

To live is to change,
and to be perfect is to
have changed often. -
St. John Henry
Cardinal Newman



UCM News

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The
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of the Union
of Catholic
Mothers

Winter 2023



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May the Virgin Mary inspire the leaders of nations to seek paths to peace

In a broken world, lacerated by war and suffering, Pope Francis asks believers to join him in prayer for peace and reconciliation. He implores the Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace, to offer the solace, guidance, and hope of a mother who has seen her children endure pain and loss throughout history. To Her, he consecrates "the world, especially those countries at war."

By Linda Bordoni

Consecrating our lives, the Church and the world to the Queen of Peace, Pope Francis prayed to the Mother of God to touch the hearts of those imprisoned by hatred, and convert those who fuel and foment conflict.

May the Virgin Mary, he implored, "inspire the leaders of nations to seek paths of peace. Queen of all peoples, reconcile your children, seduced by evil, blinded by power and hate."

"Inspire the leaders of nations to seek paths of peace"

Day of Prayer, Fasting and Penance for Peace

The Holy Father raised his prayer during a prayer service in St Peter's Basilica on Friday evening at the culmination of a Day of Prayer, Fasting and Penance for Peace that he called for in the context of the devastating wave of violence unfolding in the Holy Land.

Announcing the initiative on 18 October, the Pope extended his invitation to join the Day of Prayer to "the various Christian confessions, members of other religions, and all who hold the cause of peace in the world at heart."

Presiding at the prayer service that alternated gospel readings, prayers and meditations as well as the Rosary and with Adoration and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the Pope turned to Our Lady asking her to look at us: "We stand here before you. You are our Mother, and you know our struggles and our hurts."

"Queen of Peace, you suffer with us and for us, as you see so many of your children suffering from the conflicts and wars that are tearing our world apart."

At this dark hour, the Pope prayed, "we entrust

ourselves and our problems to your maternal heart which knows our anxieties and fears."

Alone we cannot succeed

Invoking her as a beacon of light and a source of hope, he recalled how Mary always responded to the trials she endured with tenderness, love, and acceptance and he prayed for her help "to keep alive the hope of Easter through the night of sorrow."

The Holy Father prayed to Mary to again "take the initiative for us, in these times rent by conflicts and laid waste by the fire of arms," because by ourselves we cannot succeed.

"Turn your eyes of mercy towards our human family, which has strayed from the path of peace," Pope Francis prayed, and invoked her to "Intercede for our world, in such turmoil and great danger."

"Teach us to cherish and care for life – each and every human life! – and to repudiate the folly of war, which sows death and eliminates the future," he said.

"Teach us to cherish and care for life and to repudiate the folly of war, which sows death and eliminates the future."

Recalling that Mary has often urged us to pray and repent, the Pope said our worldly distractions have often led us astray: "Help us once again to put God first."

He continued: "By ourselves, we cannot succeed"; without your Son, we can do nothing. Appealed for peace and conversion saying "You bring us back to Jesus, who is our Peace."

"Mother of mercy, we appeal for mercy! Queen of Peace, we appeal for peace! Touch the hearts of those imprisoned by hatred; convert those who fuel and foment conflict."

"Dry the tears of children, be present to those who are elderly and alone; strengthen the wounded and the sick; protect those forced to leave their lands and their loved ones; console the crestfallen; awaken new hope," Pope Francis implored.

Consecration to Mary's Immaculate Heart

Entrusting and consecrating ourselves and all we possess to Mary's Immaculate Heart, the Pope said: "To you we consecrate the Church, so that in her witness to the love of Jesus before the world, she may be a sign of harmony and an instrument of peace."

"To you we consecrate our world, especially those countries and regions at war."

The Pope concluded by praying that a "glimmer of light may illumine the dark night of conflict," and that the leaders of nations may seek paths of peace.

"Queen of all peoples, reconcile your children, seduced by evil, blinded by power and hate. You, who are close to all, shorten our distances. You, who have compassion on everyone, teach us to care for



Our Lady Queen of Peace

one another. You, who reveal the Lord's tender love, make us witnesses of his consolation and peace. Queen of Peace, pour forth into our hearts God's gift of harmony."



A day of prayer



Pope Francis Prayer of Peace

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Editorial

As 2023 races towards Christmas there have been so many events around the world to trouble us. From wars to natural disasters to the personal trials and tribulations we all face from time to time. I hope all of you find comfort in the love and friendship of family and friends. During Advent let us focus on the wonder of GOD's creation and the salvation brought by Jesus' birth.

National Media Officer



A Film Suggestion

'The Most Reluctant Convert' The Untold Story Of C.S. Lewis
Starring Max Mclean as the older C.S. Lewis and Nicholas Ralph as the younger man. Available on DVD and some streaming services.

Pope: May we be neighbours to wayfarers of our time

On October 19th Thursday evening, Pope Francis led a prayer vigil to remember the plight of migrants and refugees and the call to save them, heal their wounds, and help them contribute to society to build a better world marked by fraternity and peace.

The Pope led the "Moment of Prayer for Migrants and Refugees" organized by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development with the participation of refugees from Cameroon, Ukraine, and El Salvador.

The vigil took place before the large sculpture in St. Peter's Square called the "Angels Unawares" monument, a life-size sculpture in bronze and clay that depicts a group of migrants and refugees from different cultural and racial backgrounds and from diverse historic periods in time.

The Pope shared some reflections during the brief prayer vigil while also marking a moment of silence to remember all those who have lost their lives along the different migration routes.

Recalling the theme of the Good Samaritan heard in the reading from Luke's Gospel at the vigil, the Pope said the parable shows us how to move from a closed to an open world, from a world at war to one at peace.

Dangerous roads

The dangers facing travellers from Jerusalem to Jericho in ancient times are like the unsafe migration routes facing people today who travel through hostile deserts, forests, and seas, the Pope observed.

So many are robbed, stripped and beaten, often deceived by unscrupulous traffickers, the Pope said, to then be "sold like commodities."

The dangers facing migrants and refugees today are stark he went on to say as they risk kidnappings, exploitation, torture and rape with many not surviving before reaching their destination.

Sadly, he noted, even in these days we witness how people are fleeing war and terrorism.

Compassionate hearts

Recalling the witness of the Samaritan who took notice and pity on the man lying at the side of the road after being beaten by bandits, the Pope said "he saw the wounded man and had compassion on him," saying "compassion is the imprint of God in our hearts."

And from that moment, the wounded man began to recover thanks to the "foreigner" who helped him.

"The outcome was not simply a good deed of assistance; the outcome was fraternity."

Pope Francis Called to save lives and heal wounds

"Like the Good Samaritan, we are called to be neighbours to all the wayfarers of our time, to save their lives, to heal their wounds and to soothe their pain. For many, tragically, it is too late, and we are left only to weep over their graves, if they even have a grave. Yet the Lord knows the face of each of them, and he does not forget it."

The Pope said the Good Samaritan's actions went beyond simple charity and consisted of four verbs that marked his service: welcome, protect, promote and integrate.

His immediate care for the man extended into a long-term responsibility, as he returned to make sure he was fully recovered while making it possible for him.

He added that the long term opportunity of this solidarity leads to "the growth of more inclusive, more beautiful and more peaceful societies."

Making safer roads

Another action we could all undertake is to "strive to make the road safer, so that today's travellers do not fall victim to bandits," the Pope added, saying more efforts are needed to counter the criminal networks "that exploit the hopes and dreams of migrants."

Creating safer routes require efforts to "expand regular migration channels," he said, while at the

same time bringing "demographic and economic policies into dialogue with migration policies."

But it is key to look out for the most vulnerable, he emphasised, while working to find common and responsible approaches to managing migration flows that are only likely to increase in the coming years.

"Let us ask the Lord for the grace to draw close to all migrants and refugees who knock at our door, because today 'anyone who is neither a robber nor a passer-by is either injured himself or bearing an injured person on his shoulders.'"

Source: Vaticannews.va



Pope Frances

New Jubilee app, "Iubilaum25", available for download

The Dicastery for Evangelisation announces the launch of an app in six languages, with news about, and sign-ups for, events during the Holy Year.

The official mobile app for the Holy Year 2025, "Iubilaum25", is available for download. The app, which will make it easier to register for Jubilee events, can be downloaded from the App Store for iOS and from the Play Store for Android. It will also provide all the news on the Jubilee, and allow users to register as a pilgrim for the Holy Year and obtain a free Pilgrim Card. Once registered on the portal, users will also be able to register for Jubilee events and pilgrimages to the Holy Door. The simple and intuitive interface allows pilgrims to save the events they are interested in, access their personal area more quickly, and receive a unique QR code for entry to the Holy Door.

By Vatican News



Submitting copy for next issue
The deadline for articles and photos for the next edition of the UCM News is 4th February 2024
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FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Dear Friends in UCM,

As we approach the season of Advent and look forward to the celebration of the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem it is so sad that the land of His birth is riven by so much conflict and hate. Only a year ago I was at the WUCWO meeting in Athens where we were being told about the women of the area working together for peace and reconciliation. Let us pray that the current conflict can be resolved quickly and see peace return in the area. Also let us pray that the war in the Ukraine can be resolved and the peoples of that country can once again live in peace.

With 2024 fast approaching we look forward to our “Relaunch” where we hope to bring the UCM to the notice of more women in our parishes and see

new Foundations and an increase in membership. For the UCM to survive we need not only new members, but also ladies prepared to take on office at Foundation, Diocesan and National level. Without you coming forward to fill these posts we will cease to exist as an organisation.

As my Foundation in Merstham meets to plan the floral decoration in our church for Christmas I wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

With my love and prayers

Joan Hodge

The Way Forward into 2024

We all know the problems of groups like ours in the current climate and post pandemic. Now is the time to be:

UNITED – In our faith and ability to effect change in our communities, country and the world.

COMMITTED – to our aims and objectives.

MAINTAINING – Helping each other in our journey of faith, Christian family values and Christian social action in the world.

Can we do this? the National and Diocesan Committees think we can, do you the members agree?

If so, then we need to talk to everyone, Bishops, priests, other members, congregations, and other groups doing wonderful work in parishes and wider communities. We need to share our passion for the

work and encourage other like-minded women of all ages, single or married to join the crusade. All are needed, those who can lead, those with ideas and those who put things into action. So, encourage others with similar interests to join us. Be proud to wear your membership badge and to explain who you are and what you do. There are also scarves and collars available if you wish to wear them, especially at special Masses or meetings.

Choose a particular issue to follow up, to campaign for, raise funds for; tell the Diocesan UCM what you are doing send in a report about your work, it need not be long. Join forces with other parish groups to further their work. Think about groups outside of your parish, such as community groups, foodbanks, hospices etc. I am

sure you can all think of many more. In fact, I am sure many of you already do this work, you just don't tell us, being the quiet backbone of your parish or town that you are. All this good work needs to be shared, time to let people know what you do. Join the private national UCM Facebook page, post on there the things you do; a national campaign that needs action, petitions need signing or invitations to an event coming up.

The website as you know is undergoing an updating process which is taking a while, remember that this is the public face of the UCM and needs your input to keep it up-to-date and vibrant.

All this is fine for members of the UCM, what about the parishes or Dioceses where there is no

UCM presence, can we reach out to them? Our National President is sending a letter to all Bishops asking for their support. A visit to another parish? An information script to be read out at Mass? National Committee getting around to as many as possible? These are some of the projected ideas for 2024. So please consider various activities throughout the year to advertise UCM's presence, include others in whatever you do and encourage others to start new Foundations. If you cannot commit to a Foundation for any reason, it is possible to be a Diocesan Independent Member, see below..

UCM National Committee

Update on Diocesan Independent Members

ARE YOU A BUSY WOMAN BUT ALSO INTERESTED IN HELPING YOUR COMMUNITY?

The UCM may be for YOU! The UCM is open to ALL women who want to support Christian values across society, especially in family life and helping those in need. Normally members meet regularly in Foundations attached to a parish, but this model doesn't work for everyone. Diocesan Independent Membership may be a good solution for you. You will have the chance to influence government/Catholic church/ helping others and charities as the UCM has input and influence into wider women's organisations but won't be a part of a Foundation. Using technology perhaps, Diocesan

Independent Members keep in contact with their Diocesan UCM organisation and can attend Diocesan and National Meetings, Pilgrimages AND to contribute to issues that you are passionate about which fall within the Objectives.

The UCM can give every woman a voice in the issues of the day and a chance to contribute!! Interested?? Look us up on the website theucm.co.uk.

Contact Sarah Davis – Diocesan Independent Members Liaison - ucmindmem@gmail.com

Members only Facebook page provides virtually daily information of mutual interest.

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Events			
2024 dates			
Study 2024	Wistaston Crewe	27-28 February	
National Council & AGM	The Hayes Swanick	3pm Wed-Fri 8th-10th May	
National Pilgrimage	Walsingham	1st-3rd July	
Autumn Officers Meeting	Grimshaw Room, St Chads Birmingham	Sat 12th October	
2025 dates			
National Council & AGM	The Hayes Swanick	3pm Mon-Wed 19th-21st May	
Vacancy Notices			
Diocesan Duties	Host needed for National Council & AGM	May 2025	

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

God’s Chef at Anna’s House

“Anna’s House” is celebrating 25 years since it was founded by Italian missionary, Fr. Vincenzo Bordo, OMI, also known as “God’s Chef”, who has served over 30 million meals and saved hundreds of children from the streets.

Father Vincenzo Bordo, OMI, is an Italian missionary of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, who has served in South Korea for 30 years.

It was there that he founded “Anna’s House,” an institution committed to working with people living on the streets of Seoul: street children, homeless people, and elderly people who have been abandoned by their families.

This year, “Anna’s house” is celebrating the 25th anniversary of its foundation.

"I would like to use this anniversary to remind Korean society of the reality of the poor and to help volunteers grow in this dimension of service to others. I would also like it to be an occasion to collect donations," Fr. Vincenzo told the Vatican's Fides news agency ahead of World Mission Sunday, on 22 October.

Anna’s House carries out its mission by receiving half its operating budget from government subsidies and the other half from donations from the faithful.

More than 3 million meals

From 1998 until March 2022, Anna’s House served more than 3 million meals, subsidised 21,000 health interventions, and assisted with 1,000 dental treatments.



Fr. Vincenzo Bordo, OMI

The charity provided 6,000 psychiatric counselling and treatment sessions and 700 legal consultations, as well as offering personal hygiene services and distributing clothes.

Above all, Anna’s House has offered “great respect and love for the people who live on the streets of a rich but often neglectful city,” says Fr. Vincenzo.

‘People did not want to see the poor’

Some might think that missionaries are not called to economically-developed country with a wealth of local clergy, such as South Korea.

However, “it is not that the poor are not there,” according to Korean Cardinal Lazzaro You Heung-

sik, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Clergy, in his preface to a book by Fr. Vincenzo.

“It is that the people did not want to see them,” he wrote. “Seeing the excluded requires a gaze of faith and love. This is the way our Oblates look at our country.”

In Seong-Nam City, the local community also claimed there were no homeless people or people living on the streets. Fr. Vincent began encountering homeless on his own initiative and soon welcomed over two hundred to Anna’s House, many of them teenagers.

Local authorities also claimed that a home for street children was a useless facility because there were no street children. In spite of that, already in 1998, Fr. Vincenzo welcomed more than twenty children and offered them a home. They received a proper education, found jobs and were helped by volunteers and psychologists, all aiming toward their full reintegration into society.

Fr. Vincenzo's book translated to Italian

"The Love that nourishes", Fr. Vincenzo's book, has been translated into Italian and entitled "Chef per amore". The book aims to expand support for the work of "Anna's House" in Seong-nam, on the outskirts of Seoul.

In South Korea, the book was a huge success with 10,000 copies sold and 5 reprints. The Italian Embassy to Korea supported the translation and its publication in Italy.

The book on Fr. Vincenzo's work is "an

extraordinary witness of faith and love. It is not only a report of charity at work, but also of the mystery that nourishes charity: silent and long prayer, constant reading and meditation of the Word of God. The witness of a living and active faith that knows how to care for others is the royal path of evangelization even in today's world," says Cardinal You Heung-sik.

As Jesus explained the Scripture to the disciples on the road “their hearts burned within them”, also “their eyes were opened as they recognized him”, says The Pope. Ultimately, “their feet set out on the way”.

By Sr. Nina Benedikta Krapf , VMZ



The missionary priest serves the faithful in many ways

London: Visitor from the School of Joy



A special visitor from Bethlehem recently stayed at Our Lady Help of Christians in Kentish Town, north London. Fr Mamdouh Abusada is the founder of the first special school for children with learning difficulties in the West Bank.

It all began in 1998 when Fr Abusada was working at a family centre in Bethlehem. Parents there started asking him for help. Their children were being excluded from schools who couldn't cope with them. They were saying they must go to a

special needs school - but there wasn't one.

With no education there was little hope for the future for these children. Many Palestinian youngsters with disabilities end up on the streets, roaming around while their parents' work. In some cases, having a child with a disability carries a stigma and some have been abandoned or shut away at home alone.

When Fr Abusada learnt about these children, he began to research what it would take to start a specialist school for them. He wanted love and joy to be at its heart - things these children had too often been missing.

God opened a way through many challenges and School of Joy, at Beit Sahour just outside Bethlehem was born 25 years ago. In the first year, they had 13 students. This year there are 76 pupils, aged 7 - 14, with ten teachers.

The school welcomes children from all religious backgrounds without discrimination. Some pupils are simply behind in their education due to trauma or undiagnosed problems with their vision or hearing. Others have cerebral palsy, Downs Syndrome, autism, severe dyslexia or ADHD. Some travel 25 miles from Hebron to attend - because there's still no other provision like this anywhere in the West Bank.

Teachers encourage the children to discover their talents and develop skills that will help them support themselves. Many now have fulfilling careers - from olive wood carving to construction, floristry and hairdressing. The Palestinian Authority has a rule that all businesses must take five percent of staff with special needs. Others can work serving in shops or as janitors or doormen - all futures that nobody imagined was possible before School of Joy welcomed them in.

This vital school receives no state funding, and the majority of the students' families are too poor to pay any fees.

Friends of the Holy Land has helped fund the School of Joy since 2013. Their support has enabled the school to double the number of classes, introduce better facilities, supply school

lunches, trips and activities, and invest in well-qualified teaching staff. During the Covid pandemic, Friends of the Holy Land was the only source of funding, as there were no visitors for many months. "It was a terrible time" Fr Abusada said, recalling the sad number of funerals he had to conduct. Now that crisis has passed and the school is thriving - but Fr Abusada said if they could afford to employ more teachers, they would be able to take more students.

Brendan Metcalf from Friends of the Holy Land told ICN: "For the academic year just begun the school has much increased demand for places. In financial terms the cost to support one child at the school is roughly £1,200 pa. so we will face a challenge in our existing budget projected for the year.

"Given the terrible events that are unfolding now universities and some schools have moved to remote learning, however Fr Mamdouh is keeping the school open as long as he can as these children cannot get the same love and therapy remotely bearing in mind their families' circumstances need the meal the school provides. I understand 59 are attending at the moment, with 19 unable to make it due to travel restrictions."

Fr Abusada said: "The situation is very critical these days, because of the war, so we ask you to pray for safety, and peace."

His final words to the group in Kentish Town were: "Pray, Act and Visit. "

If you would like to support the School of Joy please visit Friends of the Holy Land, either through their webpage - www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/school-of-joy - by post to our office Farmer Ward Road, Kenilworth, CV8 2DH - or over the phone by calling their office on 01926 512980.

Donors can make single gifts or set up a regular gift, indicating that it is restricted to support the School of Joy. If donors who are taxpayers indicate this on the form - making a gift aid declaration - there is the added benefit that the charity can claim gift aid on their donation which will generate an additional 25p for every £1 they donate.



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“I’ve been in a hundred slums throughout the world” – Father Chantry describes his missionary life

Father Anthony Chantry, the National Director of Missio in the UK, the Pope’s official charity for world mission, has explained his life as a missionary, also giving some valuable insight into what Africa’s biggest slum, in Kibera, Kenya, is like.

Speaking to the bishops’ conference in a podcast, Father Chantry said: “I’ve been in a hundred slums throughout the world and they’re all the same, they all follow the same pattern.”

“There are people who, because of the economic situation, perhaps the social situation, are confined to very densely populated areas without facilities. By that I mean no electricity, no water, no communications, no drainage, no sewage, etc., in most places most of the time.

“And yet in those places that I have been and worked, the people generally never lose hope. There is always a sense that actually God is with them, that God is accompanying them, perhaps for some feeling that God is also suffering with them.

“And so it is that our story that we present for World Mission Sunday really encapsulates all of that.”

Speaking about a nun called Sister Mary, who lives in Kibera, Father Chantry described what motivated her to “accompany people”.

He said: “Sister Mary, lives in Kibera with the people, which is immensely difficult for her and her fellow sisters because they will share the same deprivations as the people they are serving.

“So her whole philosophy, if you like, her whole spirituality, actually is to accompany people, to be with them, to share in their suffering as far as they can, and to listen.

“An enormously important part of mission is to listen, to listen to where people are, to listen to their culture, to listen to their innate spirituality. Because I have not met anyone in Kenya yet who does not believe in God, they may not believe in the God I do, but that’s another question.”

Father Chantry also had some advice for the

ongoing synod in Rome, explaining how the experiences of missionaries can help inform the Church’s role in society in the 21st Century.

He said: “I think that missionaries, or those who have devoted their lives to mission at the synod, will encourage people to listen if they’re worth their salt. They have been listening to people they’ve served, so they understand what that’s about and how difficult that is.

“If I were there, I would say be courageous. Be courageous. Risk, calculated risk. Oh, yes. But try to find ways in which we can do what we are called to do, and that is the mission to proclaim Christ to the



world. Try new ways, try to be inclusive, and try to be reaching out more to others in different ways.

“Try to recognise the presence of Christ, working in all sorts of different ways as His kingdom, His, not ours, His kingdom comes to cooperate with that whole process of God redeeming the world.”



Sue Bickerstaffe

Sue Bickerstaffe New National Treasurer

My name is Sue Bickerstaffe, and I grew up in Liverpool, the next to youngest of eight children. It was lovely having older brothers and sisters who you could talk too and looked after you. Going into town with my eldest sister Sheila and day trips with Bernie my brother still brings back happy memories.

I married John in 1973 and moved to Skelmersdale after our wedding. We have 2 children Mark and Alison, 2 grandsons and 1 granddaughter. It’s lovely spending time with them all and seeing how the boys have grown up as they are now 21 and 17. Lola loves staying with us during the holidays as she is only 6.

I have been your National Treasurer for 4 months and prior to this position served as Diocesan Treasurer for Liverpool for 6 years and Vice President for 2 years. I joined St Richards UCM Foundation in 2013, as a founder member, when 12 members made our commitment. This has enabled me to make new friends from across Skelmersdale and work with many people who have helped our Foundation to grow. I retired in 2013 from Lancashire County Council having worked in the financial sector in various post throughout my working life.

I am still involved in many aspects of parish life as a Eucharistic Minister and reader and catechist supporting parents and children preparing for Holy Communion and Reconciliation. I became a member of the Holy Family Lay Associates in February 2000 and served on the National Committee for six years and held the role of Treasurer during this time. I have been a school governor in our local high school and one of our primary schools in Skelmersdale for many years.

My way of relaxing includes dancing, which I love, and is my type of exercise which I do twice a week if I can, listening to music, going to the theatre and concerts with family and friends John and I love our days out to local areas, holidays abroad and our annual trip to Devon for a week with my sister and brother-in-law in the summer. This gives us both a chance to recharge our batteries and relax in wonderful scenery.

Sue Bickerstaffe

Aid to the Church in Need

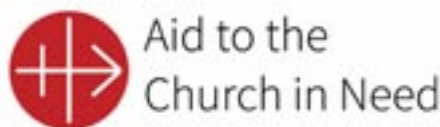
I am writing to ask if the UCM would consider promoting Aid to the Church in Need’s 2023 #RedWednesday campaign to your membership? If you are not already aware of our campaign – this will be our 8th year - #RedWednesday is an important opportunity for UK Christians to express their support for persecuted Christians worldwide.

This year, our focus is on suffering Christians in Africa where, in some parts, there has been an upsurge in jihadist violence and huge numbers of Christians are now displaced, with many traumatised by their experiences.

To help Christian communities there, I am writing to ask if you and the Union of Catholic Mothers could consider helping us from November until the end of the year with two of our important #RedWednesday goals?

As well as inviting people to wear red, light up buildings red and to undertake red-themed activities we are asking people across the country to:

- Pledge decades of the Rosary towards our 100,000 Decades of the Rosary for Africa Challenge. We want to offer spiritual support for the hundreds of thousands of Christians who are displaced and traumatised. If this is of interest to you or your membership, you can register your pledges on the website <https://acnuk.org>
- We are also trying to raise £100K for Africa by Christmas. Donations made will be ‘matched’ by



generous benefactors (up to £100K) – thereby doubling the impact of each gift. Money raised will help with basic necessities e.g. food and shelter across the African countries we are working in. We are also supporting Trauma Counselling for families who have lost loved ones as a result of jihadist violence and help for families – especially widows – to learn new skills to support their children.

For information, on #RedWednesday itself – 22nd November –our main #RedWednesday event at St George’s Cathedral, Southwark. Holy Mass at 6pm will be celebrated by His Eminence Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendia, Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain, with Archbishop John Wilson. Would also love to have representation from UCM members, so to reserve space/s visit <https://acnuk.org/event/redwednesday-london/> For people too far away, the event will be livestreamed.



Visit our
website at
www.theucm.co.uk

The Union of Catholic Mothers 77th Annual Walsingham Pilgrimage


Monday 1st & Tuesday 2nd JULY 2024 Led by the Diocese of SOUTHWARK

Diocese:		No. of Pilgrims badges @ £8 each:		No. of pilgrims for the Sacrament of the Sick:		TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED:	
Foundation Name:							
No. of Cars:	No. of Coaches	No. of Mini Buses		Organiser's Name:			
Tel. No. of Coach Company [Inc. Area code]				Address:			
No. of Pilgrims proposing to take part in the Monday Evening Service		Do you require a map with directions to the Shrine		YES/NO	Post Code:		
No. of Deacons or Acolytes who wish to participate		No. of Priests who wish to concelebrate			Tel No: Email:		
Signed					Date:		
<p>Bookings cut-off date is Monday 20th May 2024.</p> <p>Fees for Priests/Deacons: <i>Please remember that the Foundation/Diocese is responsible for paying and booking your Priests/Deacons. It is important that you indicate their number when making your bookings as facilities for them have to be made at the Shrine.</i></p>					<p>All Bookings to be sent ASAP to:</p> <p>Mrs Angela Higginson 26 Holmescarr Crescent Rossington Doncaster DN11 0QD Tel: 07940528011</p> <p>Please include a SAE of adequate size and postage.</p>		

Booking Form: All Cheques should be made payable to: "The U.C.M. Walsingham Sub-committee"

Monday 1st July
SERVICE OF LIGHT
8pm
In Chapel of Reconciliation followed by the TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION

Tuesday 2nd July
MASS 12 Noon



Concelebrated Mass with Bishop Alan Williams, Southwark Auxiliary Philip Moger and Diocesan Priests.

For further information please contact your Diocesan President or Local Organiser



Light up Christmas for hundreds of seafarers and fishers.

Look around you: 90% of the things you use has been brought here by sea. It's extraordinary to think how much we depend on the shipping industry. But so often, men and women of the sea are forgotten.

This Christmas, the port chaplains and ship visitors of Catholic charity Stella Maris will welcome many seafarers and fishers in ports around the UK, bringing them gifts, and ensuring Mass is organised for them, where possible, at this special time.

And it's all thanks to you. Your gift to Stella Maris helps us to share God's love with seafarers and fishers and make their Christmas special.

Please visit www.stellamaris.org.uk for more information about how you can light up Christmas for seafarers and fishers. Please also keep them in prayer. Thank you, in advance, for any support you can kindly give.



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

Changes to the UCM National Pilgrimage 2024'



Thanks to everyone who attended the pilgrimage this year, it was good to be together at Our Lady Shrine, it was a joyful and prayerful occasion.

The planning for 2024 pilgrimage is in the early stages and the sub-committee is working with the National committee to ensure that we continue to be able to attend this wonderful Shrine.

To highlight some of the issues of the past 2 years: the numbers of the pilgrims attending are well down, only 350 last year, which has meant we have been unable to cover the costs, last year the sub-committee had to ask National for the sum of £1114 to help with the bills. Part of the reason for this overspend was due to underuse of rooms in the Bureau. The UCM has had a long-term contact with the Bureau in that we book all the rooms, but most people request a single ensuite room and these are very limited and similar for the doubles. In order not to be left with unfilled rooms the sub-committee has agreed with the Bureau that rooms not booked by the 31st January will be handed back to the Bureau and then individuals can liaise with the bureau directly.

The other big costs are for the Abbey Grounds,

hire the Marquee, chairs, and sound system. these must be booked at the latest before May. So last minute requests for chairs in the Abbey Grounds can made it very difficult to ensure that everyone who needs a seat has one.

Some of the other issues are that the path going into the Abbey Grounds is not very suitable for those in wheelchairs or with walking difficulties. Risk of inclement weather for those pilgrims who have used the Abbey link buses. Despite the warm day last year some pilgrims felt very cold.

Unless there are over 500 pilgrims, the road can no longer be closed, so the Rosary/Railway path must be used for the procession and the uneven surface can be unsuitable for many.

The Sub-committee has proposed for 2024 that instead of going to the Abbey Grounds that everyone will remain at the Basilica and have the afternoon services there. This would be instead of raising the pilgrim cost from current £10 to £15. Following the Autumn meeting in Birmingham the National Committee have agreed to do this as an experiment for 2024 only.

Mary Wardle
Walsingham sub-committee co-ordinator

MIDDLESBROUGH DIOCESE

St. Mary's Filey Foundation Celebrate 20th

To celebrate their 20th Anniversary the members of the Filey Foundation decided to have a Celebratory Lunch. Their parish priest Fr. Albert Schembri, Middlesbrough Diocesan Spiritual Advisor Fr. Bill Serplus, Diocesan Officers, members from other foundations and friends were invited. Filey had previously had a foundation way back in 1971 but a few years later this had closed and in 2002 it was decided that a new foundation would be formed. In 2003 the first members were enrolled by Fr. Sean O'Donnell the then Middlesbrough Diocesan Spiritual Advisor. Many will remember Fr. Sean as he always came to Council Meetings. He would have been delighted that they were celebrating their 20th Anniversary. A most enjoyable afternoon when many reminiscing stories were told. May St. Mary's foundation continue to thrive.

From the left on Photo Kath Stubbs Media, Barbara Cookson, Diocesan President Foundation, Diane MacDermott Vice President Filey



Visit from Orchard Nurseries

St. Aelred's Foundation welcomed Chris Small from Orchard Nurseries who had brought along a large collection of climbing plants and to give advice on their care, flowering and suitability for particular areas in our gardens. He reminded members on the pruning of the plants we already have in our home gardens which can add a wonderful display over the summer. A lively discussion followed when members queries were answered, and many plants were purchased.



Musical Evening with Alex

St. Aelred's Foundation were delighted to be entertained by a talented young performer Alex Callaghan who we have seen grow up in the parish over many years as an Altar Server and Musician. Alex having recently graduated from Leeds gave a performance on her flute and fiddle including a rendition of 'Speed Bonny Boat' and of her own poetry including the use of rhythm, metaphor and quirky humour particularly in 'The Sock Market' and a Great British Apology were full of humour and with change of mood she read us "I've been looking for my son for so long" a mother's lament in the current situation in Ukraine. We all wished her well in her next steps.



Filey Foundation Summer Fundraiser

A day after the longest day of the year there was an excellent turnout for, 'Westway Open Arms' & 'Smile' the two charities Filey UCM have voted to support this year. All were greeted with, 'What would you like to drink?' by an attentive hostess. Raffle tickets were on sale and each Entry Ticket was entered into the raffle. Fashion items were presented by Diane Yalozo from her shop, 'Desire' of Filey. The models, all working & retired people from the area strutted their way down the catwalk. This years, 'Cherry Berry' and 'Magic Trousers' were modelled with floaty tops. The linen dresses were of many beautiful colours. Handbags in various hues & necklaces completed the ensemble. During the interval tasty, 'Finger Food' was on offer & the opportunity to purchase items from the show. A delightful Summer Evening.



Judith Quirk

Evening meeting with Richard Keesing

Dr. Richard Keesing, formerly of the University of York gave a very interesting, illustrated lecture on the life of Sir Isaac Newton. He told us about his earlier life, his school days and the time at Cambridge University. The plague saw him home for 2years and during this time he is thought to have watched the apples fall from an old tree at Woodthorpe Manor. This is part of the movement

on Earth, and the whole universe. Newton only published his mathematical work on the encouragement of some of his peer group in London. His theories gained ground and were translated into French and German from the original Latin. Dr Keesing who obviously loves his subject gave a very interesting and enthusiastic talk.



JERICHO

Combines the Contemplative life with an active apostolate to the destitute.

Vocation information from:

Bro. Patrick,
The Jericho Society
'Mater Salvatoris'
Harelaw Farm, Kilbarchan,
Renfrewshire PA10 2PY
Tel: 01505 614669
thejerichosociety@gmail.com

ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON DIOCESE

Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation

September 7th, 2023, was a beautiful sunny day and members of Arundel & Brighton Union of Catholic Mothers and the Knights of St. Columba met at the Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation in West Grinstead, near Horsham in West Sussex for their Annual Pilgrimage.

Canon Tom Treherne (Spiritual Adviser to A&B UCM) led the day and gave an inspirational talk about perseverance in prayer and believing in the mercy of the Lord. He mentioned 3 saints in particular: Charles de Foucauld, Venerable Matt Talbot, and St. Augustine, to whom this was relevant in their lives.

At noon we had Holy Mass followed by a shared lunch in the garden. After lunch The Holy Rosary was led by Canon Tom Treherne and Mrs. Judy Harkins (Our Diocesan Secretary) in the garden, and by Mrs. Eileen Harris MBE (Our Diocesan President Elect) and Mr. Sean Harkins (KSC) in the church for those who find walking difficult. This was followed by the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction led by Canon Tom. Sadly a few of our members were stuck on the A22 after their car broke down and they had to wait at the side of the road to be rescued. Sadly, they didn't get to the Pilgrimage but did their own praying whilst they were waiting patiently! They did manage to get a cup of tea eventually in a little café along the road.

Some of our members have been coming here for over 40 years and feel very at home in its setting and tranquility.

I would like to thank you for the feedback from several foundations, which has made it possible to share this article.



Contributions by:
Judy Harkins (A&B Diocese Secretary), Anna Witham (A&B Diocese Study & Welfare), Pamela Schwenk (Merstham Foundation Treasurer), Vivienne O'Byrne (National Welfare Officer and Merstham Foundation member), Cecilia Thuy Cameron (A&B Media Officer)

Celebrating Joan's Birthday

On the occasion of Joan's birthday we held a surprise gathering in the church hall at St. Teresa's, Merstham, after our weekly Monday Mass, for Joan to cut a cake in celebration of her 80th. Joan is not only our Merstham Foundation member but she is our UCM National President. I am sure she knows how much she is appreciated for all that she does for the UCM and our wider parish.

We would like to thank Janet Franklin (our Foundation President) and Vivienne O'Byrne (our Foundation member/National Welfare Officer) for organising the mass intention for Joan as well as the surprise gathering with flowers and cake.

Congratulations Joan!

Cecilia Thuy Cameron (Merstham Foundation Secretary)
Photo by Janet Franklin



BIRMINGHAM ARCHDIOCESE

110th Anniversary at St. John the Baptist Foundation

St. John the Baptist Foundation, Tamworth, celebrated its 110th anniversary this year. On October 14th members were joined by Diocesan President, Mrs. Eileen Priest, past members, friends and parishioners for a thanksgiving Mass in St. John's Church celebrated by Parish Priest, Fr. Michael White.

Long service certificates were presented to Kate Connell and Sue Daly for 40 years and Angela Foster and Rosemary Kinsella for 50 years service.

After Mass everyone enjoyed tea and celebration cake.

One of the Founder members in 1913 was Elizabeth Tricklebank and her daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughter have followed in her footsteps to the present day with Angela Foster, currently Diocesan Secretary and Foundation Treasurer.

Rosemary Kinsella Foundation President



St Marie's Coronation Party

On Monday 24th of April after the 10am Mass, St Marie's UCM Rugby held their celebration party in our parish hall Hibbeth for the King's coronation. It was a shared table and we had a lovely sing song

with our own musical director Angela Crisp, who had planned the programme also played the music. God save the King.



Fire Walk!

On 24th June at Sacred Heart Church in Tamworth 82 brave souls took part in a Firewalk - walking over hot coals for charity. Over £22,000 was raised for Heart of Tamworth charities. Congratulations to our Parish Priest, Fr. Michael White and our own UCM member (and Diocesan Treasurer) Jane Barr who successfully and safely completed the feat. Jane is not sure which of the UCM objects this feat fulfils! In July nine members of St. John, the Baptist Foundation shared afternoon tea at a local garden centre as a celebration before the summer break. This year the Foundation celebrates 110 years in the parish and we hope to celebrate later in the year.

Miriam Cunliffe Media Officer





Submitting copy for next issue
The deadline for articles and photos for the next edition of the UCM News is 4th February 2024
Please send copy to ucmnews@yahoo.com
Thank you
(GDPR) General Data Protection Regulation

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

HALLAM DIOCESE

St. Peter in Chains, Doncaster visit

On Sunday 14th May 2023 the members of the Union of Catholic Mothers met at the Church of St. Peter in Chains, Doncaster. The afternoon included Tombola, a bric-a-brac stall, and teas and coffees were served raising a total of £250.

This money was donated to Susan McDonald the Director of Youth Ministry in the Hallam Diocese to assist with the costs for the Youth Ministry. Susan is pictured below with Mrs. Margaret Webster the UCM Foundation Treasurer.



Inter Diocesan Pilgrimage in honour of the Padley Martyrs

During the afternoon of Sunday 8th July 2023, Padley Chapel in Grindleford, Derbys. was the country setting where pilgrims from the Dioceses of Nottingham and Hallam gathered. In July 1588 two travelling priests were discovered whilst staying overnight at Padley Manor. Everyone at the hall was arrested. Garlick and Ludlam with another priest Richard Simpson were gruesomely executed in Derby two weeks later. An annual pilgrimage honouring the two martyrs began in the late 19th century. The Diocese of Nottingham bought Padley in 1931 and it is now owned by the Diocese of Hallam. Holy Mass, which was celebrated on the outside altar in the grounds of the old Manor house

was offered in honour of Blessed Robert Ludlam and Blessed Nicholas Garlick. The Rt. Rev. Bishop Ralph Heskett was the main celebrant assisted by the Rt. Rev. Patrick McKinney of Nottingham who gave the homily. The weather was warm and many pilgrims from the two dioceses were able to sit outside and enjoy meeting up afterwards and chatting. Bishop Ralph was celebrating 47 years of his ministry in the Priesthood. My thanks to Michael Galvin who has provided the pictures in this article.

Dorothy Anderson (Media Officer for the Diocese of Hallam)



LEEDS DIOCESE

A Bed for every head

A Bed for Every Head or as its more formally known Zarach Charity, was founded in 2017 by a Leeds teacher. The female teacher found that a significant number of her Primary school class fell asleep during lessons. When she questioned them she was shocked to be told that they either had no bed or were sharing a bed with several siblings so got little or no sleep. The teacher was so concerned she decided to supply beds for these needy families and eventually the charity was founded.

Hundreds of beds with mattresses, pillows and bedding have been supplied all around West Yorkshire. St. Ignatius UCM held a Silent Auction in the Parish Centre and was delighted to raise £400 which has been donated to the charity.

Eileen Goodwin Media Officer.

Photo shows UCM president and secretary, Pam Watkins and Christine Woodhouse with member Joyce Armitage.



Rosary Rally

October being the month of the Holy Rosary St. Annes cathedral in Leeds hosted the UCM 16th Rosary Rally. After the procession and benediction mothers gathered in the cathedral hall for afternoon tea, Our diocesan chaplain Canon Lawrie Hume has recently retired but our Bishop Marcus Stock has kindly agreed that Canon Lawrie can remain as UCM chaplain. Canon Lawrie was presented with a "blue plaque" to fix next to the front door of his retirement bungalow causing much laughter by everyone present. Photo shows the presentation by Margaret Chambers Diocesan President

Eileen Goodwin Media Officer



St Benedict's garden party

In July UCM members from St. Benedicts foundation, Garforth, Leeds joined with St. Marys Mothers Union at Pearls Garden Party where £325 was raised for the Summer of Hope Charity. This Charity is very similar to our Rest Home Scheme providing a holiday in a caravan on the East coast of Yorkshire for deserving families.

It is amazing how similar the aims and purpose of Mothers Union and UCM are. St. Benedicts UCM and St. Marys Mothers Union meet together for fundraising and social events regularly including a Coronation Afternoon Tea. **Sue Oldroyd St. Benedicts UCM, Garforth**

UCM never gives up

Recently my UCM friend Mary and I were invited to support an Afternoon Tea to be arranged by St Benedicts UCM based in Garforth, a Leeds suburb. As we both live in Bradford and because there was a train strike that day we set off early hoping to arrive in Garforth in plenty of time. We missed the bus into Bradford city centre so were 20 minutes late already. The stop we needed for our bus to Leeds had been moved to the far end of the bus station causing us

to miss the express bus which would have got us to our destination very quickly. Sadly we had to jump another bus which we knew would add a long time to our journey. Thankfully we decided to check we were on the correct bus but were told by the driver that the bus we needed didn't even leave from Bradford bus station meaning a long walk for Mary and I. On arriving at the correct stop we discovered our bus had been cancelled but luckily 20 minutes later

another bus arrived. We all boarded and off we went with the driver travelling much too fast for a double decker. After several miles through countryside we heard a strange noise just before 2 young men sitting on the back seat shouted to tell us the bus was on fire and we had to get off immediately. Huge clouds of smoke were belching out of the bus so the only option was to walk the rest of the way to Garforth.

Poor Mary had blisters due to new shoes so limped all the 25 minutes of the walk. we arrived at St. Benedicts at 3.20pm but missed our Afternoon Tea which started at 2pm. Nevertheless in true Catholic style we were made very welcome and had a wonderful time. **Pat Whitford-Barite late of St. Clares UCM Bradford now a private member**

SHREWSBURY DIOCESE

St. Peter and St. Raphaels Parish visit to Ladyewell Shrine

On Wednesday 20th September members of St. Peter's and St.Raphael's UCM joined members of the Parish on a visit to Ladyewell in Preston . We commenced our visit with Mass in the Chapel led by our Parish Priest Father Phillip Atkinson. After listening to a very interesting talk on the history of Ladyewell by Sue the manager, our members

enjoyed exploring the beautiful gardens, the shop and the Artefacts centre which displayed many relics from the past all of which survived the devastating fire which destroyed the chapel in March 2011.

Jean Clarke
Joint Media Officer Shewsbury Diocese



Shrewsbury Diocese AGM

Members representing foundations within the Shrewsbury Diocese attended the AGM held at St. Ann's Church, Rock Ferry on Saturday 21st October. After attending Mass beforehand which was led by Father Mario from St Ann's, the ladies enjoyed an interesting afternoon with the highlight being news

that our officers Mary, Sheila and Gill had been invited by Bishop Mark to Shrewsbury Cathedral for the Apostolic Nuncio Mass to meet the Pope's representative which we all considered a great honour for them.

Jean Clarke
Joint Media Officer Shewsbury Diocese



Shrewsbury Diocese Officers meet the Pope's representative

The Shrewsbury Diocesan officers Mary Dearden President , Sheila Morrison Secretary and Gill Moss Treasurer received a special invitation from Bishop Mark Davies to attend the Papal Nuncio Mass at Shrewsbury Cathedral on Wednesday

26th October. They were very honoured to meet the Papal Nuncio Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendia after the Mass.

Jean Clarke
Joint Media Officer Shewsbury Diocese



SALFORD DIOCESE

Beautiful Embroidery

This is a photo of one of our members, Santina Akello, with the lovely tablecloth she embroidered for our statue table. She grew up in South Sudan, where with a group of young girls she learnt to sew, making tablecloths and bed linen as presents for couples getting married. Each couple would choose a different design for their set of linen. Sometimes they were paid for their work, sometimes they donated them, but they were always beautiful!

Mildred D'Amore
(UCM president, St. Mary and St. Philip Neri, Radcliffe, Diocese of Salford)



Ann Barrett receives her 60 year certificate

Ann Barrett, receiving her 60 year certificate as a member of UCM here in Radcliffe at our foundation AGM in March this year. With her are Pauline Lifford, secretary, Mildred D'Amore (me), president,

Jenny Ferguson, Diocesan Secretary, Kathleen Henderson-Playfair Diocesan President, and Iris Riley, our treasurer.

Mildred D'Amore



St. Ann's Foundation, Rock Ferry

As a fund raiser the foundation members held a raffle to guess the weight of a giant marrow grown by the Diocesan president's husband Paul. The winner was Margaret Brennan who guessed 6lb 13oz and is pictured with her prize. The raffle raised £25 for their chosen charity and the marrow was presented to the Parish Priest Father Mario who

was delighted to receive it and is looking forward to cooking several meals with it.

Jean Clarke
Joint Media Officer Shewsbury Diocese



SOUTHWARK DIOCESE

Sheppey Sunflower Competition



Our UCM had a sunflower growing competition this year organised by our events officer Sandra Forster, the winners were Father Aklilu and Rita Glock. Joanne Pavitt Southwark Media Officer

Winning Flowers

Joanne Pavitt
Southwark Media
Officer



Sheppey UCM Barn Dance

On September 22nd the Sheppey UCM Foundation held a Harvest Barn Dance to raise money for the Parish, attended by 100 people. The evening was organised by our wonderful events officer Sandra Forster and fellow member Sue Jarvis. All attendees were asked to bring food for a sharing supper, which resulted in an abundance of delicious food which was enjoyed by all. The Sheppey UCM members all donated

raffle prizes which were beautifully wrapped by our treasurer Jean Cheesbrough. We had a fantastic evening with lots of dancing, fun and laughter, we raised an amazing £640 for the Parish. We hope to make it a regular event as it was a great success.

Joanne Pavitt Southwark Media Officer



Sheppey UCM Foundation Summer Outing

On July 6th 2023 Sheppey UCM had our summer outing organised by our Events officer Sandra Forster. We were accompanied by our new priest Father Aklilu who originates from Ethiopia, and since Father arrived, he has been keen to go on a boat as our parish is so close to the sea. It was a warm dry day for the boat trip on the Jacob Marley from the Isle of Sheppey around the wreck of the SS Richard Montgomery a US Second World War ship which ran aground in August 1944 off the coast of Sheppey with a cargo of bombs. The half-submerged wreck is just 2 kilometres from the coast of Sheppey and still has 1400 tonnes of TNT in its hold. The group made it back to dry land in one piece and enjoyed a delicious fish and chip lunch at The Flying Dutchmen Pub in Queenborough. A blessed day was had by all. The photograph show the masts of the SS Richard Montgomery.



St Anthony's Foundation Anerley

On 17th July we had our summer meeting at the Bridge House. It was a lovely warm evening. We had a great catch up about our families and holiday

plans. It was great to welcome a new member Nina who brought her daughter Maria to meet us.

Mary Naughton



Annual Rally Mass at St George's Cathedral, Southwark

The UCM Southwark Diocese held our annual Rally Mass at St George's Cathedral, Southwark on Saturday 21st October. The mass was led by our spiritual advisor Father Doug Bull assisted by Father Nolan. The mass was dedicated to our Patron Margaret Clitheroe. Father Doug and the Southwark Diocese President Sharon Bishop gave us very interesting incite into Margaret Clitheroe's life. The mass was attended by many of our Foundations including Anerley, Birchington, Camberwell, Catford, Hythe, New Malden, Sheppey, South Croydon, Sutton, Tolworth and West Norwood. We welcomed visitors from

Westminster Diocese, Arundel & Brighton Diocese and the Catholic Women's League. The Mass was organised by our wonderful Secretary Mary Piper and all our committee members were in attendance to ensure the day went smoothly, including our treasurer Margaret Carter, Penny Curran, Catherine Rooms, Margaret Witham, Majella Turner, Justina Ukaegbu, Denise Hall and myself Joanne Pavitt. Following the mass we were treated to a delicious meal of Jollof rice and chicken supplied by the lovely ladies from the Camberwell Foundation. It was a wonderful spiritual day enjoyed by all.

Joanne Pavitt Southwark Media Officer



40th Anniversary celebration

On Saturday 13th May 2023, we had a wonderful celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Upper Norwood Foundation. Diocesan Officers who attended were Sharon Bishop, Mary Piper and Penny Curran. We had Mass which was concelebrated by Father Doug Bull and our Parish Priest Father James Clark. This was followed by a celebratory lunch where stories were shared about the history of the Upper Norwood Foundation.

Sharon presented the long term achievement award for 40 years to our Foundation, which was received by our President Mrs Christine Alabaster. Other 40 year awards went to Mary Hall, Marjory Lenihan, Jenny Mitchener, Christine Owens, Teresa Slayford and Maureen Westrupp. For 28 years, Peggy Bohen, Alice Owusu and Helen Ryan.

Helen Ryan, Secretary



Guided walk through Bermondsey

In July Sutton Foundation and friends joined UCM guide Kate Boyle for another of her enjoyable outings. She took us on a guided walk through Bermondsey. It lasted about two hours, and we learned so much about the area - its history since the Romans built the road which is now Borough High Street in what was a very marshy area. We saw the site where Bermondsey Abbey was set up by the Benedictine monks in the 11th Century and saw how the area had changed from being farmland to become an industrial area. Many of the original historic buildings and factories can still be seen. It has now become a very popular and trendy place to work and eat.

Maggie Carr Sutton Foundation UCM

PORTSMOUTH DIOCESE

Reflections on a year recovering from post covid depression

Our year began with some joyful news from Waterlooville foundation. Veronica Sutton received a special diocesan medal for long and faithful service to the Catholic Church. Her dedication began at the age of 14 when she taught catechism to the young people in her parish. Her commitment continued when as a young wife and mother she joined UCM taking on many roles at foundation and diocesan level. Now at age 91 she is still serving the UCM as she has done over the years. A wonderful role model for our younger members

Our newest foundation in Hook now has twenty members in their expanding lively group. They have been busy involving the UCM in parish life, helping to build up their parish community; running a social event BBQ sponsored by Fr John; raising money for CAFOD; contributing funds to the new flooring in the Church Hall; supporting families on the day of their children's First Holy Communion; organizing a MacMillan coffee morning among other things. The monthly meetings are held in the morning on the second Saturday of the month, a time convenient for all members and they often enjoy lunch together after a busy business meeting.

Most of our foundations were unable to organize enough support to travel to Walsingham for the annual UCM pilgrimage. However, one enterprising foundation managed to meet to join in the Mass on the internet.

After a quiet summer we looked forward to celebrating the season of creation in September, so our annual Diocesan Study Day was held on the last Saturday of the month with

the topic "Seasons of Creation, Reconnecting people with nature. New hope from Pope Francis' encyclical Laudate Si." Dr Sarah Gardener, an ecologist, has been concerned for many years about the need for everyone to recognize that we are totally dependent on nature. She welcomed Pope Francis' letter to the world to remind them that nature is a gift from God, and we have been given the responsibility to restore proper stewardship of nature and planet earth.

It is easy to blame the economists and food companies in the need for making profits, but how far are we responsible for the disconnect between humanity and nature. We were asked to think about our relationship with nature and what changes we have observed over our lifetime. Are we aware of how our actions have driven this change. The key themes of Laudate Si show how everything in the world is connected. The relationship between nature and the society that lives on this planet forms one complex crisis. Pope Francis reminds us of our moral obligation to be good stewards of this earth. We must love our neighbour. This provides the moral framework for the current environmental debate, it calls us to change our behaviour, values, and lifestyle. Nature has its own way of bringing about change – the cycle of life – re-cycle, re-use, re-grow, re-form. We were left to consider our reactions to the questions we had discussed and to make our own individual commitments to making the world a better place for everyone.

Maureen Meatcher
Portsmouth Diocesan Media Officer

Wokingham Foundation – Day of Recollection

Members of Portsmouth Diocesan UCM have not only been involved in Pope Francis' call to join the synodal journey but have also been working on our Bishop's ten-year plan for his vision of the Diocese. A major part of the discussions has concluded with the need for formation for all the baptized if we are to take part in the mission of the Church. With that in mind, Wokingham Foundation chose Feminism, the role of women in the Church, for their annual Day of Recollection for the parish. The day was led by Dr Judith Thomas, a theologian and former Anglican Priest until her conversion to Roman Catholicism. Judith led us through scripture passages which told the story of women who had been instrumental in saving the people who believed in the one true God. She then went on to use examples from the New Testament of those women who were some of the first disciples to take an active part in the development of the early church. She emphasized the importance of reading the scriptures to inspire us to follow the role models who have gone before us. For us Catholic Mothers we have no better than Mary, the mother of Jesus and the Mother of the Church. For those of us who were

educated in Convent schools, we were shown how the women religious who founded their congregation, did not wait for permission to do their evangelical work, they just got on and did it.

Dr Judith Thomas was surprised to learn that the President General of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO), Dr Maria Lia Servino, was one of the three women theologians who had been appointed to take part in the next phase of the Bishops' Synodal journey. In her February newsletter, Maria Lia invited us to open the doors of our organization to evangelization and to invite others to join us in our activities. We have always invited all the women in our parish and other UCM foundations to our Day of Recollection but this year we also invited the Catholic Women's Organisations. The roots of their associations are in Africa, but they are keen to work with those English organisations who are members of WUCWO.

Dr Judith Thomas was thanked by all for a very inspiring and enjoyable day, with the hope that we would have a better understanding of the responsibility we have as women in the church.

Maureen Meatcher

WESTMINSTER ARCHDIOCESE

Hounslow UCM

September and October has been a hive of activity of the members of Hounslow Foundation, on the 27th September some members attended a local nursing home for their Chit Chat and Brunch morning, where they met the local Mayor Afzaal Kiani. One of the Foundation's long-term members is unfortunately now a resident at this home.

On the 3rd October a second meeting with the Mayor occurred at another Care home where members were invited to an exhibition of art done by one of the residents with Alzheimer, though his memory is poor, he manages to paint places he has been and people who he admired.

6th October the members held a Macmillan Coffee morning and raised £404, then on the 11th October in support of CAFOD, some members



attended the handing in of Salina's letters at the World Bank HQ.

Mary Wardle

A celebration at St. Edmund of Canterbury, Whitton

85 years of the Foundation and great joy that the new Archdiocesan President is one of their members.



Isle of Man church granted Cathedral status

Pope Francis has granted cathedral status to the Church of Saint Mary of the Isle based in Douglas in the Isle of Man. The announcement comes following Douglas being awarded city status as part of the late Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June 2022.

The Church will be a co-cathedral for the Archdiocese of Liverpool alongside the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, based 80 miles away in Liverpool city centre and will be the first Catholic co-cathedral in the British Isles.

Co-cathedrals are rare in the Catholic Church, but exist when two dioceses, each with its own cathedral, are merged or when a single diocese spans two distinct civil jurisdictions. The Irish Sea separates the two cathedrals in the archdiocese.

Monsignor John Devine, parish priest of St Mary of the Isle, said of the announcement:

"I am delighted that St Mary of the Isle has been granted cathedral status, it is wonderful news for Catholics across the island.

"It has been a year long process to get to this point. I was first approached by Douglas Borough Council who pointed out that cities have cathedrals, the island already has an Anglican cathedral in Peel on the west coast of the island, but they enquired whether it would be possible to elevate the church of Saint Mary of the Isle, Douglas, to the status of a cathedral.

"The Archbishop of Liverpool, the Most Rev Malcolm McMahon, on the advice of canon lawyers, petitioned the Holy Father; a request supported by both the Anglican Bishop of Sodor and Man, the chief executive of Douglas Council and the President of Tynwald."

Archbishop Malcolm McMahon said:

"It's with great joy that St Mary of the Isle has been granted cathedral status. The Isle of Man is a significant part of our archdiocese, it constitutes one third of its land mass and the island's Catholic community has increasing diversity with parishioners coming from many different parts of the world. It is fantastic that we can acknowledge this with the announcement of a co-cathedral – a status that is rare in the Catholic Church. It is something that everyone on the island will take great pride in."

Monsignor John Devine added:

"It is not just an honour for Douglas, but it

acknowledges the unique faith story of the Isle of Man.

"Christianity in the Isle of Man traces its roots to the time of St Patrick and St Maughold in the 5th century. But there is limited appreciation of the unique history and traditions of the Manx Church in the rest of the archdiocese. Similarly, few of the island's Catholics identify with Liverpool. However, rather than separating them further, the granting of co-cathedral status to St Mary's will raise consciousness in Liverpool to the riches of the Manx church.

"The permanent presence of the Archbishop's seat at St Mary's will also serve as a reminder to the people of the island that the Archbishop of Liverpool is their Archbishop, too."

Right Reverend Peter Eagles, Anglican Bishop of Sodor and Man added:

"It is a source of great gladness to me that we have such strong ecumenical relationships here on the Island. It has often occurred to me that Saint Mary of the Isle has a dignity and spaciousness that is as appropriate for a cathedral as for a parish church and I fully support the bestowing of co-cathedral status."

A cathedral is where the bishop of a diocese has his seat or cathedra. Plans are in hand for an official ceremony during which Archbishop McMahon will formally take possession of his seat to mark the Church becoming a Cathedral.



Archdiocese of Liverpool gains 'rare' co-cathedral

400th Anniversary of the Old Brotherhood of the English Secular Clergy

On 28 September 2023, members of the Old Brotherhood of the English Secular Clergy gathered at Westminster Cathedral to celebrate its 400th anniversary. This group of clergy, limited to 24 members who are elected by their peers, meets twice a year for 'Consults' and administers a small charitable fund.

In its early years, the Old Brotherhood had an important role in the leadership of English and Welsh Catholics. After the accession of Elizabeth I, there were no active Catholic bishops present on English soil. There was a leadership vacuum, and priests and laity were effectively left to their own devices. Various solutions were tried and finally, in 1623, William Bishop was appointed as Vicar Apostolic of England and Scotland, the first resident Catholic bishop for over 60 years.

William Bishop quickly introduced order where chaos had once reigned. On 10 September 1623 he established a Chapter, initially of 20 (later 24) canons. They were tasked with assisting the bishop and securing a smooth process of succession. Unfortunately, Bishop died the following year, before his Chapter could be canonically confirmed by the Holy See. Nevertheless, it was confirmed by the

next Vicar Apostolic, Richard Smith, and after he went into self-imposed exile in France, the Chapter effectively governed the Catholic Church in England up until the 1680s. It maintained an agent in Rome, granted faculties and dispensations, and discussed candidates for episcopal appointment. Most famously, in 1662 it authorised the dispensation for the marriage of Charles II and the Catholic Catherine of Braganza.

It continued to meet, even after a new system of bishops (Vicars Apostolic) was introduced in the 1680s. The 'Old Chapter' included well-known leaders and scholars, including Richard Challoner, John Milner and John Lingard. In 1862 it was officially renamed the 'Old Brotherhood of the English Secular Clergy.' Twentieth century members included Mgr Ronald Knox, the famous Catholic convert, writer and preacher.

The 'Old Brothers' and their President, Mgr John Allen, were joined for this 400th anniversary celebration by Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster who celebrated Mass for the brotherhood at the shrine of St John Southworth, one of the English Martyrs. A Reception for all was hosted by the Cardinal at Archbishop's House.



Synod General Assembly to People of God: 'Church must listen to everyone'

Participants in the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops have approved a Letter to the People of God giving thanks for their experience, detailing the work of the past few weeks, and expressing the hope that in the coming months, everyone will be able to "concretely participate in the dynamism of missionary communion indicated by the word 'synod'".

Letter of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to the People of God

Dear sisters, dear brothers,

As the proceedings of the first session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops draw to a close, we want to thank God with all of you for the beautiful and enriching experience we have lived. We lived this blessed time in profound communion with all of you. We were supported by your prayers, bearing with you your expectations, your questions, as well as your fears. As Pope Francis requested two years ago, a long process of listening and discernment was initiated, open to all the People of God, no one being excluded, to "journey together" under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, missionary disciples engaged in the following of Jesus Christ.

The session in which we have been gathered in Rome since 30 September is an important phase of this process. In many ways it has been an unprecedented experience. For the first time, at Pope Francis' invitation, men and women have been invited, in virtue of their baptism, to sit at the same table to take part, not only in the discussions, but also in the voting process of this Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. Together, in the complementarity of our vocations, our charisms and our ministries, we have listened intensely to the Word of God and the experience of others. Using the conversation in the Spirit method, we have humbly shared the wealth and poverty of our communities from every continent, seeking to discern what the Holy Spirit wants to say to the Church today. We have thus also experienced the importance of fostering mutual exchanges between the Latin tradition and the traditions of Eastern Christianity. The participation of fraternal delegates from other Churches and Ecclesial Communities deeply enriched our discussions.

Our assembly took place in the context of a world

in crisis, whose wounds and scandalous inequalities resonated painfully in our hearts, infusing our work with a particular gravity, especially since some of us come from countries where war rages. We prayed for the victims of deadly violence, without forgetting all those who have been forced by misery and corruption to take the dangerous road of migration. We assured our solidarity and commitment alongside the women and men all over the world who are working to build justice and peace.

At the invitation of the Holy Father, we made significant room for silence to foster mutual listening and a desire for communion in the Spirit among us. During the opening ecumenical vigil, we experienced how the thirst for unity increases in the silent contemplation of the crucified Christ. In fact, the cross is the only cathedra of the One who, having given himself for the salvation of the world, entrusted His disciples to His Father, so that "they may all be one" (John 17:21). Firmly united in the hope brought by His Resurrection, we entrusted to Him our common home where the cries of the earth and the poor are becoming increasingly urgent: "Laudate Deum!" ("Praise God!"), as Pope Francis reminded us at the beginning of our work.

Day by day, we felt the pressing call to pastoral and missionary conversion. For the Church's vocation is to proclaim the Gospel not by focusing on itself, but by placing itself at the service of the infinite love with which God loved the world (cf. John 3:16). When homeless people near St. Peter's Square were asked about their expectations regarding the Church on the occasion of this synod, they replied: "Love!". This love must always remain the ardent heart of the Church, a Trinitarian and Eucharistic love, as the Pope recalled on October 15, midway through our assembly, invoking the message of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus. It is "trust" that gives us the audacity and inner freedom that we experienced, not hesitating to freely and humbly express our convergences, differences, desires and questions.

And now? We hope that the months leading to the second session in October 2024 will allow everyone to concretely participate in the dynamism of missionary communion indicated by the word "synod". This is not about ideology, but about an experience rooted in the apostolic tradition. As the Pope reminded us at the beginning of this process, "communion and mission can risk remaining somewhat abstract, unless we cultivate an ecclesial



praxis that expresses the concreteness of synodality (...) encouraging real involvement on the part of each and all" (October 9, 2021). There are multiple challenges and numerous questions: the synthesis report of the first session will specify the points of agreement we have reached, highlight the open questions, and indicate how our work will proceed.

To progress in its discernment, the Church absolutely needs to listen to everyone, starting with the poorest. This requires a path of conversion on its part, which is also a path of praise: "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children" (Luke 10:21)! It means listening to those who have been denied the right to speak in society or who feel excluded, even by the Church; listening to people who are victims of racism in all its forms – in particular in some regions to indigenous peoples whose cultures have been scorned. Above all, the Church of our time has the duty to listen, in a spirit of conversion, to those who have been victims of abuse committed by members of the ecclesial body, and to commit herself concretely and structurally to ensuring that this does not happen again.

The Church also needs to listen to the laity, women and men, all called to holiness by virtue of their baptismal vocation: to the testimony of catechists, who in many situations are the first proclaimers of the Gospel; to the simplicity and vivacity of children, the enthusiasm of youth, to their questions, and their pleas; to the dreams, the wisdom and the memory of elderly people. The

Church needs to listen to families, to their educational concerns, to the Christian witness they offer in today's world. She needs to welcome the voice of those who want to be involved in lay ministries and to participate in discernment and decision-making structures.

To progress further in synodal discernment, the Church particularly needs to gather even more the words and experience of the ordained ministers: priests, the primary collaborators of the bishops, whose sacramental ministry is indispensable for the life of the whole body; deacons, who, through their ministry, signify the care of the entire Church for the most vulnerable. She also needs to let herself be questioned by the prophetic voice of consecrated life, the watchful sentinel of the Spirit's call. She also needs to be attentive to all those who do not share her faith but are seeking the truth, and in whom the Spirit, who "offers everyone the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery" (Gaudium et Spes 22), is also present and operative.

"The world in which we live, and which we are called to love and serve, even with its contradictions, demands that the Church strengthen cooperation in all areas of her mission. It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium" (Pope Francis, October 17, 2015). We do not need to be afraid to respond to this call. Mary, Mother of the Church, the first on the journey, accompanies our pilgrimage. In joy and in sorrow, she shows us her Son and invites us to trust. And He, Jesus, is our only hope!

Vatican City, October 25, 2023

Pilgrimage to Walsingham by Bus Pass

Oakham via Stamford to Peterborough

Immediately on leaving Oakham we were traveling alongside Rutland Water. It is a dazzlingly beautiful lake which is actually a reservoir, completed in the 1970s, serving the east Midlands. There is a narrow peninsular within the reservoir where some buildings remain. It is a nature reserve and has been designated a protected area for some wildfowl. It is a veritable paradise for bird watchers and is also used for water sports. Naturally, attracts many visitors to the area.

Approximately thirty minutes later I reached Stamford. Wow! What a beautiful town! I immediately thought of Edinburgh because its buildings, which are made of Lincolnshire limestone, are sturdy and have a solidly permanent air like the granite of Scottish cities. The streets are full of traditional character and are busy and alive. The shops are unspoiled and individual. I would have loved to jump off the bus and just spend the day wandering around. Apparently, it was the setting for the town of Meriton in the BBC drama series *Pride and Prejudice*. I'll definitely be back!

From Stamford to Peterborough gave another glimpse of the natural beauty of the English landscape. As a person reared in the hills of east Lancashire I find the flat terrain of the East Anglian region very fascinating. The sky is so much bigger! I have usually travelled to Peterborough by the A1 and have never been right into the city. I was surprised at how big it is. As with most 21st century cities, the centre is dominated by brick and concrete.

Peterborough to Kings Lynn

The bus station at Peterborough is like a vast underground cavern without much in the way of amenities, probably because it is adjacent to a vast shopping mall. Most noticeably lacking were any information boards indicating where to catch a particular bus. Once again I had to rely on the kindness of strangers so I addressed a bench full of waiting passengers and asked where I would get the bus to Kings Lynn. A chorus of helpful advice got me to the correct place and I was soon on board the most comfortable and well-equipped bus I have ever been on. There was an LED display showing, not only the location of the bus as it progressed, but also information about the upcoming stops, so it was virtually impossible to miss your stop.

Not only was wifi available, but each seat had its own charging point for phones. This is quite usual on trains but almost unknown on buses. It was a longer than usual journey and, in that area, the buses are a significant factor in transport between towns. It makes sense to make them convenient and comfortable if they are to persuade people to leave their cars behind. In fact, although it was possibly the longest spell on a bus, it seemed to pass remarkably quickly.

Kings Lynn to Fakenham

Kings Lynn bus station was the busiest I came across. Norfolk is dotted with small towns and villages with few large conurbations, apart from Norwich and the larger coastal resorts. Buses seem to be a transport lifeline. The bus to Fakenham was packed and there were some very jolly conversations going on around me. Lots of young people seemed to be out and about. This part of the journey was very familiar to me and again it seemed to go by very quickly. I appreciated how much more of the landscape I could enjoy while being driven, whereas, so much is missed when driving. In Fakenham I discovered that the bus terminal comprised two bus stops on a quiet street. I was able to get off the bus and hop straight onto the one that was waiting to go to Little Walsingham. Twenty minutes later I was at the corner of the Friday Market and making my way to Elmham House, the Catholic Pilgrimage Centre.

Walsingham

On previous visits I had stayed in the Sue Ryder hostel where we were served hearty, but slightly stodgy, food by young Polish students. Sue Ryder was known as Baroness Ryder of Warsaw because of the work she accomplished in Poland after the war, alleviating the suffering of displaced people. Sadly, it has now closed. I had also stayed in the Anglican accommodation centre, which has all the amenities you could wish for. We went there because there were people among us with disabilities and they had rooms with special facilities and adjustable beds. The catering there is excellent and there is a brilliant coffee shop.

Just as an aside ... there seems to have been a missed opportunity to cement the unity of Christians in Walsingham. Both the Anglicans (who were the ones who revived the ancient pilgrimage shrine) and the Catholics have shared a Palm Sunday procession for many years, but, as soon as they reach the Friday Market, the two "churches" split and continue on their separate ways. This baffling discordance is made even more evident in the fact that the replica Holy House is situated in the Anglican Church while the ancient Slipper Chapel is at the other end of the Holy Mile and is part of the Catholic Shrine. Each has its own Stations of the Cross, prayed separately. It is a great sadness to many to see this happening. It would be wonderful if one of the outcomes of the Synod would be a visible reuniting of the Christians of our country. Maybe the newly regenerated Pilgrim Way will help to break down the barriers.

Elmham House proved to be a bit more Spartan than the 5 star Anglican accommodation. All of the few en-suite rooms had been taken even though I booked months in advance so I was allocated a minute cell of a room with a tiny window overlooking a private garden next door. There was a prominent notice by the window informing me that looking into next door's garden would not be appreciated! Custody of the eyes!



Despite the drawbacks, the staff were eager to make me welcome and familiar with the house. The receptionist who welcomed me seemed to be new to the job and made a few false starts with keys and directions, but, eventually I found my way through the labyrinth of corridors and staircases. The place to meet up with fellow pilgrims was the dining room at meal times. Exactly on the dot of dinner-time a queue formed at the serving counter. I was delighted to discover, as I chatted with those beside me, that they were members of a parish pilgrimage from St Bernadette's in North Manchester. I had known their former and much loved Parish priest since he was a teenager and had been at his ordination in my previous parish. Of course, I was then gathered into the group and treated as an old friend. They too were intrigued by my mode of transport and the word soon got round so people began to ask about my journey. Thanks to being included in the group, I was able to share the meal times with some very interesting people, including the Rector Mgr. Philip Moger who sat among us at dinner. He's a northerner but from the other side of the Penines. He seemed very familiar with the Wirral though I didn't get to know how. I was in Walsingham for only one whole day, arriving late afternoon on Wednesday and leaving early on the Friday morning.

That time was very fruitful for me. I spent quite a long time in the chapel of the Holy Spirit where I always find new inspiration and insights. This time was no different. I began to see how the Holy Spirit had led me to make this pilgrimage. I seemed to be able to draw together some fragments of thought that had been struggling to make sense and I came away from that time of contemplation with a deeper understanding of Our Lady and I felt more prepared to place myself in her care and wisdom. The time I then spent in the Slipper Chapel was utterly peaceful and reassuring.

The fruits of my pilgrimage have been personally very sustaining. The strands of my ponderings seem to have come together and led to a new awareness and appreciation of our National Shrine to the Mother of Jesus.

It seems to me that the Walsingham shrine is iconic for the Live Simply approach to our relationship with our habitat. In contrast with

some other Marian shrines, the narrative of Walsingham has not resulted in splendid basilicas, attracting conspicuous commercialism. Despite the numerous pilgrims, it has retained tranquility and simplicity; something absolutely in keeping with the request of Mary for a replica Holy House of Nazareth, the ultimate symbol of living in simplicity and humility.

My journey to Walsingham, using only my concessionary bus pass, proved to be an illuminating glimpse into our truly divided nation. Passing through neighbourhoods that are off the main inter-city routes revealed the dramatic polarization between the affluent and the struggling sections of our society. The closed-down shops and shabby terraces in run-down areas of the East Midlands contrasted dramatically with the trim villas of the well-heeled in their leafy enclaves; their fashionably thatched roofs and mullioned windows aping mini manor houses, often a mere cock-stride from their neglected and down-trodden neighbours. All this had me well primed for a meaningful reflection on the power and influence of Mary of Nazareth.

The depiction of Mary of Nazareth in images of Our Lady of Walsingham has brought me to a deeper understanding of her role and stature as the strong and assertive Mary of the Magnificat. We see an empowered woman, not just a beautiful, loving, yet, essentially passive, vessel. Sturdy and enthroned, we see strength and confidence radiate from her as she presents her son to us in the certainty that " the Almighty works marvels for me". Her proclamation of the dignity and authority of her role and her prophetic assurances of the justice and mercy of God as he pulls down the mighty and lifts up the lowly, place her foremost among the apostles. Her message of hope and fulfillment resonates with astounding conviction as the one best placed to know the mind of God. This is the Mary that delivered Jesus to the world and, thus, vindicates Womanhood. Mary of Walsingham calls in question the misogyny of those who deem women not worthy of priesthood.

Walsingham says, "No Mary, No church"!

Mary Sample

OBITUARIES

SOUTHWARK DIOCESE

Esme Mills
Sheila Dallison

Tolworth Foundation
Sutton Foundation

NORTHAMPTON DIOCESE

Margaret Anderson
Patrica Stringer

Kettering Foundation Diocesan Media Officer
Kettering Foundation Past Northampton Diocese President

PORTSMOUTH DIOCESE

Angela Gilmore

Past Diocesan President

Leeds DIOCESE

Rita Willis

St. Johns UCM Bradford - mother of Fr. Chris Willis who was
Diocese UCM chaplain for several years.
St. Josephs, Huddersfield. (now closed)
St. Ignatius, Ossett

Elizabeth Flannery
Anne Hartley

HALLAM DIOCESE

Elizabeth Mulroy

Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Victories

SALFORD DIOCESE

Doreen Barrow
Kath Holroyd
Pat Stocks
Maureen Brennan
Sheila Edgington

St. Mary and St. Philip Neri, Radcliffe Salford
St. Mary and St. Philip Neri, Radcliffe Salford
St. Mary and St. Philip Neri, Radcliffe Salford
St. John's foundation Chorlton Salford
Guardian Angels, Bury, foundation

WESTMINSTER ARCHDIOCESE

Teresa Quigley

Our Lady and St. Joseph Foundation Kingsland.

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.

WUCWO General Assembly in Assisi, May 2023'

**67 organisations; 832 participants;
38 countries.**

Countries represented – Asia Pacific// Australia, New Zealand, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Lebanon, Philippines: Latin America and Caribbean// Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico, Guatemala, Cuba; Europe// France, Germany, Greece, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, UK: North America// USA, Canada: Africa//Barundi, Cameroon, Eswatini, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Cote D'ivoire, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda.

WUCWO RESOLUTIONS 2023 – ADOPTED AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ASSISI

1) WUCWO will consolidate, develop and extend the world women's observatory

WUCWO and its Member Organisations will consolidate, develop and extend the World Women's Observatory, according to available resources, to reach all regions of the world, as an appropriate mechanism to regularly listen to and give visibility to as many women as possible, especially the most vulnerable, to help transform their lives by generating pastoral strategies, NGO synergies, public policies and contributions to the international agenda. The Observatory will be a permanent project of WUCWO until an Assembly decides otherwise.

2) Religious Freedom: A foundation for the path of brotherhood and peace (Ft 279)

Religious freedom is a fundamental human right. It is an integral part of the culture of every people and is part of the dignity of every person. Therefore, WUCWO and its Organisations are committed to:- raise awareness of the richness of welcoming differences and valuing them with the joy of being brothers and sisters, children of the one God;- promote the defence of a broad right to religious freedom;- work for non-discrimination;- denounce violations of religious freedom or persecution, and;- encourage interfaith and interreligious activities and channels of dialogue for serene, orderly and peaceful coexistence, weaving bonds of universal fraternity (conf. FT 279).

3) Global food crisis. Care of our common home. Call to ecological conversion

WUCWO women must work to redress current global food crisis and restore equality of distribution and the protection of and respect for all women and children, encouraging a responsible consumption, reducing food loss and waste to address hunger globally. We must lobby Governments and donors to supply funding for food, nutrition, protection, education and livelihood support, and urge federal and local governments to enact legislation that provides the fundamental principles and rights for delivering food security and nutrition to all through the

reduction of food loss and waste and to support the development of new technologies that reduce food loss and waste by addressing marketing, food processing systems and the management of food quality. WUCWO women must get involved in the urgent call to action enunciated in the Laudato Si Encyclical in connection with environmental and climate change issues, with advocacy and urging all to embrace ecological conversion, to recycle and to reduce individual environmental/carbon foot print.

4) Let us take, with renewed conviction, the joyful journey of family love, motherhood and fatherhood

In response to Pope Francis call to take up with renewed conviction the journey of family love and following the theme of the X World Meeting of Families: "Family Love: a vocation and a path to holiness", WUCWO and its Member Organisations will promote programs that:- support the development of young people to help them discover the vocation and joy of marriage and of motherhood and fatherhood as a lifetime commitment;- accompany matrimonies at different stages of preparation for marriage and married life and encourage families to become examples of fraternity and places of hope for people in need.

5) Building the future with migrants and refugees

In response to Pope Francis' invitation to engage in "Building the Future with Migrants and Refugees" through a concrete proximity that reflects God's gaze on them, WUCWO, its Member Organisations and their International Representatives shall:- encourage actions for the Church to: welcome, protect, accompany, promote and integrate migrants and refugees;- promote volunteering in favour of refugees, asylum seekers and the most vulnerable migrants;- make the deaths visible that occur during irregular migration and human trafficking;- seek to advocate for countries to seek new alternatives to the legal category of "refugee".

6) "Enabling everyone to participate is an essential ecclesial duty!" (Pope Francis): Synodality. Formation and Participation of Women

WUCWO and its Organisations will promote:- the formation of women so that, through "spiritual, intellectual and pastoral" conversion, listening, discernment, dialogue and action, they may assume the leading role that corresponds to them in the construction of the Church, so that men and women, priests, consecrated and laity, "walk" together to make Synodality and their participation in different decision-making bodies in the Church possible.- the formation and participation of women to assume leadership and responsibilities, from their youth, in the search for the common good, in the social, political and religious spheres, being promoters of a culture of life and care that fosters peace and universal brotherhood, working, hand in hand with men, to change the mentality of the prevailing culture and being witnesses of holiness.

Heartfelt thanks for her work with WUCWO go to Val Ward our representative for 4 years who has now finished her term.



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Memories of the Holy Year of Mercy

With the closing of the Holy Year of Mercy, I have great pleasure in looking back in awe at the opportunities which have come for me to seek reconciliation as I entered through some of the "Doors" which were dedicated to that purpose.

My first occasion was at St. Joseph's Gerrard's Cross, and that was an inspiring and spiritual event in December 2015. I went to visit family in France in January 16 and went through the Holy Doors both at Sacra Coeur and the Notre Dame in Paris. I have been given the pilgrimage booklet, so was happy to read the prayers and to receive the Holy Eucharist too. In March I was able to go to Mass at Westminster Cathedral, and again through the Doors of Mercy, and on Maundy Thursday was our own Northampton Cathedral.

My brother was becoming increasingly unwell, so much of my intentions were concentrated on him, his family and my own family too. Another opportunity occurred at Walsingham with our UCM pilgrimage how blessed I have been with all these opportunities. My dear brother died on the 12th July; may he rest in peace. He had been an altar server in the same parish of St. George's Sudbury Town for 73 years and in the choir for 70 years, what an extraordinary blessing and achievement.

My final opportunity came because I had seen an article in the National Trust magazine and travel brochure about a four-day visit to Rome. So, on September 24th I set off to London City Airport by train for an Alitalia flight at 10.55am. Pre-booked taxi was not there apparently, tried the announcement system but no response so after 3/4 hour took another one outside the airport to take me to my pre-booked B&B at local Carmelite Convent, 'Casa Per Ferie Carmelitane' for 3 nights. I booked into a comfortable room with private facilities, visited the Chapel on the entrance floor where vespers was being said, then went for a walk towards Rome. I found a newsagent so bought some bus tickets and took a bus to the area of the Vatican City. The tourist information was closed but there was no list of times when it would be opened.

I walked across St Peter's square but entrance to St. Peter's was closed and so access to Holy Door. I went in the direction of the buses and stopped for a pizza then onto 913 bus back to the convent. I was locked out! walked all around the complex but no entrance so was in flat despair. Suddenly a small door opened and a lady came out. The door closed before I could leap through. She showed a little white button! Hey presto a voice invited me in how lucky. I slept well.

Breakfast was not served until 8:00am. Dashed off for bus and got to tourist office info at 8:50am. It will open at 9am. Paid for ticket for Monday to go to The Vatican, train to Castel Gandolfo has closed so I shall have to come here another time! I got a good seat for Mass in St. Peter's Square and was given a Mass booklet to use. It was a scorching hot day so sat near one of the big fountains so that its shadow would shelter me. By about 10.30 when Mass was to begin Pope Francis officiated, the choir was in full voice, the readings and the bidding prayers were in different languages. very helpful, and the big screens showed the officials who were leading the rosary and the other prayers before Mass. Although far away, i had an excellent view for the open air alter and could follow much of Pope Francis sermon. Received Holy Communion and began to make my way out of the square. The Pope was being presented with gifts and giving blessings to perked people which took about 3/4 hour and I stopped to watch some of that on the big screen. I was two people back from the barrier and suddenly the security guys began moving the barriers and getting people to move back. some could not find their companions so as a space occurred i took it. Minutes later 'El Papa' came past in his pope mobile and it slowed right down in front of me. He was only a car width from me smiling, waving, and blessing us all. What a privilege! He sped away so I strolled along to the main road and was able to order a hot panini and some juice. I went back to visit St Peter's Basilica and to go through the Holy door. There was only a small queue but very strict security. No one can go through the Door. I was so disappointed. aka

stood on the inside and read the pilgrims prayers in a background of noisy chattering, cameras being flashed, iPads and other items being plied liberally, and very little sign of reverence or awe at the wonders of this holy place. I went in to say some prayers and to see some of the beautiful statues, altars, floors, ceilings and curtains and was unable to find kneelers or seats at which to pray. Maybe Sunday is not a good day for this. There was to be an outdoor service of Rosary and Benediction at 5pm but no access to the seats in the square until 4.30pm. As it was 3pm I thought I would go back to the convent but could not find the bus stop. All the roads are one-way traffic, so I walked for 2 hours to find my way. I was hot and tired so stopped to eat and drink. "Menu offers 10 euro for pasta and salad, coffee and water. Felt better for the rest and took the 913 bus towards the terminal, then saw one going the other way so got off and went to a stop to wait for another. Phew! What a day!

On the Monday 26th went by bus to the stop for the Vatican. found a pharmacy open. bought more sticking plasters for the many blisters after my 2-hour wandering yesterday. Found my way to the meeting point for my tour but was a little early. Finished writing the last two postcards and sent them off, then walked around the entrance to the Vatican museums and a long wait before going through an imposing set of engraved glass doors to a waiting open air bus for our garden tour. We had mini ear plugs to listen to a proper guided explanation and the history of various beautiful buildings in the grounds. We heard about those who had formerly lived in them and who currently live there. (including 2 refugee Syrian families and their children being cared for and educated as guests of the Vatican City). We saw the steam engines and heard how they are still used to transport goods to and from areas in and around Vatican City. We saw the many lovely fountains, lakes and water works which were created by bringing water from the mountains via aqueducts both above and underground. (to protect them from vandalism in earlier centuries) and we saw as some more formal plantings full of colour splendour. What a joyful hour. It is possible to go to the Vatican gardens and to walk self-guided or with a guide in a small group and many people were doing so. I felt that on such a short trip I should prefer to go to the museums and Sistine Chapel rather than solely the gardens. I was rewarded fully for that decision as I enjoyed two and half hours in the wonderful museums, rejoicing in the tapestries with clever display of original cartoon, they worked from the back of design and the intricate stitching in row led to finished article. Considering they were created using candlelight and natural light with wool spun from fleeces using natural dyes, the outcome being so extraordinary makes me wonder how soon the

workers lost their eyesight. I loved the walls painted with maps of the world and the development over the centuries of more accurate details of the shorelines of Africa, Northern and Southern America, of the many Atlantic Islands and Northern States of Europe. Britannia changed shape dramatically from 1150 to 1600, when Ireland appeared all of a sudden. At last, I entered the Sistine Chapel where pads and smart phones were not allowed but were in use by many people. What a shame that many were taking the photos and not looking at the beauty and extraordinary marvels themselves. I did manage to look carefully at the ceiling by going to the dais then standing and looking carefully from left across to the right and appreciated all that extraordinary creativity. I was there for over 3/4 hour but was not hurried along by guards, I like going on my own as I can see what I find the most interesting/very selfish. Had a light snack and drink in the gardens and was amazed at the varied bird life in the nearby trees, flocks of parakeets screaming around, many sparrows, crows, pigeons and a flock of beautiful white doves too.

I discovered that the 'Pinoteca' (Vatican Art Gallery) was opened, so I went there. It's a really lovely building with golden mosaics picking out the names of famous artists from Giotto, Lippi, Michelangelo to Raphael, and Veronese, and Bellini etc. The formal architecture of the exterior is matched by the formal evergreens in their tubs and then the lovely floors of the galleries themselves. I was fascinated to read that there is a theme amongst the display of development of perspective. The marvels culminate in the special display of two of Raphaels most famous paintings in a gallery of their own. The rooms are filled with religious images, both paintings, sculptures and articles for use in ceremonies of the church. I was enchanted.

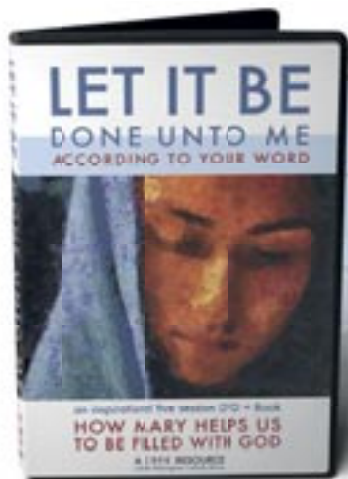
I found the way into St. Peter's and had planned to go to the roof. The queue was one and half hours, so I went first to the Treasury and then to the Papal Tombs. Both were very well worth my spending time there and I am so glad I was able to go. I had another lovely reward as I was leaving the Basilica; a huge curtain was drawn aside to reveal the lady chapel and the Pieta with soft lighting and some kneeling pews too. Despite the constant chattering I was able to meditate and offer prayers for those who had asked me to remember them. I failed to find any means to light a candle or to make offerings but did buy some holy pictures in the Vatican shop and a lovely 2017 calendar too for family and friends.

I stayed by the inside of the Holy Door for a little while and then to the outside again before leaving to go back to the convent for my last evening. What a fabulous weekend, Deo Gratias

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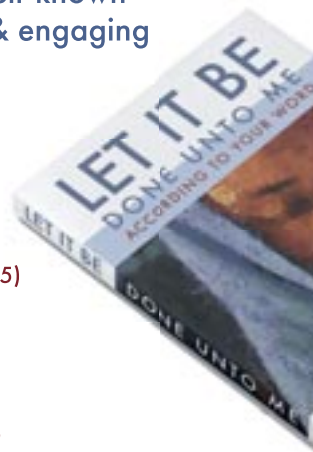
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