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Issue 187
April 2020

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SYNOD 2020
Archdiocese of Liverpool

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Inspiring

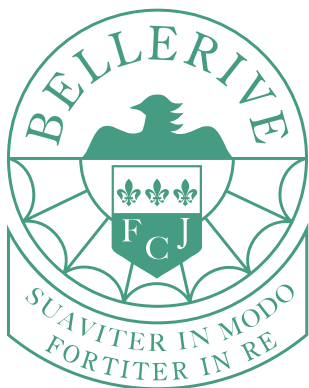
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Welcome

This is truly a time for prayer in light of the events of these last weeks. It is also a time for us to show how much we care for others. As I write all public acts of worship in our churches have been suspended, although many are open for at least a few hours so that people can spend some moments in private prayer. It is an opportunity for us to pray for all affected by the coronavirus in any way, and to pray for those close to us and for those who continue to work through these weeks of crisis to protect us.



Our Easter celebrations this year will be very different, but they are real. At the end of a very dark week containing every human emotion the disciples came to the empty tomb. They did not understand at first until the risen Lord came to them, whether on the road to Emmaus or in the upper room. We too are on that journey, a time of darkness and no understanding of what is happening. If we persevere in prayer and in care for others, we too will experience the same joy that the disciples enjoyed at the resurrection of the Lord.

Let us pray for one another.

From the Archbishop's Desk

Coronavirus is affecting every one of us. In my case I have had to rearrange appointments, issue advice to parishes and cancel my pilgrimage to Lourdes with the Handicapped Children's Pilgrimage Trust. Of course, this is very minor compared with what some people have had to put up with.

My prayer has also changed as I now pray for victims of the virus and for it to be quickly controlled. But as I converse with God, I wonder about the usefulness of viruses. I imagine that they have some function in the ecology of our planet, but it is hard for me to see what it can be. Like the microbe of hunters of the nineteenth century I am amazed how something so small can cause such devastation across the world. I have no satisfactory answers to these questions, but one spin-off is that I have gained a heightened sense of my own smallness before God, and how dependent we are on Him.



It comes a shock to the modern person to realise that not all problems can be solved by our ingenuity. So much of what it means to be human actually depends on each of us being dependent on each other and open to God, not on technology. We have lost touch with nature in many ways and we now live in an artificial world of science and concrete which seems to exist without God. One lesson we can learn from the coronavirus is that we still live in God's world, and not only a world of our own making. God is the Creator, and we are his creatures – including the coronavirus.

Most Rev Malcolm McMahon OP
Archbishop of Liverpool

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Cover: Archbishop Malcolm with Emma Foulkes and John Smith from St Teresa's parish Norris Green at the RCIA Rite of Election. Emma is a Candidate and John is her sponsor /faith friend.

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The Rite of Election

Celebrating 'the many forms of God's grace at work in people's lives'

by **Veronica Murphy**

Every year, on the First Sunday in Lent, dioceses throughout the world celebrate the Rite of Election at which the Bishop welcomes those who desire full membership of the Roman Catholic Church.

His role demands that he question them and those who are travelling with them on this journey of faith, about their readiness to take this important step. The community needs to have a sense of 'The God who Calls' recognising that all faith is gift and that 'Election' comes through God's diverse action both within and outside of our communities. It's a wonderful and joyful celebration in which we can appreciate the importance of different ministries.

These include Sponsors and Godparents who support in the 'in-between times' of sometimes doubt and uncertainty, RCIA team leaders, and all who share the responsibility to welcome and provide the necessary catechesis as well of course as the Bishop and his clergy. It's a celebration within our diocesan family that for many provides a very special beginning to the Lenten journey to Easter.

Whilst there are significant ritual moments that would be recognisable wherever the celebration was taking place, each diocese will have its own special touches. One of these underlines the importance of welcome: a member of the Diocesan RCIA Core Team offers a very special welcome a few minutes before the entrance procession to mark the beginning of the service. This welcome includes these words addressed to those who are acknowledging God's call in their lives.

'The journey which has brought you to this day will be different. Each one is called by God at different stages of life: called from different experiences of life. Give thanks to God today for those events which have led you here, because they are part of the mystery of the call you recognise today. Give thanks to God for all those people who have passed through your life, and, even without being aware of it, have been an influence for good in your life.'

A second addition for Liverpool is the presentation of a prayer card which our Archbishop requested be included and offers to all who attend. It's a prayer he wrote himself and prays every day during Lent for those

'It's a wonderful and joyful celebration in which we can appreciate the importance of different ministries.'

who will be baptised and enter into Full Communion with us this year: he invites us all to do the same.

God our Father,
Through your mercy you have called us to become your children.
Help us to walk with your Son through his passion, death and resurrection so that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may rise with him on Easter Day.
Show us your mercy and love every step throughout our lives so that we may grow in friendship with you, now and forever.
Amen.

To help those who will participate in the celebration, the Diocesan Core Team provide the opportunity to come together to prepare: finding out just what will be involved and what questions will be asked of them; spending some time in reflection on the readings, and having a 'music rehearsal'. For those who may never have visited our wonderful cathedral, it can be daunting and so this event helps ensure that they can participate fully.

Pope Francis, with his emphasis on the importance of meeting people where they are and through careful and gentle listening urges us all to become better at 'ACCOMPANIMENT'. This has always been a central understanding of the RCIA since



it's re-introduction soon after the Second Vatican Council. However, there are now many different processes which we include under the category of RCIA and which individual parishes adopt at different times. Good discernment will lead them to decide the most appropriate process for those who enquire about what it means to become a Catholic.

The enquirers, following an initial period during which basic questions can be answered and stories told and heard, may decide to undertake a period of formation which will hopefully bring the recognition that God's call in their lives is leading them to Full Communion with us. You may recognise elements of these different processes in your community's practice.

1. The RCIA team issues invitations

through parish communication systems to attract people to an RCIA or Journey in Faith group. There is an assumption that the group formed will meet regularly together and will journey through the steps and stages of the RCIA process over a period lasting anywhere between 9 months and 2 years.

2. Depending on the needs of the enquirers a Rite of Acceptance or of Welcome will be celebrated after perhaps 6 and 10 sessions then the RCIA team will continue with Catechumenate sessions, adding content appropriate to this stage of the process.

3. A parish 'Welcome' group will be discerned, comprising 2/3 people who are good at making people feel welcome, skilled in listening and able to share their own faith story easily

and naturally. They will meet whenever there are 'enquirers' to be welcomed and accompanied. Their task is to get to know the enquirers, their questions and their stories and to begin the process of nurturing them into an understanding and appreciation of God's great love story. They do not provide the further formation in Scripture and Church teaching that will be necessary but continue to support through prayer and social interaction at regular parish services and events.

4. The parish identifies a team of people who are willing to welcome and accompany enquirers by meeting them as and when they present themselves. They either visit them in their own homes or meet them on parish premises. Looking after the enquirers at Mass on Sundays and gradually introducing them to different



'Let us all give thanks for life-giving parish communities that nurture faith and proclaim the Good News!'

aspects of parish life is also a vital component. If there are a number of people being accompanied in this way then perhaps, once a month, the whole group might come together. This model can be adapted for a Pastoral Area, where resources are shared between two or more parishes. Here an RCIA team made up of people from different communities, welcomes and accompanies throughout the whole process but ensures that the key liturgical celebrations of Welcome and the Sacraments of Initiation are celebrated within the home parishes of those making the journey.

All of the above can be adapted to provide for different working patterns. Groups may meet mornings or afternoons. Perhaps a good time is immediately after Sunday Mass with care provision for young children made available. Rather than weekly, enquiry

sessions may be advertised fortnightly or monthly with time for planning in between. The RCIA makes clear that adaptability and flexibility is to be a hallmark of the process. There is no 'one size fits all'.

Undoubtedly those parishes that attended this year's Rite of Election did so in a spirit of genuine accompaniment and will have offered the support necessary to journey to this stage in different ways. The final part of the special 'Welcome' extended at the celebration is addressed to them.

'And to you, family and friends, sponsors, catechists and clergy, give thanks to God for the joy of being here today and of being invited by God to be a means of grace for others. Let us all give thanks for life-giving parish communities that nurture faith and proclaim the Good News.'



God calls to us constantly, longing to guide those who yearn for life and desire to see good days into the way of peace. The Rule of Saint Benedict helps us to hear God's voice, in the Holy Scriptures, in the sacred liturgy and in our brothers in community. If you are a single man longing to live your Catholic faith in a way which brings great joy as it demands the best of you, consider whether God is calling you to be a Benedictine monk at Buckfast Abbey. Please reach out to us, and we will do all we can to help you.



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News diary

If you've got any news from your parish that you'd like featured e-mail us with the details at: catholicpictorial@rcaol.co.uk

Afternoon tea and tour at St Francis Xavier church, Liverpool

The Friends of SFX recently hosted an afternoon tour highlighting the beautiful architecture of Saint Francis Xavier's Grade II* listed church and its wealth of 19th to 21st Century stained glass.

People were welcomed from across the city and beyond. Marian Lloyd, who came along with a group of friends, said the tour was presented with so many interesting facts and good humour, showing the pulpit where the great poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ, would have given many homilies when served as a Jesuit Priest in 1869 and that Charlie Chaplain attended the Junior school during his stay in Liverpool with "The Eight Lancashire Lads Dancing Troupe". The Friends of SFX would like to build on this interest, especially with so many cruise liners visiting the Port of Liverpool. If you are interested an 'Afternoon Tea and Tour' for 5 to 20 people or individuals can be hosted; and larger group tours can be arranged without the Afternoon Tea. SFX Church is open each morning (except Wednesday). Contact the Church Office Tel: 0151 298 1911 for more details.



Catenians lend support to asylum seekers

Asylum seekers in Liverpool Archdiocese are benefitting from the efforts of Liverpool's Catenians. Bob Wheelhouse, president of the Liverpool province of the Catenians, chose asylum-seeker projects in the

Merseyside and Runcorn areas as his presidential charity, taking inspiration from the message of Pope Francis that 'Biblical revelation urges us to welcome the stranger'.

Wheelhouse, together with the brothers

of his circle and their fellow Catenians across province 4, have been able to assist several projects. After the circle's annual Mass for vocations at St Anne's church in Overbury Street on 9 February, he presented Father Peter Morgan with a cheque for Asylum Link Merseyside. Asylum Link is a drop-in centre for all asylum-seekers and refugees and it provides friendship, help and advice to people fleeing persecution in their own countries.

There have also been donations made in Wheelhouse's home parish of St Maximilian Kolbe in Runcorn, to assist an Egyptian asylum-seeker and a family from El Salvador.

In the case of the former, his initial application was turned down and is now on appeal, while the Salvadoran family's initially successful application has been appealed by the Home Office.

'We can only imagine how upsetting this to them, but we will continue to support them and keep them in our prayers,' said Wheelhouse.



Bob Wheelhouse presenting a cheque to Fr Peter Morgan at St Anne's Church, Overbury Street.

Liverpool Seafarers Centre honoured for positive impact



Liverpool Seafarers Centre (LSC) received further recognition of its vital work with the Positive Impact Award at the Mersey Maritime Industry Awards 2020.

John Wilson, the LSC chief executive, collected the award at the event at St George's Hall, Liverpool on 6 March, the centre earning the prize ahead of fellow nominees Jubilee Sailing and Nautilus International Welfare Fund. It was reward for having fulfilled the remit of bringing about 'positive measurable change, whether to the lives or living conditions of individuals, the community or in terms of projects that are changing perceptions about the industry.'

Liverpool Seafarers Centre is a partnership between Apostleship of the Sea (Liverpool) and the Mersey Mission to Seafarers with roots dating back to the 19th century. In

September 2019, it was named as the world's best seafarer centre at the International Seafarer Welfare Awards (ISWAN).

Of this latest honour, Wilson said: 'We're delighted with this award in recognition of everything we do, because it has been awarded by the maritime industry the centre serves.' LSC's work involves visiting vessels to integrate with the crew, offering a listening ear to help combat isolation and loneliness, and providing places ashore for seafarers to relax. The Crosby-based charity sees thousands of seafarers every year and Wilson explained: 'We offer practical and emotional support on a daily basis to the crews that dock in Liverpool and the surrounding area, whether it be by going on board the ships or inviting seafarers into our centres in Liverpool and Eastham.'

Papal Award for Tilly



Mrs Agnes Jolliffe (Tilly), a parishioner of Our Lady of Assumption, Gateacre, was presented with the Bene Merenti by Bishop Tom Williams at Mass in the Metropolitan Cathedral last month.

Tilly is known and much loved and for over 40 years has been organising pilgrimages to Medjugorje, Lourdes, Fatima, Rome, Assisi and San Giovanni and closer to home days of prayer at Holywell, Pantasaph, Bala and the (now closed) Poor Clares Monastery at Hawarden. She raises funds for many charitable causes including for the Vocationist Fathers and the upkeep of Bala Church. She was a volunteer at the St Frai Hospital in Lourdes for sixteen years and for many years with the Missionaries of Charity at Seel Street.

Tilly was blessed with three sons and always prayed if none of them was called to the priesthood, would God send her someone to support. Her wish was fulfilled when she met Father Jean-Paul Illuga in 2009, at St Paschal Baylon, who put her in touch with a young neighbour of his in the Republic of Congo. Allidor had no family and had a calling to be a priest. Tilly was honoured to support him for many years and later opened up the fundraising to her pilgrim friends to fund a laptop vital to his studies. The group had the joy of buying his Ordination vestments and Chalice and Tilly organised a Pilgrimage to Pantasaph for Mass when he was ordained on 15 July 2017.

Pauline Books and Media Refurbishment

Pauline Books and media at 82 Bold Street, Liverpool, L1 4HR, will be closed for refurbishment from Saturday 28 March until late April.

In the meantime, please contact one of the other stores for assistance:

Newcastle: 0191 231 6040

Glasgow: 0141 226 3391

London: 0207 937 9591.

Appeal for solidarity as Bethlehem shuts down

By John Pontifex

An urgent call for prayer and support for Christians in Bethlehem has come from two charities which are warning that the Coronavirus lockdown could plunge the faithful into desperate poverty.

With a state of emergency declared by the Palestinian Authority (PA) on 5 March, Bethlehem is in lockdown – tourism has ceased and the Church of the Nativity and other places of worship remain closed. The Israel Defence Forces, acting in cooperation with the PA, are enforcing checkpoints to stop people from entering or leaving Bethlehem and the official 30-day quarantine period for the city could be extended.

Friends of the Holy Land (FHL), which aids projects to sustain the Christian presence in the region, and the Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), which helps persecuted Christians across the region, are calling for people to pray for their brethren in Bethlehem at this time.

FHL executive director Brendan Metcalfe said: 'While the lockdown precautionary action is understandable and reflects similar situations in other countries, the particular impact on the Bethlehem economy has been disastrous. The timing could not be worse especially in the lead-up to Holy Week and Easter – one of the key tourism seasons for the city.'

Tourism is Bethlehem's main industry and



the lifeline of the city's economy with around two million visitors last year. Metcalfe added: 'Unlike the developed world, employment conditions for most in the city are fragile, hand to mouth, with no safety net of family or social support. Seventy-six per cent of families were assessed as living below the poverty line before this crisis. They're now pushed beyond their means by sudden unemployment.'

Both ACN and FHL are calling for prayer for all those affected by the Coronavirus, especially people in Bethlehem at huge economic risk. Neville Kyrke-Smith, ACN's national director, said: 'Please join us and

stand by those ACN helps in the Holy Land – especially the Christian families – and those who are enduring so much throughout the Middle East as they witness to Christ's love this long Lent. 'Let us also pray for all the people of Bethlehem who have been indirectly affected, those losing their jobs, for the many families who, in an already difficult and precarious situation, are now facing even greater economic and social difficulties. During this time of Lent, let us remain united and supportive in prayer above all, and in all possible forms and means of mutual help and support.'

Widnes Lions

Father Joe Bibby celebrated a Children's Mass on the First Sunday of Lent in St Wilfrid's Parish, Widnes. The theme was 'The Year of the Word - the God who roars' and the children enthusiastically showed off their new lion friends after Mass.



Widnes community celebrates sustainability award

St Wilfrid's parish, Widnes, has recently received a prestigious LiveSimply award for their efforts to reduce their waste, improve the environment and support communities, both close to home and around the world.

Parishioners were joined by Archbishop Malcolm McMahon, to celebrate receiving a LiveSimply award, an eco-award championed by charity Cafod, which was presented to the parish thanks to their collective effort to become more sustainable.

To gain the award, the parish completed many activities over a year, including partnering with the Medaille Trust and local foodbanks, organising fundraising 'soup suppers', and holding community events, like their recent 'Creation Mass' which celebrated the environment and called on the UK government to take urgent action to tackle climate change. Pauline Rolt, a Cafod volunteer, said, 'Here at the Parish of St Wilfrid, achieving the LiveSimply Award has been a great way to recognise how we can embrace new initiatives and deepen our understanding of what we do and why we do it. Perhaps most significantly of all, it has moved us to see the global, as well as local picture, as we reach out in solidarity, love and friendship.'

In deciding to work towards the award the school community, inspired by Pope

Francis' environmental letter, 'Laudato Si', has committed to live in solidarity with all people and sustainably with creation. The group are hoping that their example will inspire others to also take up a simpler way of living.

Archbishop Malcolm, said,

'Congratulations to St Wilfrid's on their LiveSimply Award. I hope it will continue to encourage us all in the on-going challenge to LiveSimply.'

Find out more about the LiveSimply award at cafod.org.uk/livesimply



Annual Civic Mass

Archbishop Malcolm McMahon celebrated the Annual Civic Mass at 11.00 am on Sunday 23 February in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King.

The Mass is one of the major services of the year, paying tribute to the thousands of men and women who contribute to public service across Merseyside and celebrating the diversity of faith within our community.

Guests in attendance included the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Councillor Anna Rothery, the Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside, the High Sheriff, the Honorary Recorder of Liverpool and members of the Judiciary and Consular Corps.

There were also representatives from all walks of life in the City, including the universities, the Armed Services, Police and Fire Services, Catholic societies and schools. Picture: nickfairhurstphotographer.com



The following Pastoral Letter was read at all Masses on the Fourth Sunday of Lent, Laetare Sunday and a day of prayer for the work of Nugent.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The entrance antiphon for Mass today opens with the words, 'Rejoice, Jerusalem and all who love her.' That is why today is called Laetare Sunday, the Latin for word for rejoice. On this Sunday, roughly halfway through Lent, we take a pause from the rigours of Lent to consider the joy that awaits us at Easter. You may well ask, 'What do we have to rejoice about?' but I believe that as Christians there is always good cause to rejoice despite the coronavirus and the uncertain economic future, we still have much to be happy about.

The gospel passage that we heard today reminds us that Christ is the Light of the World, and that only by seeing things with his eyes can we see the world as it really is. So often we are blinded by our prejudices and we fail to see the love of God at work among us. In the archdiocese, Nugent, our own catholic social services agency, works quietly from day to day supporting many people who have needs that cannot be met by the person's family alone. It has been doing this for over 139 years. But there is probably no need for me to tell you this as you will remember from your school days the Nugent Good Shepherd Appeal.

Some examples of Nugent's current work with children and families include the adoption team, helping families struggling with food poverty and supporting refugee families fleeing torture and oppression. All this is done in addition to the ongoing work of care of the elderly and support of children and adults with additional needs of one kind or another. In naming these areas of work I have only scratched the surface of Nugent's wide-ranging activities which take place in our name. The Nugent Good Shepherd appeal is one of the longest standing appeals in the country with its origins dating back to Victorian times. Although times have changed there is still great need in our society, so I ask you to give generously to the Nugent Sunday collection. In so doing your act of kindness will positively change the lives of those supported by Nugent.

Like the man born blind who was healed by Jesus, my eyes were opened recently when I visited Syrian refugee families who have been settled in some of our parishes under the auspices of Nugent as part of the Home Office's Community Sponsorship Scheme. In response to the appeal of Pope Francis to welcome a family into our community, teams of parishioners have been formed to find housing and put in place all that is necessary to welcome refugee families from Syria.

So far, four families have arrived, and one hundred volunteers have been registered with Nugent. This initiative has brought hope to these families as their accommodation in a refugee camp is replaced by a house which soon becomes a real home, children settle in school, and parents and children together learn English and our customs as they take their place in the wider society. A wonderful side effect of this project has been the way in which parishioners have been brought together – people who were once strangers are now friends.

We have another reason to rejoice on Laetare Sunday. Next week I will take part in the rededication of England as the Dowry of Mary. This will be a spiritual renewal to facilitate the New Evangelisation and will be the offering of the faith of the people of this country to the Mother of God, to seek Our Lady's prayers for the loving care and protection of our country. Unlike the first dedication of England by King Richard II in 1381 this dedication will not offer our country as a gift to Mary but our individual faith.

You can do this on your own with a short prayer or it can be done collectively. Whichever way you do it doesn't matter. What does matter is that in this act we deepen our own commitment through Mary to live and to spread our faith which is so precious to every one of us. The New Evangelisation which the rededication heralds is in the first place living our faith in a joyful way so that others may be attracted by who we are and what we do. St John Paul II often said that



faith is caught not taught, and how true that is. When the English and Welsh bishops met Pope Francis in 2018 His message was simple: we are to live the gift of our faith with joy. Joy was his great emphasis, he explained that this joy is rooted firmly in our relationship with Jesus.

It is a joy of knowing that he is with us; of knowing the presence of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives, drawing and guiding us towards the will of God; a joy of knowing our Heavenly Father is waiting for us, longing to hold us in his embrace of loving mercy. This is the joy of the faith by which we are to live. Pope Francis added that this joy is the source of lasting peace in our hearts and lives, no matter our circumstances.

Nugent is a joyful organisation at the heart of the diocese and is an expression of our deep faith. May the joy which Nugent brings to others in our local communities bring joy to you and your families as we look towards Easter.

With every good wish and blessing,

+ Malcolm McMahon OP

**Most Rev Malcolm McMahon OP
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On a liturgical note

Canon Philip Gillespie

There is much darkness and much worry in the world at the moment – it will have touched our individual families and communities in various ways, and here in Italy it has been the fact that over the past weeks we have been in effective ‘lockdown’, only able to come out of the college for emergencies, for shopping and for health reasons.

We gave the option to our students as to whether they wanted to remain in college or return to their respective countries – it means that we are now a small community of 15 and we are trying to maintain a routine of prayer, study and community life as best we can. It is all very concerning and we are immensely grateful to all those who are working so hard to ensure our safety, those who care for our physical and spiritual and psychological health.

The message of the Easter Vigil – the lighting of the fire and the blessing of the Paschal Candle – reminds us that even in the darkness of doubt and disillusion, it is the presence of the Risen One speaking the words ‘Peace be with you’ which makes all the difference. It is literally life-changing. Through the Season of

Easter, the 50 days leading us to Pentecost, we are shown how in those early years the message of the Risen One spread and transformed the lives of those who came into personal contact with Christ – not least the man named Saul who, from being a persecutor of the faith, became its greatest exponent and the ‘doctor gentium’, the teacher of all the peoples. We may know him better as Paul – and it is from his letters and theology and spirituality that we receive instruction most Sundays of the Ordinary Time of the Year in the second reading at Mass.

Here at the Beda, we are literally over the road from the Basilica of Saint Paul, where he is buried. We are also within walking distance of a place called ‘Tre Fontane’ (The Three Fountains) where, tradition has it, Paul was put to death by beheading. St Paul is for us a ready and constant presence in our lives – we hear from him on Easter Sunday as he says: ‘He (Jesus) is our life.’

May we always act and love accordingly.



Sunday thoughts

Mgr John Devine OBE

There are times in Holy Week when I envy Quakers. Sitting quietly can seem an attractive alternative to organising Holy Week services in three churches. When I was in the seminary, I was a member of the choir. This let me off the hook for serving on the altar but leaves me ill-prepared when altar servers ask me, ‘What do we do now?’ or ‘Where should I stand?’.

I would love to simplify the Holy Week services. For me the Good Friday service should consist of hearing the readings – especially the Passion – followed by venerating the cross. Then we should go home. An advantage of the adoration of the cross is that no one is excluded, just as no one is excluded from coming up for ashes on Ash Wednesday. And people vote with their feet.

Will we ever win the argument that the Easter Vigil is the liturgical highlight of the Church’s year? Even the

committed stay away. The Easter Vigil is maybe too late for the majority. Older people stay indoors after dark. If they are younger, they go out – but to socialise. The Vigil begins with the excitement of the blessing of the fire and the Exsultet but is followed by the anti-climax of lengthy readings. It’s good to reflect on the Word but maybe we could place that before the blessing of the fire rather than after. On the Isle of Man we have the tradition of gathering with members of other churches on Easter morning to watch the sunrise. I know some parishes elsewhere meet on the beach. We read the gospel account of the Resurrection. John’s version begins with the words ‘Very early on the first day of the week and still dark...’; that’s the service that gives me a real Easter buzz. Afterwards we pile into Costa for an Easter breakfast.



The power of mercy



Recently I met a young man called John. He was 22, well over six foot, covered in tattoos and obviously spent a lot of time in the gym. When we had a break, I caught up with him and asked him how he’d ended up in our gathering.

He told me that his mother had been a heroin-addicted prostitute. When he was five, her boyfriend had beaten him up and thrown him out. I was immediately filling up as I imagined this vulnerable five-year-old on the streets with nowhere to go. He got himself into crime, stealing to stay alive, and became part of a Fagin-style group of pickpockets. He’d been in a couple of young offenders’ institutions and then graduated to prison, serving time for drugs and GBH. He’d attempted suicide a couple of times and was heavily medicated to keep him stress-free. His presence with us was because he had nowhere else to go.

I thought of him when I was reflecting on Matthew’s Gospel. Matthew has Jesus challenge us with several questions. Are we prepared to be love in the world? Are we prepared to be compassion in the world? Are we merciful?

At the heart of the Gospel of Matthew is mercy. That image of the merciful face of God is the one that Matthew wants us to know most fully. Megan McKenna calls it ‘the Gospel of mercy’ because throughout it, Jesus acts from mercy and constantly invites us to be merciful too, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount where He challenges us to not to judge or condemn but always to let mercy flow.

Even the challenges that Jesus gave, chiefly to the Scribes and the Pharisees, were always to enable people to move into areas of mercy, of undeserved kindness. One of the truths of mercy is that it sets us free, free from our brokenness and pain. It frees us to know that we’re loved and forgiven. When this happens, we are free to be who we are called to be and to do what is demanded of us for the sake of the world. And just what is demanded of us is to let mercy flow through us and into the lives of the poorest and most broken in society. Yet all too often we make faith into ritual and rules to be followed rather than about mercy. Unless we let loving mercy flow through us, we have no hope to offer the world. Mercy is what will change the world. Mercy is at the heart of the Kingdom that we are invited to be part of. Let’s pray during Lent that we’ll have the courage to let this mercy flow.

Fr Chris Thomas

Weekly Reflections are on the Archdiocesan website at www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/reflection



Normandie Wragg
Chief Executive Nugent

International Women’s Day and Working for Nugent

Recently, it was International Women’s Day. When I first started at Nugent in 2013, I wanted to have an event that recognised IWD but was unable to progress this intention at that time. International Women’s day promotes that an equal world is an enabled world. The roles everyone can play in forging gender parity.

Today, things are different, we had our first IWD event, since I have been here, that recognises this international day. This event was held at Nugent House

School and is inclusive for everyone. Nugent is a large employer in the Liverpool area. We have over 600 staff, 76% who are women and 24% who are men (2019 Gender Pay Gap snapshot). We have defined pay scales for each of our roles, which means that male and female staff receive the same pay for doing the same job.

As a charitable organisation, and the social welfare arm for the archdiocese, we regularly have opportunities within our charity for many professions, including, management, social work,

psychology, therapists, teachers, teaching assistants, child care workers, care workers, domestics, maintenance people, HR partners, finance etc. We also have many volunteer opportunities.

If you would like to work for a values led organisation, that makes every decision based on the benefit it brings to the people we serve, please take a look at our careers page on our website - <https://www.wearenugent.org/careers/> or call 0151 261 2000 and ask to speak with our HR department.

Nugent House School to remain open with adapted provision

Following the Government announcement that all schools are to close, we have courageously and compassionately taken the decision that as a school that supports vulnerable children, Nugent House school will stay open with an adapted provision to keep our children safe and to keep them learning.

Headteacher, Sarah Gregory said: “Myself and my dedicated staff are committed to ensuring that the education and welfare of our children is not disrupted and our staff team have developed a programme that will ensure they are inspired and engaged during this unsettling time.

Most of our children will still be able to attend school, but as transport issues develop, we are developing support packages for those who will be staying at home.”

This will include a weekly work pack and daily support calls with teachers to help them continue their learning, and also the staff will be delivering lunch packs put together by the school catering team, to ensure they have hot meals too.

“We are also going to provide extras for their families, such as bread and fresh



food to keep everyone safe and well. This adapted model is a key part of Nugent’s work to maintain normality for our children and young people, to ensure they can keep their routines and stay safe. Nugent CEO, Normandie Wragg said: “I

cannot thank our dedicated and loving staff across Nugent enough at this time. They care so deeply for the welfare and future of our children, young people and adults and are pulling together in this difficult situation to ensure they are all cared for, educated and supported.”



Cessation of Public Acts of Worship

Dear Father,

The Bishops' Conference has today agreed that all public acts of worship in churches will cease as of the evening of Friday 20th March. This includes all public Masses. This decision will be reviewed regularly, but I would ask that all parishes and chaplaincies follow this directive until further notice. This is not a decision which is taken lightly, but it is one which we believe is in the best interests of all the faithful, in light of government guidance. The obligation to attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days is removed for as long as this crisis continues.

It would be worth placing a clear notice on the church door saying that public Mass is not being celebrated. Where it is possible churches should be left open, especially on Sundays, for private prayer. Where it is not possible to leave churches open for long periods, then perhaps you could arrange for the church to be open at specific times so that people have the opportunity for prayer in church. The notice could also give details in this regard. There is obviously a need to maintain social distancing on entering the church.

Private Sunday and daily Mass should continue, but this should not involve the presence of a deacon or any members of the lay faithful. Some Masses will be streamed live online, and a list of all those Masses which will be streamed online will be made available shortly.

I have attached to this letter a statement from Cardinal Nichols and myself, as well as a document on liturgical advice. This latter document will cover guidance on baptisms, confessions, first reconciliation and Holy Communion, confirmation, matrimony, anointing of the sick, receptions into the Church, and funerals. Please read this document. I would like this guidance to be followed.

At this time, it is important that we maintain links with our parishioners, where possible, especially the most vulnerable. In many cases this will have to be done by way of telephone. You may want to establish a group of volunteers to help, but I would stress that government guidance on social distancing and hygiene should be followed at all times.

It is also important that we have measures in place for our clergy who are seventy or over, or who have health conditions which make them more vulnerable. A meeting is taking place today and this will be on the agenda.

The Bishops' Conference will be issuing prayer resources (including prayers for making acts of spiritual communion) for this time. I am also arranging for prayer resources to be produced for our archdiocese. I will issue a pastoral letter, in addition to the one for this weekend, in the next couple of days.

As ever, I am very grateful for everything that you do for your parishes. This is certainly a strange time that we are living in, but our life and communion together in the Lord will continue in these new and different ways. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Archbishop's House. I would also like to repeat that, if any of you have to self-isolate and find yourself in difficulty, please get in touch and we can help.

With my ongoing prayers that you stay safe and healthy.

Yours sincerely,

+ Malachy M. Mahon OP



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES
Liturgical Advice for the Bishops of England and Wales
in the light of the COVID-19 Pandemic
18th March 2020

This advice will be reviewed and developed as necessary weekly

The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, having consulted the Ordinaries of the Dioceses, has agreed that the cessation of public liturgies should begin from Friday evening 20th March 2020. Because of the situation the Church finds herself in, the obligation for the faithful to attend Holy Mass on a Sunday or Holy day of Obligation is removed, until further notice.

The following instruction is now given for the celebration of the Sacraments and sacramentals of the Church at this time.

Celebrations of Holy Mass

Priests (parish priest and assistant priests) who hold parochial office should continue to celebrate Mass in a church within their parish without the faithful on a daily basis. Other priests (i.e. retired from office or entrusted with a non-parochial ministry) may celebrate Mass without the faithful in a church, chapel or their private home. Deacons should not participate in these celebrations.

The continuing celebration of Mass ensures that the faithful can join in spiritual communion with the priests of the Church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states (1364): As often as the sacrifice of the Cross by which 'Christ our Pasch has been sacrificed' is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried out. Daily liturgical resources for those at home, including those for making a "Spiritual Communion" with the priest, will be available on the CBCEW website.

Information about the live-streaming of the celebration of Mass will be made widely available in our dioceses so that the faithful can participate in the prayers of the priest at Mass at home. A fine example of this is from The National Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham will continue its full liturgical programme and this will be available to all via the Internet (www.walsingham.org.uk) Wherever possible, during this period, churches will remain open, especially on Sundays, for individual private prayer, without any organised services, and offering prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

Baptisms

Baptisms should be deferred until such time that the public health advice is that congregations can gather safely. In case of necessity, baptisms should be celebrated with all the hygiene precautions that have been laid down by the Church in its COVID-19 advice.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Confession may be offered on request as long as hygiene and social distancing requirements are observed (eg a physical barrier between the penitent and the priest such as a grille and cloth). The use of Rite II and Rite III of the Rite of Penance is not permitted as this, by necessity, requires the gathering of people in our churches.

First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion

These celebrations should be postponed until a time that allows for families and friends to gather safely within our churches.

Confirmation

The celebrations of Confirmation should be deferred until such time that the public health advice is that congregations can resume public worship.

Matrimony

If possible, the celebration of the sacrament of Matrimony should be deferred until such time that people can gather in numbers safely. However, if this is not possible and only in the most pressing of circumstances, then those present for the marriage should be restricted to the celebrant, bride and groom and immediate family, and if necessary, the legal Registrar.

Anointing of the Sick

No pastoral visits should be made to people who are self-isolating until the isolation period ends. However, do offer phone support. When anointing the sick, the Oil of the Sick can be applied using a cotton bud which can be burned afterwards (one end for the head and the other for the hands) and the priest extend his hands over the sick person for laying on of hands, without physical contact. This has been confirmed as a valid mode of celebrating the sacraments which involve "laying on of hands." Visits to people in care homes or hospitals should follow advice from the staff on infection control.

Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil

This will be dependent on the forthcoming decisions of the Bishops for the Holy Week ceremonies.

Funerals

There must be great pastoral sensitivity to this issue. The funeral service should take place at the graveside or at a crematorium, subject to the conditions laid down by the cemetery or crematorium authorities. Arrangements should be made for a Mass to be celebrated in memoriam when congregations are allowed to gather.

Rev. Canon Christopher Thomas
General Secretary
18th March 2020

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Trisha Wilson & Mary Heaton

Exploring the Synod themes within their parish by Simon Hart

There is a chuckle from Trisha Wilson as she describes the theme of the glasswork she created of the Synod 2020 logo, now adorning the lectern at St Teresa's parish church in Penwortham. 'Stupid old woman takes on this job which nearly kills her!' she laughs. The job in question is that of Synod parish member for St Mary Magdalen and St Teresa, the combined parish in Leyland on the northern edge of our Archdiocese.

It is a role to which the retired headteacher and glass-fusing enthusiast was elected in the autumn of 2018 when her parish's Synod support group embarked on the process of considering the four themes of Liverpool Archdiocese's Synod 2020 process: 'All called and gifted by God'; 'Sharing the mission of Jesus'; 'How we pray together'; and 'Building community, nurturing belonging'.

'We didn't know what we were taking on, nobody did,' she says of her 23-strong group of parishioners. 'There were varying degrees of interest within our community varying from curiosity, enthusiasm and scepticism to interest and a desire to work to further the faith life of our parish.'

The support of John Sargent, Synod member for their pastoral area, helped as

did as a series of reflective meetings using materials from the Synod website as the group considered the four themes in turn, compiling a list of five proposals for each. She adds: 'Our small discernment team found themselves humbled and amazed at how well we worked prayerfully together to generate the proposals.'

The desire for more answers led some of them to embark on the diocesan Faith For Life course. 'As things have opened up, they've realised a narrow outlook is not enough – they need to embrace other schools of thought,' says Trisha.

'One challenge in any group is the fact we're all coming at it from different directions,' adds Mary Heaton, a retired civil servant and lifelong parishioner. Yet she was heartened by the fact 'people have kept saying what they really believed'. Her uncle John Dover was parish sacristan for 40 years and Mary is now more optimistic about the future of a place she now knows even better through her involvement with the group. 'There's a new generation coming along and it's nice to know. I've got to know people I'd see at church but we never spoke. This has made sure we've got a cluster of people and some of them are younger and will take things forward.'

Younger, but not necessarily young – the

parishioners involved range in age from their 40s to their 70s. It is a concern for both women. 'An endeavour to reach out to young parents failed,' says Trisha of the challenge of 'reaching out to the youth'. She goes on: 'People feel very strongly that they've failed their children because they haven't been able to pass on the fullness of their faith and are looking for ways they could include them. That's a big, big issue and the realisation we could be accepting them just as they are.'

Mary wonders: 'Do we need more social groups to encourage young people? There are those who perhaps we're never going to get to come to church every Sunday but who could well be part of the community.'

This question is at the core of this parish group's considerations but it is not the only one. Summing up the fruits of their reflections, Trisha says: 'I feel that several thoughts were repeated throughout the whole process – Youth liturgy, women's role in the Church, opportunities for spiritual growth in our parishes, and a return to traditional Catholic devotions.'

'We didn't know what we were taking on, nobody did'

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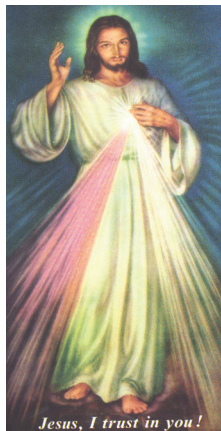
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FEAST OF DIVINE MERCY

Sunday 19th April 2020

Our Lord asked Saint Faustina to promote the Devotion to His mercy- saying

"The soul that will go to Confession (within the octave of the feast) and receive Holy Communion on the Feast day, shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment"

St Faustina confirms Our Lord's command to her: *"If I cannot show mercy, by deeds or words, I can always do so, by prayer. My prayer reaches out even there, where I cannot reach out physically."*

Archdiocese venues celebrating the Feast of Divine Mercy - start time

Holy Cross and St Helen 1.30pm Exposition, Rosary, Confession, Devotions, Mass 4 pm
Corporation St – St Helen's town centre- train, No 10 bus from Liverpool (Peter - Divine Mercy shop)

St John's Fountains Road, Kirkdale Liverpool 2.00pm
Confession, Rosary Devotions, Exposition, Stations of Cross

St Clares, Arundel Avenue, Liverpool
3.00pm Devotions, Exposition, Confessions

Our Lady of the Annunciation, Bishop Eaton, Lpool
4.30 pm Blessing of Image, Rosary, Devotions, Mass
6.00 pm

St Francis of Assisi, Garston, Liverpool
2.30pm Confession Devotions,

St Aloysius, Huyton, Liverpool
2.00pm Devotions, Confession, Mass 5.00pm

Holy Spirit, Ford
3.00pm Devotions, Confessions, Exposition

St Edmund of Canterbury, Waterloo
2.00pm Confessions, Ven of Image, Devotions, Mass
4.00pm

St Mary's Broadfield Drive, Leyland
3.30pm Devotions, Confessions, Healing Service, Mass
5.00pm

Sacred Heart, Brooke St, Chorley
3.00pm Exposition, Confessions Devotions, Mass 4.00pm

St Mary's, Standishgate, Wigan
3.00pm Devotions, Confessions Mass at St John's Church
4.30pm

Holy Family, New Springs, Wigan
3.00pm Devotions

Our Lady Star of the Sea, Ramsey, Isle of Man
2.30pm Confessions, Devotions

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Mountains and the majesty of God

By Tom, Animate Youth Ministries team member

Throughout the gospels, we often read about Jesus going up a mountain to pray. For instance, we read in Luke 6:12 that 'one of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.' Matthew 14:23 tell us, 'After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone.'

Why does He do this? Are we supposed to infer that, like when making a phone call with a bad signal, we are supposed to go to a high place in order to be heard more clearly? Is it that God cannot hear our prayers unless we are on top of a mountain? Of course not. God sees all and hears all, no matter where in the world we are.

But do we see and hear God?

animate
youth

Modern society is filled with so many distractions, and moves at such a fast pace, that it can be all too easy to be caught up and lose sight of God in our lives and what He wants from us. The importance of taking time to be alone with God cannot be understated. We might not necessarily have to climb a mountain, but in general the more isolated from the hustle and bustle of life we are, the clearer the Lord's voice will be.

This is reflected throughout scripture. The Lord frequently speaks and demonstrates his power on mountaintops. Moses receives the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, Elijah demonstrates God's power to the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel, and later, again on Mount Sinai,

Elijah hears the Lord speak in a 'soft whisper of a voice' (1 Kings 19:12).

Throughout Lent, mountains take on an even greater significance. We hear how Jesus took Peter, James and John up a mountain, commonly believed to be Mount Tabor, and was transfigured into his full glory. He converses with Moses and Elijah and the voice of the Father once again proclaims Jesus as His son. The disciples are awestruck and fearful. Jesus tells them not to speak about what they have witnessed.

Later, on the Mount of Olives, Jesus weeps over the city of Jerusalem before his triumphant entry on Palm Sunday. Then, several days later, he returns to the foot of the mountain where he experiences his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane prior to his betrayal and arrest. Finally, just outside Jerusalem's walls, the Lord is crucified and dies on the rock of Calvary, fulfilling his mission and reconciling the world back to the Father.

The events on these three mountains give us a great insight into the person of Jesus and the nature of God. Throughout Lent and the Easter season, let us reflect on what these signs mean for us and our relationship with the Lord.

Let us take the time to accompany Jesus up each of these mountains to pray, to experience the true majesty of God, and to come to know Him and His love for us more completely.

Welcome to our new Canons

At the Chapter Mass on Tuesday 3 March in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel of the Metropolitan Cathedral Archbishop Malcolm installed three new Canons.

Canon Aidan Prescott, Chancellor of the Archdiocese and formerly an Honorary Canon became a full member of the Chapter. Canon Aidan Prescott serves as Parish Priest of St Clare and St Hugh, Liverpool. Canon Sean Kirwin is Parish Priest of St Joseph and St Laurence in Kirkby and Canon Michael Fitzsimons is Episcopal Vicar for Education and Parish Priest of St Wilfrid, Widnes.

Picture:
nickfairhurstphotographer.com



Give thanks to the teaching profession with the Educate Awards

It has been a difficult few weeks in education following the spread of the coronavirus and the Government declaring the majority of schools in the UK are to be closed.

The dedication, strength and positivity by senior teams, teachers and support staff has been incredible to witness and the team behind the Educate Awards are encouraging students, families and colleagues to give thanks to those who have gone above and beyond during this time.

Nominating your favourite teacher for the highly coveted 'The Teacher of the Year Award' is one way you can show how much they mean to you.

This award recognises teachers who have gone that extra mile by bringing learning to life by engaging and inspiring children and young people to fulfil their potential through their tireless efforts, patience, passion, encouragement, dedication and energy.

You can also nominate senior leaders for the Leadership Team of the Year category and non-teaching staff for the School

Support Star of the Year Award.

Kim O'Brien, founder of the Educate Awards, said: "It has been a testing time for everyone recently, especially schools and their teams of dedicated staff who have been working around the clock to ensure pupils and students can self-isolate without it hindering their learning.

"Now, more than ever, we need to shine a spotlight on the work of the teaching profession and so we're encouraging pupils, students, families, headteachers, and colleagues to nominate those who deserve to be recognised."

Kim added: "Entries will no doubt be stronger than ever this year and so we recommend that you head to the Educate Awards website to find out how you can make your submission stand out from the rest."

The deadline for entries is midnight Sunday 21 June.

Visit www.educateawards.co.uk for more information and find out **details about all 21 categories.**

World Book Day 2020 celebrations at St John Bosco

St John Bosco Arts College organised an event as part of Bosco Book Week and students were fortunate enough to participate in a range of cross-curricular activities based on the life and works of Beatrix Potter.

All the activities built on students' reading skills and promoted reading for pleasure. Throughout the week students enjoyed visiting the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) to participate in various activities.

Two activities which shone through involved students creating their own acrostic poems, and a special arts and craft session during which students used Rabbit templates to design their own Peter Rabbit models. Students produced some wonderful work which will now be displayed as a collage in their LRC.

On the day there were some fantastic costumes as Year 7 students dressed up as their favourite book characters. This proved to be difficult for the form tutors as they had to quickly decide on just three students in their form who would be awarded with a prize.

They were delighted to give away over thirty prizes and certificates during the week

as so many students involved themselves in the activities. In addition, each student received a free book token which allowed them to visit any of their favourite bookshops and use the token to obtain £1 off any book.

Many of the staff from various departments also chose to dress up. Miss Markey who dressed up as Gangster Granny was crowned the overall winner and the Modern Language Department were the overall department winners. With such creative costumes they are already eagerly awaiting staff's costumes for next year.



Staff and pupils at St John Bosco



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It's not goodbye just yet

The Academy of St Francis of Assisi said 'see you soon' to its year 11s on Friday 20 March as schools across Liverpool and the rest of the UK closed due to the coronavirus.

It was an emotional day for students and staff who had to say farewell earlier than planned, following the Government's decision to close schools in order to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

A special assembly took place in order to pay thanks to the students' hard work and commitment to the ASFA community over the past five years.

Chaplain Phil Johnson also paid a special tribute and sung 'Be Humble and Kind' to the students.

Staff from across the academy wrote a message for students evoking tears, laughter and togetherness, truly exemplifying the community spirit and ethos at ASFA.

Head of School, Kevin Maddocks, said: "Unfortunately we have had to say 'see you soon' to our year 11s a little earlier than we imagined but it certainly isn't 'goodbye' just yet.

"I'm so incredibly proud of how well our year 11 cohort have conducted themselves during this uncertain time. Like the team and I, they have had to quickly understand a lot of the changes that are now in place regarding exams and their future."

Kevin added: "We look forward to welcoming them back in near future."



St Cuthbert's says farewell to year 11s

St Cuthbert's Catholic High School in St Helens said farewell to its year 11 students.

Catherine Twist, headteacher at St Cuthbert's Catholic High School in St Helens, said: "In the last few days we've

had to prepare our Year 11 students for leaving school far earlier than expected. When they left school today they – along with their teachers and fellow students – knew that this was potentially the last day of their high school life and we did not want it to pass without recognition. "We tried to keep as many of our leaving traditions as possible under the current circumstances, including our staff forming as a Guard of Honour and clapping the students out of the main entrance. We felt this was a fitting way to thank them for their hard work and contribution to school life during their time with us. We would like to commend their maturity and resilience in dealing with these sudden changes, and the ways in which they have supported their teachers and classmates at this emotional time. You are all a credit to our school and yourselves."



Year 11 pupils from St Cuthbert's High School

Being a Pastoral Associate

Last year we profiled the new Pastoral Associates who were taking up their posts in the archdiocese. Over the next few months they will be updating us with their progress.

A Pastoral Associate in Ainsdale by Eleanor Lalley



Last January I was welcomed into the community of HeartStone parish, the paired parish of Sacred Heart and St John Stone in Ainsdale as their pastoral associate. For 12 months I have experienced a massive learning curve: to understand the parish, to meet the parishioners of two churches and to discover together how we follow Jesus and what it means to be a paired parish. In past years the Parish Vision Team, parishioners and Father Tony Slingo, the parish priest, have carefully discerned and set HeartStone's priorities. It began with listening to parishioners and includes open parish meetings and reports as well as expanded opportunities for praying and reading scripture together. I am extremely lucky to have walked into a parish with a strong sense of identity and mission.

HeartStone's priorities for their pastoral associate include: working with adults, supporting adult volunteers, participating in the Living Christ Retreat, RCIA and the Synod. Through the Synod we have strengthened pastoral area relationships between parishes in Southport. The past year has brought a developing relationship with Christ the King High School and the Sefton Lourdes Coach as parish outreach to young people and their families. It has also been important for me to celebrate with the community at Sunday Mass and during the week, so I travel to Ainsdale one Sunday a month. I am also a commissioned Eucharistic Minister. Ainsdale has a village feel and Christians work together in ministry to adults, young people and families. Working ecumenically has been a new experience for me and showed me the creative ways Churches can reach out in the local community. For example, in Lent last year I was able to lead a parish 'Arts and Faith' reflection on works of art and scripture. This year we are experimenting with it in the Methodist Church as a Churches Together initiative. We are also working ecumenically with the Message Trust to provide support and follow up for the Higher Tour in Christ the King School <https://highertour.com/> I have enjoyed working with Christians who play rock-and-roll and rap music and have dreadlocks. Explaining my role to others in the parish and

outside of it is challenging, how do you describe a pastoral associate in one sentence? For now I have learned to say 'I am not ordained and I am not a nun. I am a mum who works in a parish'.

A Pastoral Associate in Seaforth and Waterloo by Kenny Lawler



How has the journey been so far? Absolutely amazing and a privilege. Spending most of my time in this new and rewarding mission across two parishes, I also get to do some work for the Archdiocese of Liverpool and study for a Diploma in Pastoral Ministry and Leadership.

At the beginning, myself and the other four Pastoral Associates got to know the parishes where we are based. We then spent a very special week together in our induction. This included getting to know all about the inspiring Archdiocesan work that goes on from the Liverpool Archdiocesan Office, as well as visits to Animate, Irenaeus, Nugent Care and a visit to Archbishop Malcolm's house. A lot to take in at the time, but vital in preparing for our new roles. It gave us the foundation and inspiration to add to all the great work that already currently goes on across the archdiocese.

The months that followed brought the blessings of being able to get to know the parish communities we belonged to. My heart and eyes were opened at how much faith, love, care and dedication there is from some of the people who make up these parish communities. I was made to feel extremely welcome and I'm eternally thankful for that. I have never walked alone.

Up to now, working alongside both parish priests and the valuable input of some of my fellow lay people in the parishes, we have established new events and activities together. To give you an idea, some of these include across one or both parishes; coffee mornings, liturgy group, bereavement group, Family Groups, music group, parish exhibition, joint parish RCIA group, more involvement with the sacramental programme and an online and social media presence for both parishes. I've established connections and involvement with the local schools plus organisations and groups in the wider community. Leadership and mission, education and faith formation, prayer, worship and spirituality and community and outreach, have been the themes that have underpinned what we have done so far. I very much look forward to continuing this journey on new ground and hope to continue to be an open door and provide a warm and welcoming experience, for everyone.



Cathedral Record

Canon Anthony O'Brien – Cathedral Dean

Following a statement from the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales which is endorsed by Archbishop Malcolm McMahon, our daily schedule of public worship was suspended from Friday evening, 20 March until further notice. Our last public Mass took place that evening at 5.15 pm.

We are doing everything to ensure that the Cathedral can remain open for private prayer, and we will continue to observe with great care strict hygiene and social distancing practices.

For the time being, our opening times will be 8.00 am to 6.00 pm from Monday to Saturday and 10.00 am to 6.00 pm on Sundays.

Please note that The Lutyens Crypt will be closed until further notice.

Over the coming weeks we will continue to offer spiritual and practical support and guidance. Our priests will continue to say private Masses for our congregation and local community, and they will also endeavour to maintain a presence within the Cathedral during the day.

At weekends, the celebration of Mass will take place without a congregation but will be live-streamed on our Cathedral Facebook page at 9.00 am on Sunday. You will be able to watch a recorded version of this on our Youtube channel on Sundays at 11.00 am. Links to both are available on the Cathedral website.

Mums the Word



'But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman.' Gal 4:4

These words, taken from St Paul's Letter to the Galatians, started Pope Francis' homily on the first day of this year as the Church celebrated the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. The Holy Father was keen to remind each of us that the Incarnation, 'God's Taking-Flesh', took place within the womb of a woman, and, had it not been for the great 'Yes' from Mary's sinless heart, there would have been no salvation from our sins.

'That is why', said Pope Francis, 'we begin the year by celebrating Our Lady, the woman who wove the humanity of God. If we want to weave humanity into our time, we need to start again from the woman.'

As Pope Francis pointed out, while women are our sources of life, while it was of a woman that salvation came forth into our world, women continue to be abused, despised and dejected. Women and their bodies are too often approached with the contemporary philosophy of materialism and utility, yet 'theirs is the most noble flesh in the world, for it conceived and brought to light the love that has saved us!'

Under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Union of Catholic Mothers meets and prays for various needs and intentions: for the life of the Church; for vocations; and, in a particularly special way, for marriage, family life, and pro-life issues. With this in mind, and as we journey through this season of Lent towards the joy of Easter, when Christ conquers death and restores all women and men to their dignity in knowing that they are his brothers and sisters, let us keep in prayer all women who suffer violence, abuse and hatred. May the light of Christ shine in the world's darkest places.

**Maureen Finnegan, UCM
Archdiocesan president**

A Prayer in time of danger and illness

God Our Father,
each person is precious to You.
You are the Giver of life.
Have mercy on us and protect us
at this time, as the Coronavirus
threatens health and life.
You are an ever-present Helper
in time of trouble.

Watch over those who are
suffering, give strength to those
who are aiding the Sick and give
courage
to all in this time of anxiety.
We ask this of you in the name of
your Son
Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

A century of service News from the Liverpool Province of the Knights of St Columba

Liverpool knights honoured at annual dinner



The KSC's annual provincial dinner was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Liverpool on Friday 21 February, bringing together members, their friends and families from across the province and beyond. We were honoured to have a number of distinguished guests present, including His Grace Most Rev Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool, who is the national ecclesiastical adviser to the KSC.

Rev Dunstan Harrington, the provincial chaplain, was also with us, together with the following members who all appear in the photograph (above): Bertie Grogan, supreme knight; Harry Welsh, deputy

supreme knight, and his wife Tricia; Ray Pealing, provincial grand knight, and his wife Mary; and John Church, provincial social secretary, and his wife Patricia.

During the course of the evening, Brother Bertie announced that Council 9 from Liverpool province had been selected at the KSC's annual conference as the outstanding council nationally for 2019 and a presentation was made to Pat McCole, its grand knight. Bro Bertie also presented John Donoghue of council 12/13 with a certificate and medal marking his 50 years' membership of the order.

**Websites: www.ksc.org.uk and www.kscprov02.weebly.com
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"Behold Thy Mother" (John 19:27)



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PIC Life

It's never too late to change our ways

By Moira Billinge

One of my sisters decided to buy a cat with a complicated gene pool, which she named Mitzi. This was never going to be a cute, cuddly, easy-going cat, but my sister thought that with time, she would settle down in the ancient cottage, in the grounds of an apple orchard, and get to like her fellow housemates, including my brother-in-law and Hero, a beautiful but ageing golden Labrador.

These idyllic surroundings should have been a perfect setting for a quiet, peaceful life for all concerned, but from the moment Mitzi was introduced into the family, she caused mayhem, especially for poor Hero. Adopting the house as her sole territory which she was reluctant to share, Mitzi would regularly lie in menacing wait for the poor dog. Soon, both animals had to be kept apart for their own safety; they couldn't even be in

the same room without fighting. In most of the scraps, Mitzi claimed the victor's title.

This situation continued for about a year. Just hearing each other in the vicinity would result in a ferocious confrontation between the two animals. Then Hero became unwell. He gradually stopped noticing Mitzi's continued attempts to goad him and, eventually, Mitzi gave up her campaign of intimidation.

Hero's weak heart and his old, painful limbs had become an impossible burden. One afternoon, limping into 'his' beloved sitting-room he slowly lowered himself on to the floor. The vet was called but amid all the concern for Hero, someone had left the door ajar and Mitzi crept quietly into the room. Her demeanour was no longer that of an aggressor and no-one attempted to stop her determined approach towards Hero. Somehow she sensed that he was very sick and that he was no longer her rival, but her friend.

She lay down close to him, and nuzzled into his neck. He was clearly aware of her but he did not object: on the contrary, her presence seemed to offer great comfort.

Mitzi remained at her post as the vet administered the injection that would put Hero to sleep. Eventually, she gave the lifeless animal one last nuzzle then left the room as quietly as she had entered it.

If animals are able to make a change for the better, how much more capable should we be as human beings – God's personal gift to Himself – to make the changes to our lives that we know we should, and which are achievable if we could only get around to making the necessary effort. We don't have to do it all on our own. We have only to ask God to help us. While we can never change our past, we can – immediately – start on our journey of change to ensure that we can be different for tomorrow.

As the 'Good Thief' happily discovered, as he hung on the cross alongside Jesus on Calvary, it is never too late to change or to repent. When he asked Jesus to 'remember me in your Kingdom', Jesus replied with those few but incredibly powerful words: 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise.'

It is unlikely that we will ever hear Jesus physically repeat those words to us, but we are justified in believing that for each of us to be with him in Paradise is exactly the reason for which he died on the Cross. It is up to us whether or not we accept his loving, and very personal, invitation.

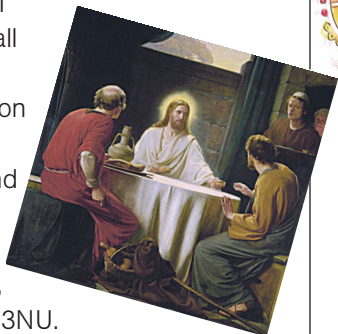
Happy Easter.

It's nearing Easter Sunday - It's time to select lovely cards for your family and friends. Look into this shop at Maryton Carmel Allerton and you will find delightful Easter cards as well as cards for all occasions on sale.

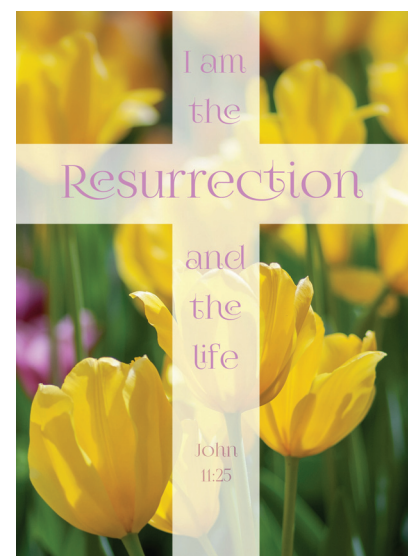
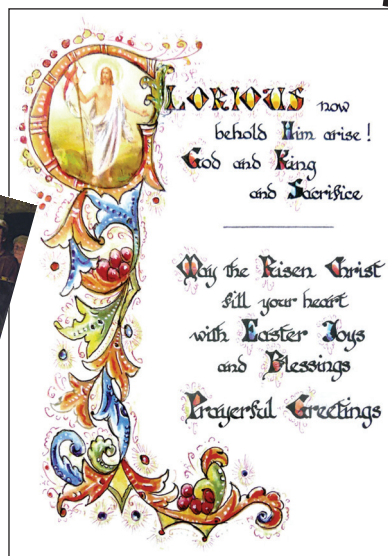
There are beautiful greeting cards for all occasions, prayer cards and medals on sale in the shop, excellent quality and inexpensive.

Contact the Sisters at Maryton Grange, Allerton Road, L18 3NU.

Telephone the card office on 0151 724 7102 or Email the Sisters at marytoncards@outlook.com



Easter Cards from Carmel



Catholic PIC retreats and away days 2020

To all our lovely readers who supported our retreat and away days we want to say a very big thank you.

We have, due to the Covid19 virus, had to cancel our plans for 2020, so we will not be able to meet for a while.

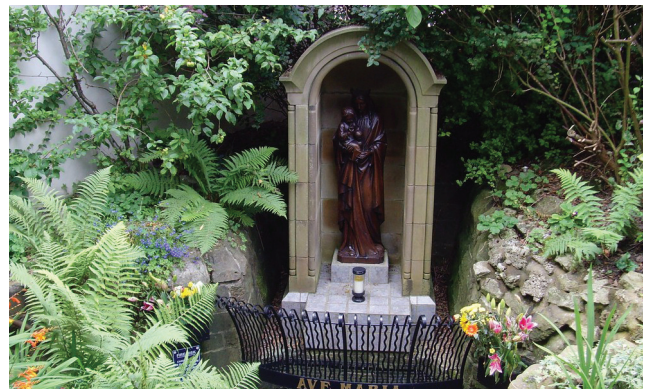
We will let you know through the Catholic Pic magazine when we are able to resume our days out together.

If you want to ring for a chat the number is 0151 733 5492.

If you leave a message then please remember to leave a contact number.

We hope you will all stay safe and well and we look forward to being hearing from you soon.

God bless you



Worth a visit - Windsor Castle

Visit a royal residence less than an hour's train ride from London and enjoy some stunning scenery and striking architecture, writes **Lucy Oliver**.

Windsor Castle was first built for William the Conqueror as a motte-and-bailey, occupying an excellent vantage point over the River Thames. Henry II then oversaw the construction of a luxurious royal palace within the castle, and remodelling continued through the reign of Edward II and into Tudor times when the court became a centre of diplomacy.

On the castle rooftop, standing on pinnacles, are the Queen's Beasts – 14 heraldic animals depicting the royal supporters of England. A particular jewel in the crown is the high-medieval gothic St George's Chapel, added in the 14th century.

From the immense and impressive to the miniature: Queen Mary's Dolls' House, which was built for Queen Mary, consort of George V, and has been on display at the castle since 1925. Created by Sir Edwin Lutyens, the architect with the

original vision for Liverpool's Metropolitan Cathedral, the dolls' house has fully furnished rooms and includes running hot and cold water, electricity and working lifts. Such is the attention to detail there are 588 miniature books, including works from 170 authors of the day, and over 700 watercolours, prints and etchings.





Letter from Oscott

by Peter Ross

Oscott is a community. Communities as such consist of a group of people with a common interest, living and sharing together. Living and sharing together requires much to ensure that things run smoothly. At the college, all sorts of people can be found, from priests and teachers to domestic staff and those who manage the large cemetery that we have here.

While all of these people work hard to keep the place running, there are some jobs that they can't do. That's why we seminarians have house jobs. For the last 12 months my house job was music administrator. Among other things, this involved planning music for Masses and services at the college. But that changed last week when the new house jobs for 2020/21 were announced and I was appointed the chief guest master. This involves welcoming and caring for guests who stay at Oscott, but it also entails raising the college flag on Sundays and solemnities along with opening and closing the main door every day – how exciting! I have three others on my team and so far we're doing quite well.

Life here at Oscott is centred around the Eucharist. Our daily celebration of Mass is also supplemented by optional holy hours each day and a community holy hour every Thursday evening. In addition, we recently held our annual Quarant'ore weekend. For forty hours, the Blessed Sacrament was solemnly exposed in our chapel. It really was a fantastic experience. Being able to go down into the chapel in the middle of the night and spend some time with the Lord on your own is a remarkable privilege. One thing that Quarant'ore brought home to me is just how fortunate we are here to have the Blessed Sacrament under our roof.

During the event we processed with the Blessed Sacrament out to the front of the college. As Oscott sits atop a hill overlooking the city of Birmingham, the Rector gave a benediction over the city, linking us, through Jesus, with all of the people who live and work there. Furthermore, we managed to raise some money for Across, the charity we are supporting this year, through the sponsoring of candles.



justice & peace

The meaning of Synod and synodality

By Steve Atherton, Justice & Peace fieldworker

Synod, we are told, means 'walking together'. The Justice and Peace Commission began its involvement with the diocesan Synod by organising a series of events during the Eucharistic Congress. We looked at how an expansive understanding of Eucharist is central to our lives, involving our understanding of who we are, our relationships with each other, and with the world around us. The experience of talking, planning and meeting people helped us to grow in understanding the rich complexity of our experience of Church.

This year the Commission's usual work has continued – including greetings cards for prisoners and parishes in the Holy Land; developing resources for parish groups; work on inequality and the environment; organising 'The Palestinian Paintings' exhibition; and the celebration of St Oscar Romero – yet in addition we have devoted four meetings to reflection on the themes of our diocesan Synod, generating plenty of work for those who have to coordinate all the proposals.

The more we have prayed, pondered and written proposals, the more it has become natural to think that we are involved in shaping the future of the Archdiocese, that we are involved in discerning where the Spirit is moving, that we really are walking together towards a new future where the people of God, in their different roles and with their different experiences, are of equal value.

As we have been getting involved, the noises coming from Rome and from Pope Francis have been that this process – almost a procession – is happening across the worldwide Church. In 2018, the International Theological Commission, which advises the Congregation for the Doctrine of the



SYNOD 2020
Archdiocese of Liverpool

Faith, published a document on the topic 'Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church'.

They wrote: 'A synodal Church is a Church of participation and co-responsibility. In exercising synodality she is called to give expression to the participation of all, according to each one's calling, with the authority conferred by Christ on the College of Bishops headed by the pope. Participation is based on the fact that all the faithful are qualified and called to serve each other through the gifts they have all received from the Holy Spirit.'

The Church isn't trying to become a democracy but to become better at listening to those who live in difficult circumstances and at valuing the wealth and breadth of human experience. The Synod on the Amazon attracted the attention of the world, the German bishops are preparing a Synod, and the Pope has called a meeting of bishops for 2022 with the theme 'For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission' – effectively a synod about synods.

In the world context, our Liverpool Synod may be a relatively small event but I'm delighted to say that the J&P Commission began its involvement in the process with great enthusiasm and, as we near the end, we have a sense of excited anticipation. May the Spirit be with us all.



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