not much more than gestures really, but plug them into Frédéric's network and they have the power to make the world a slightly better place. And this Friday it will send me off on one of my favourite journeys. SVP WhatsApp says it's my turn to do the "bun run". That means nipping to each of the two local bakeries at closing time to collect the leftover bread, pies and cakes and then driving them to the convent in the city centre where the Sisters of Charity run a kitchen for the homeless. The pies will be gone in no time.

For me the bun run is the epitome of that idea. It's a sequence of tiny acts, not much more than gestures really. When I get to the shop, I have a joke and a chat with the women (they're all women) who are already carefully bagging and boxing the leftovers for me to take. I never have to explain what I'm doing. If I turn up late to one of them, they sometimes ring me to make sure I'm coming. Then I'm off to town.

The smell of the pasties and steaks slices is intoxicating but not really tempting because it's Friday, so no meat. The vanilla fragrance of the iced buns on the other hand writhes around me as I stop-start through traffic lights and road works. I

have to be like Orpheus and try not to look behind me at the back seat where the cakes loll on their trays like sirens on a rock. The back gate of the convent opens onto the pulsing heart of hen/stag night land. During lockdown it was eerily quiet but now there are already girls in sashes and tiaras and boys in tutus falling in and out of the bars.

So, it never fails to amaze me when Sister Bethany comes to open the gate and reveal the lovely little garden hidden behind. That gate is like the Narnia wardrobe. I'd say it was an oasis of calm, but, of course, it's the very opposite - this is where the lost, the troubled, and the addicted go. It does not stand apart from the chaos of the city, it invites it in. Volunteers and service users always come to help me unload the food and to pile the empty trays back into the boot for me to return next morning. And before I say goodbye, I take a moment just to look at the garden. The garden itself is lovely - blazes of flowers climb the walls to the little grottos of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Lourdes. There's a little St Bernadette on the lawn. But you enter it through a spruce little drying area, smelling of disinfectant. Mops and brooms hang from a rack on the wall like flowers. It speaks, and smells, of calm and good order and co-operation.

That garden, a brick's width from those hen nights, is a place where piety, beauty and practicality meet. It's where Frédéric's network of kindness plugs into the all-embracing love of God. Where I remember that I'm not doing this just to help fight food waste, or to feed the hungry, or even to benefit my own mental health, because it definitely does. Every time I set out thinking this is a task, and every time I come home aglow from having stepped into this particular current of kindness. I'm doing it because you were hungry, Lord, and I gave you food. Not even that, I helped give you food. I feel that here, at the point of delivery, I'm helping connect everyone I talked with on this little journey with you, Lord.



Frank Cottrell-Boyce image SVP

On the way back I often think of the Australian poet Les Murray's little quatrain about St Vincent De Paul, Incurable Grace. He calls St Vincent "my sometime tailor" because, growing up poor in the outback of Australia, it was the SVP that clothed him and his siblings. See? A network of millions of kindnesses that reaches all the way to the Outback and, if you believe Murray, up into Heaven itself ...

St Vincent de Paul old friend
My sometime tailor
I dare say by now you are feeding
The rich in heaven.

Source Independent Catholic News
17th September 2021

Westminster Cathedral welcomes Little Amal

Jo Siedlecka, Source: Archdiocese of Westminster/ICN

Around a thousand people gathered at Westminster Cathedral yesterday, for a moving prayer service to welcome Little Amal, the 3.5m puppet of a ten-year old unaccompanied Syrian refugee girl. Her 8,000-kilometre journey across Europe, from the Turkey-Syria border through Greece, Italy, France Switzerland, Germany and Belgium to the UK is intended to highlight the plight of unaccompanied child migrants and the dangers they face on the way.

Refugee friends, supporters, volunteers and staff from JRS UK, Caritas Westminster and were among those waiting for her on the steps of Westminster Cathedral with Cardinal Vincent Nichols, and the Zimbabwean chaplaincy choir. Amal, whose name means 'hope' in Arabic, was greeted by Cardinal Vincent before being ushered into the Cathedral and down the aisle by a choir from the Congolese chaplaincy.

A special liturgy of welcome, introduced by Bishop Paul McAleenan, bishop for Migrants and Refugees. Bishop Paul acknowledged the perilous journey that refugees, especially unaccompanied child migrants, make in search of a safe haven and the Church's teaching to welcome those who arrive in our midst. Canon Pat Browne led singing of Whatsoever You Do. The liturgy was organised by Cathedral Precentor Fr Mike Maguire with input from Colette Joyce and others from Westminster J&P.

Amal's journey through the Cathedral took her to the Chapel of St Paul to look at the mosaics of the perilous journeys that the Apostle made during his travels around the Mediterranean proclaiming the Gospel.

A stop at the Lady Chapel introduced her to

Mary, Mother of Jesus and Mother of the Church. "There is a place for everyone in the heart of Mary, our Mother," the Cardinal told Amal.

Speaking from the Cathedral pulpit, at about eye level with Amal, Cardinal Nichols said: "Welcome. This is the home of our hearts. This is where we pray. This where we come together to rejoice. I was so glad that you've come to visit us here in our cathedral. Thank you. Thank you."

He noted that Amal is tall and is easily seen, but that many refugees are invisible in our midst: "In our city, in your street and school, there are those who have left their country for reasons not of their own making: war, persecution, climate change."

He called attention to the many unaccompanied child refugees "who, in this country, are taken into slavery and exploitation while separated from their parents."

At the Sanctuary, he explained that this is "where we remember and come to the death and resurrection of Jesus, our source of unbreakable hope." There was a spontaneous moment when the Sri Lankan and Syro Malabar choir sang on the sanctuary and Amal and the congregation began dancing and clapping.

Amal's tour of the Cathedral was accompanied by narrative and prayers read by five children from Ss Michael and Martin parish, Hounslow, as well as music from the Sri Lankan (Tamil) and Syro-Malabar (Keralan) chaplaincy choirs.

Having turned 10 the previous day, Amal was presented with a ceramic angel made by students at Caritas St Joseph's Centre and a birthday card made by pupils at St James' Catholic High School in Barnet. She was also given a blessing by the Cardinal, as she journeys towards Manchester in search of her mother and continuing to raise awareness of the plight of child refugees. Exiting to the rousing accompaniment of the



Zimbabwean choir, she left behind her a congregation moved by her visit, and filled with joy and hope.

The figure of Amal was made by the world creators of War Horse, Handspring Puppet Company, and operated by three artists. Her lifelike movements and responsiveness to her surroundings attracted affection and interest from everyone she has met. Amir Zuabi Artistic Director of her Walk said: "Little Amal is 3.5 metres tall because we want the world to grow big enough to greet her. We want her to inspire us to think big and to act bigger."

See further reports, pictures and films on Westminster J&P website: <https://westminsterjusticeandpeace.org/2021/10/26/prayer-service-to-welcome-little-amal-to-westminster-cathedral/> Further information about Little Amal's journey is available at: www.walkwithamal.org/ See an educational pack available for schools here: www.walkwithamal.org/education/

Source: Independent Catholic News 27th October 2021

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Reflection with Canon Pat Browne - The Pearl of great price



Canon Pat Browne

There's an ancient legend that tells the story of a jeweller who had a precious pearl he wanted to sell. In order to place this pearl in the proper setting, he conceived the idea of building a special box of the finest woods to contain the pearl.

He sought these woods and had them brought to him, and they were polished to a high brilliance. He then reinforced the corners of this box with elegant brass hinges and added a red velvet interior. As a final step, he scented that red velvet with perfume, then put in that setting the precious Pearl. The pearl was then placed in the store window of the jeweller, and after a short period of time, a rich man came by. He was attracted by what he saw and sat down with the jeweller to negotiate a purchase. After a while the jeweller realised that the

man was negotiating for the box rather than the pearl. You see, the man was so overcome by the beauty of the exterior that he failed to see the item of greatest value at the centre - the pearl. And we too can and do make the same mistake with our faith.

The box is the church in all its visible forms. Some of us love it for its architectural heritage, the amazing churches and cathedrals the world over. Some of us for its music, Gregorian chant, polyphony, the Masses of a Haydn, Mozart, or in more modern times, Duruflé or Faure or more simply the popular folk music we hear in our churches today, or maybe it is the philosophy for life that our faith gives us, a good ethic by which to live, clear guidelines for right or wrong, for others it is the Mass in English or the vernacular of whichever country you are in, or the traditional Mass in Latin. We all have our preferences and that is okay as far as they go. But they are only the box.

It is what is in the box that is most important. Concentrating on the box ...the language, the music, the architecture.... we commit the sin of idolatry.

We have to look and see what is at its centre. The Pearl of great value is Jesus.

Too many Catholics today have never moved beyond the box. They not only express their preferences but sit in judgement with a sense of superiority and condemn those who don't agree with them. The precious Jewel is forgotten while they squabble and cause division in the church about the trimmings, the box.

The precious Jewel for which the church exists is The Lord Jesusand if you do not possess him the rest is all chaff, hot air and is useless for your salvation.

Years ago, in the 80's when I was at Westminster Cathedral it was a great joy to celebrate the 10.30 Mass in Latin with that beautiful choir singing behind me, with incense and formality and then at 5.30 that same day leading a folk choir singing at that evening Mass. Whatever helps people to pray and puts them in touch with God is what matters.

And the Mass said with dignity and prayerfulness whether in a great basilica or under a tree in a dried-out riverbed in Kenya that links me to the greatest treasure of all...our Lord Jesus is what it's all about.

The language, the music, the formality or lack of it is simply the box. The jewel contained there inside it is Jesus and that is whom we seek. He invites us today to find Him through our worship. I-am the bread of life He tells us, he who comes to me will never be hungry, he who believes in me will never thirst.

So, let's focus on Him and His message of love, take Him into your heart and especially at that

solemn moment of the consecration at Mass when the bread and wine is held up to you, look at it and say something from your heart like - My Lord and

My God or simply Jesus I love you.

When you enter the church genuflect mindfully to Him in the tabernacle as a real act of adoration and worship. It is for Him we come to Mass wherever it is, whatever language it is in, whether it is said or sung.

In the Mass He is giving me the gift of Himself. He is the Pearl of great price. The precious jewel in the box.

(This is the text of a sermon given by Fr Pat on Sunday 1 August 2021)

Canon Pat Browne is Parish Priest at Holy Apostles, Pimlico, and Roman Catholic Duty Priest to the Houses of Parliament.

Source Independent Catholic News
2nd August 2021

Red Wednesday 24th November 2021

Red Wednesday is a day to gather to draw attention to the plight of those who are persecuted and oppressed for their religious beliefs. Cathedrals, churches and public buildings around the world will light up in red to show solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Red Wednesday is an initiative of Aid to the Church in Need (ACN)

Where is the persecution?

Clan oppression (6 countries): 3 with Muslim majorities Dictatorial paranoia (5 countries): mostly in Central Asia with Muslim majorities: Religious nationalism (3 countries): Communist and post-communist oppression (3 countries): Islamic oppression (29 countries):

ACN website for events, prayers, campaigns, reports etc



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Patricia TESTER, Sacred Heart Foundation, Diocesan Treasurer, Assistant to National Treasurer, Stationery Stock Officer, National Study days Secretary/Treasurer, Walsingham Treasurer arranging Accommodation

LEEDS

Josie HARRISON, St. Joseph's Foundation, Castleford
Rose MACKOWSKI, St. Patrick's Foundation, Birstall
Aileen QUEENAN, past Diocesan President, St. Malachys Foundation, Halifax, Leeds Diocese

LIVERPOOL

Dian Quigley's daughter Collette, St Thomas of Canterbury Foundation

NORTHAMPTON

Veronica PREEDY, St Edmunds Foundation, Kettering

HALLAM

Marian WALKER, Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Victories Foundation, Clowne

NOTTINGHAM

Monica MITCHELL, Past Diocesan President, St. Mary's Foundation, South Wigston

PORTSMOUTH

Clementine BEST, St Edward & St. Mark's Foundation, Windsor
Joy WYBORN, St. Francis Foundation, Ascot
Wyn VICKERS, St. Francis Foundation, Ascot
Sheila BRADLEY, Cosham Foundation

SOUTHWARK

Mary Patricia McHugh Melvin 'Maureen', Selsdon Foundation

WESTMINSTER

Gerry MAZZASCHI, Hounslow Foundation

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.

Nigeria: Protests call for action to end school abductions

Source: CSW

Protesters gathered outside the Nigerian High Commission in London today, 28 October to call for action to end the spate of school abductions which have been on the rise in the country since December 2020.

The protest was part of Christian Solidarity Worldwide's ongoing Sing for Freedom campaign, and featured contributions from Lord David Alton of Liverpool, Pastor Fred Williams of Spirit Life Missions, school student Sarah Jane Wilkinson, and Mervyn Thomas CMG, Founder President of CSW and Chair of the UK FoRB Forum.

CSW's Founder President Mervyn Thomas said: "We particularly remember, as we have done so many times on this spot, Leah Sharibu. She is 18 years old now, but she was 14 years old when she was taken by Boko Haram, and she's now been held for nearly four years for one reason. The one reason is she has refused to renounce her faith in

Jesus, and so she's still being held captive. And of course, we remember the Chibok girls as part of this campaign... 270 girls who were kidnapped in 2014, and there are still 110 of them missing today. We're here today to stand in solidarity with them."

Sarah Jane Wilkinson said: "I contrast my education with that of these innocent, defenceless girls and children, who in choosing to pursue an education have been snatched from all they know and all they hold dear to them, being pushed into horrendous, traumatic experiences of life-altering violence, forced labour, rape, slavery, and forced conversions and marriages. This is a desperate situation and millions of children are paying the price of the government's failure to protect its citizens from violence."

Speaking at the protest, Lord Alton of Liverpool said the recent surge in mass abductions "mean the lives of Nigerian students generally are being commoditised by armed non-state actors of Fulani ethnicity. Since December 2020, the country has

witnessed 14 such attacks on educational establishments... in the northwest and centre, with over 1,100 students abducted for ransom, and at least ten of them have died."

Pastor Fred Williams said: "These attacks are deliberate. They are soft targets. They are intentionally showing their strength. It's not just kidnappings, it's not just killings, it's also a show of power. It's political... Kaduna state right now is like the eye of the storm in Nigeria, especially southern Kaduna." He added "the silence is deafening" in regard to the Nigerian government's continued failure to address the ongoing crisis in the country.

The Fourth International Conference on the Safe Schools Declaration is currently taking place in Nigeria's capital, Abuja. Lord Alton also pointed out that although the first Safe Schools Initiative was launched in Nigeria in May 2014 following the abduction of over 200 girls from their school in Chibok, it appears to have been less of a priority for the current administration: "This year's theme is:

'Ensuring Safe Education for All: From Commitment to Practice.' It is imperative that attendees live up to that commendable aim, by formulating concrete steps to safeguard students and educational establishments which extend to every area where attacks have become commonplace."

UNESCO recommends that governments commit 15 to 20 percent of their national budget to Education. However, for 2021 the Nigerian government allocated 5.6 percent of its budget towards Education, which is reportedly the lowest amount granted to the educational sector in 10 years.

A petition has also been launched by CSW, the IA-Foundation, Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), and the International Organisation for Peace Building and Social Justice (PSJ-UK) drawing the attention of the British Government to developments in Nigeria with a view towards securing schools.

Source: Independent Catholic News
29th October 2021

Service of Choral Evensong to mark Romero anniversary


Source: Romero Trust

An Ecumenical Service of Choral Evening Prayer will be held at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral on Thursday 14 October at 6pm, to mark the third anniversary of St Oscar Romero's canonisation in Rome in 2018.

Archbishop Malcolm McMahon will preside. The service will include the presentation to the Cathedral by the Archbishop Romero Trust of a first-class relic of Archbishop Romero - being an infinitesimally small fragment from his rib bone.

Dr Jan Graffius will speak about the relic and its provenance and Fr Stephen Pritchard will speak about Romero and Liverpool, following his relatively recent visit with CAFOD to the holy places associated with St Romero in El Salvador.

Source: Independent Catholic News 30th September 2021






Choral Evening Prayer


with the reception of the relic of St Oscar Romero

Archbishop Malcolm McMahon OP presides in the presence of ecumenical leaders.

Thursday 14 October 2021 at 6.00pm

at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool







Submitting copy for next issue

The deadline for articles and photos for the next edition of the UCM News is 10th January 2022

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

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Introducing the Laudato Si Action Platform

Brian Austin

The Pope announced in May this year what is called the 'Laudato Si Action Platform'. It is the work of the Dicastery for Promoting Human Integral Development, which is a relatively new department of the Holy See.

This has the responsibility for "issues regarding migrants, those in need, the sick, the excluded and marginalised, the imprisoned and the unemployed, as well as victims of armed conflict, natural disasters, and all forms of slavery and torture", which "takes place by attending to ... justice, peace and the care of creation." [Pope Francis]

What the Dicastery says is that: "The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change. The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home."

So, what is this Laudato Si Action Platform? It is a major effort to mobilise Catholics worldwide to put into action the message of Laudato Si, Pope Francis' encyclical letter on Care for Our Common Home. The Pope wants us all to undergo an 'ecological conversion', because, he says, "We ... need a new ecological approach, which transforms our way of living in the world, our lifestyles, our relationship with the Earth's resources and in general the way we look at people and live our life" to respond to "the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor".

It is a very ambitious programme which will be launched on 14 November, the World Day of the Poor, and will last for seven years, during what Cardinal Peter Turkson called 'this crucial decade', a decade which is critical for responses to climate change and environmental degradation. It also follows the UN Climate Conference in Glasgow

(COP26) and, once that is over, "we get to do action", says Fr Kureethadam, the Dicastery's co-ordinator for ecology and creation. The seven years are a year of preparation, five years of action and a year of evaluation; it is a journey, rather than a single event.

The Action Platform outlines specific actions and goals for Catholics aimed at "families, parishes and dioceses, schools and universities, hospitals, businesses and farms, organisations, groups and movements, religious communities, working together", and that does not leave anyone out. And it is designed to address seven areas for action:

Response to the cry of the Earth, Response to the cry of the poor, Ecological economics, Adoption of a simple lifestyle, Ecological education, Ecological spirituality and Community commitment.

In more detail, this means:
Response to the cry of the Earth: to work toward carbon neutrality through greater use of clean renewable energy and reduced fossil fuel use; support efforts to protect and promote biodiversity and guarantee water access for all.

Response to the cry of the poor: to defend human life from conception to death and all forms of life on Earth, while giving special attention to vulnerable groups such as indigenous communities, migrants and children at risk of trafficking and slavery.

Ecological economics: sustainable production, fair trade, ethical consumption and investments, investments in renewable energy, divestment from fossil fuels and limiting any economic activity harmful to the planet or people.

Adoption of simple lifestyles: to reduce use of energy and resources, avoid single-use plastics, adopt a more plant-based diet, reduce meat consumption and increase use of public transportation over polluting alternatives.

Ecological education: to redesign curricula around integral ecology, create ecological



awareness and action, promote ecological vocation with young people and teachers.

Ecological spirituality: to recover a religious vision of God's creation, promote creation-centred liturgical celebrations, develop ecological catechesis and prayers and encourage more time in nature.

Emphasis on community involvement and participatory action around creation care at all levels of society by promoting advocacy and grassroots campaigns.

In November, 'Laudato Si' Planning Guides' will be made available for us all to use. What these are, we have yet to find out and it is a case of wait and see. But to back these up there will be resources and practical guidance provided on-line, which

presumably is why it is called a 'platform'. We are assured that it is a ground-up approach, since it is a collaboration between the Vatican and an international coalition of Catholic organisations.

You can complete a registration form on the LS Action Plan website:
<https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/pledge-your-commitment/>
More about the LS Action Platform at:
<https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/about/>
and the goals are at:
<https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/laudato-si-goals/>
Brian Austin is a Laudato Si Animator

Source: Independent Catholic News 23rd October 2021

Message for the month of November 2021 of the WUCWO President General

Dear friends,

This month will be marked by the World Day of the Poor. In his message for this day, 14 November 2021, Pope Francis explains that there is a "powerful 'empathy' established between Jesus and the woman".

We, the women of WUCWO, should be filled with deep joy and gratitude meditating on this empathetic relationship with Jesus. Empathy is a positive attitude that allows us to establish a particularly affective and healthy relationship of coexistence with Jesus and of identification and affinity with Him, at the same time as it assures us reciprocity, that is to say, the knowledge that He listens to us, understands our problems, emotions and longings and makes them His own.

Empathy is a word that comes from the Greek and is formed by 'en', which means 'inside' the subject, and 'patos' which means 'affected, moved'. When there is empathy, there is an intimate understanding of the other's vital and intellectual situation. It is precisely this mutual understanding that generates affinity.

As we celebrate the World Day of the Poor this month, I ask myself and I ask you, dear friends, what are the main "affinities" between Jesus and us and what this "empathy" should lead us to. Three words come to mind: family, home and dignity.

The pandemic, on the one hand, has left us with a bitter taste for all those who have experienced death alone, but, on the other hand, it has led us to revalue family ties, the need for a healthy family, where the personalities of some help others grow, and no one is left out or harmed. How many poor people without families there are around us for whom we must care!

Care for the ecology of the family is fundamental. When an ideology denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, it

eliminates the anthropological basis of the family (cf. AL 56). This position must be accompanied by understanding and respect for people who do not live in this way because of their convictions, their often complex life stories, and must be preserved from all kind of discrimination.

In addition to the family, the affinity with Jesus brings me to the home, not only to the home that each family needs to develop as a proper family, but to the Common Home that God gave us. On 14 November, the Laudato si' Platform will be officially launched, so that each of our families and organisations can participate in it. It is the poorest people in the world, who pollute the least and suffer the most from the harmful consequences of the lack of care for the planet, who are waiting for each one of us to make a change.

If we strive to respond to the cry of the Earth, we must also respond to the cry of families in difficult situations and their most vulnerable members. Our planet is in a unique crisis. It is troubling that when some environmental movements defend the

integrity of the environment, they sometimes fail to apply those same principles to human life (cf. LS 136). Caring for the biodiversity of all living beings necessarily implies giving priority to the care of human life from conception to natural death, in its natural sphere of development: the family environment.

And this Day, precisely because of our empathy with Jesus, is also about the dignity of the poor. Let us look into the eyes of the poor close to us, as the Pope teaches us, and we will find what we can do for and with them. They have so much to teach us! Only if we create interconnection we can move forward.

Integral and sustainable development requires providing equal opportunities for access to quality education, health services, nutritious food, decent employment to the poorest families, to those divided by forced migration and especially to "discarded" families. Having a home has much to do with the dignity and growth of families (LS 152). Family, home and dignity are deeply connected in



the heart of Jesus and therefore must also be connected in ours.

May Mary, our Mother, guide us so that our deep affinity with Jesus is reflected in concrete actions with the poor on the occasion of this World Day.

María Lía Zervino, Servidora

Pope’s November prayer intention:

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.

"Overwork and work-related stress cause many people to experience extreme exhaustion – mental, emotional, affective, and physical exhaustion." Pope Francis opened the video accompanying his prayer intention for November with those words with which most people can probably identify. His intention was released in this month's The Pope Video, prepared by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network. It comes as people living in the Northern Hemisphere enter the Autumn and Winter seasons, during which cooler weather is often accompanied by rainy days and more time spent indoors. The Pope took note of that seasonal situation in his timely prayer intention. "Sadness, apathy, and spiritual tiredness end up dominating people's lives,

who are overloaded due to the rhythm of life today," he said. Pope Francis thus encouraged everyone to reach out to those around us who are depressed, desperate, or without hope. And he advised against comforting others with too many words. "Often," he said, "we should just simply listen in silence, because we cannot go and tell someone, 'No, life's not like that. Listen to me, I'll give you the solution.'" "There is no solution," remarked the Pope.

However, he continued, besides "indispensable psychological counselling", Jesus' words can help us and others to find solace: "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." With that advice in mind, Pope Francis wrapped up his prayer intention video message with a renewed invitation to assist those around us. "Let us pray that people who suffer from depression or burn-out will find support and a light that opens them up to life," he prayed.