

Hallam News



Inside



*Living Simply
in Hallam
Page 2*



*Help for School
Children
Page 3*



*Climate Change:
Obligation for Catholics?
Page 5*



*Synodal Church
Page 10*

Advent

*The Word became flesh, he lived among us,
and we saw his glory, the glory that he has
from the Father as only Son of the Father,
full of grace and truth.*



DO NOT LEAVE THIS IN THE CHURCH

once you have picked up this paper please take it with you

Hallam News

CONTACTS & DETAILS

Hallam News is a monthly newspaper for Catholics in the Diocese of Hallam
It is published by Bellcourt Ltd

AIMS

To build community in the Hallam Diocese by sharing stories relating to Catholic life around the Diocese.
To encourage readers to get more involved in - or start - projects and initiatives in the local area.
To provide thought-provoking articles to help readers deepen their Faith.

GET INVOLVED

We need your help!

Articles: We need your local articles - we can only include what we get. So if you have an article or just a photo with a short description - please send it in.
Ideas: We need your ideas for the paper and we need your ideas in the paper. If you have any thoughts on what we should include - or if you are thinking about starting a new initiative - get in touch - we'd love to support it!
Readers: If you can encourage other readers in your parish please do so.
Advertising: We rely on advertising - if you know of anyone that would benefit from promoting their business, event or anything else to parishioners throughout the Hallam Area, do let us know.

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DATES

Hallam News goes to parishes on the last full weekend of the month. It is printed around the middle of the month - so if you would like to advertise or send in editorial please do it as early as possible.

DEAR READER

Thank you for continuing to send us your news. It is inspiring to see what people are doing and the ways in which our Community is providing support and help.

As the Synod gets underway in Hallam, this sharing of ideas and thoughts from both inside and outside of the Church is really helping to develop that sense of community. In next month's edition of

the Hallam News will be a copy of the Synod survey - online versions are available too. Why not get involved and share your views and experiences with Pope Francis?

Living Simply in the Hallam Diocese

It was really encouraging and inspiring to read about the Live Simply programme at St. Joseph's Dinnington and Blessed William Richardson, Kiveton, in the last edition of Hallam News. It sounds so happy and creative as well as challenging. It inspired me to write about our own attempts at St. Vincent's Crookes to take guidance from Cafod's Live Simply advice, and from Pope Francis' Laudato Si.

As at St. Joseph's, our first efforts centred on the call to look at our natural surroundings. We couldn't come together in church in the same way during the pandemic, so we began considering space outside where we might pray and meditate and enjoy God's Creation. We started by saying a daily Rosary outside last year during the Season of Creation, and as September wore on, so grew the idea of getting a statue of Our Lady for the garden. We kept adding winter flowers and spring bulbs anywhere we could, and then came an outside crib for Christmas. We had 'Carols in the Car Park' one evening - a delight to be able to sing together safely. We used greenery from the hedges for an online Advent Wreath-making session. We took round pots of snowdrops and a candle to parishioners who were isolating at Candlemas.

Children painted stones to place at the foot of the outside Crucifix in Holy Week. And we constructed a couple of vegetable and flower beds for children to sow in the Spring. They have watched their flowers grow and die, but the seeds are there to feed the winter birds, and to sow again next Spring. God is good.

Now that the building is in frequent use again, we are working on church housekeeping. Can we exchange our use of harmful cleaning products for greener versions? Use refillable containers to reduce plastic waste? Avoid single-use plastic altogether? Make sure we are recycling everything we can? Turn the heating down a degree? Share car use?

We echo the thoughts expressed by St. Joseph's that some efforts will be increasingly challenging, especially if they cause us or our loved ones inconvenience or expense, or mean giving up parts of our way of life that are dear to us. But we have our faith, we have prayer, and we have the Holy Spirit working within us.

Please, it would be very encouraging to hear thoughts from other parishes. How can we join together in Hallam to 'live simply, that others may live'?



St Marie's Shop is Back

The retirement of the much loved cathedral sacristan Jean Rodgers & her legacy & work for the repository has prompted a collaborative partnership for a relaunch headed by the cathedral treasurer Margaret Helliwell.

The start of Advent 2021 for the relaunch was deemed suitable as it is the start of the new liturgical year after the doldrums of lockdown. It was good to see much

loved Catholic memorabilia, advent candles & calendars as well as christmas cards exhibited for sale at the relaunch.

There is of course the promise of more as the church's year progresses & confidence in the repository returns & is actively patronised. It is hoped that St Marie's, which is the mother church of Hallam Diocese, will have this as a resource in the journey of faith for many.



EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

1) Think of the readers: If you are writing about an event, think about the readers that don't know anything about it. Outline what happened, but focus on why people go, why it is important to them, or some teaching that was given. Make sure readers learn something from your

article - they don't just want to know who was there and what snacks were available!
2) Keep it brief: Make sure you make your point - but keep it brief and punchy.
3) Pictures: Send pictures as they are - even if they are very big to email. Don't reduce them in size or put them inside a Word document. They look fine on the screen but terrible in the paper!

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made to ensure that due acknowledgement, when appropriate, is made to the originator of any image submitted for publication. It is understood that those submitting material for publication in Hallam News either hold the copyright or have arranged for publication with the appropriate authority.

Help for Schoolchildren during the pandemic



One of the aims of the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) is to tackle poverty and give practical assistance. Usually, many SVP Conferences are busy visiting sick or lonely people, either at home, in hospital, or in a care home, giving people lifts, helping with shopping, and volunteering at the foodbank to name a few tasks, but this last 20 months or so "assistance" has taken on a whole new meaning. Due to Covid restrictions it was not possible to visit people face to face, so many SVP Conferences resorted to phoning, texting, and zooming instead.

When the school closures started parents were very worried that their children would fall behind in their studies, so SVP Retford St Joseph's Conference, contacted all the local school head teachers to ask them how many families they each had who would not have been able to follow the schoolwork online due to lacking the IT equipment at home. We then purchased several IT tablets, which were given to the children via their headteachers.

As 2021 progressed another need became very apparent. During the pandemic many families were struggling. It's nothing to be ashamed of. Covid has left workers unable to work due to illness, and some people have lost their jobs because firms have had to close. The last thing anyone wants is that their children should suffer.

Most Mums are acutely aware that the end of the school holidays brings with it the uncertainty of school uniforms. Will they still fit? Children grow so quickly. Will the uniforms their children have been wearing all year still be wearable by September? A new uniform will be essential if the child is moving up to "big" school. For families with more than one child at school, and a severely reduced income, this is a real struggle. The whole process can be a bit of a nightmare and can be really expensive, especially when you include blazers, shoes, sports kit and stationery. And no one wants to send their little ones, or even their not so little ones off to their first day of a new term, looking shabby, or with clothes that do not fit, and no equipment.

The SVP Retford St Joseph's Conference has made school uniforms one of its priorities over Summer. We have recently helped 52 children from 40 local families with vouchers for brand new school uniforms, including shoes. Our Conference President, Maura, also asked some of our local schools if we could come and collect the lost property, to see if it was of any use to anyone. She ended up with three large bags of clothing that had no owners, laundered it all, and made it available to anyone who might need it. [See SVP Retford St Joseph's Conference on Facebook]

The whole project took on a life of its own, and soon people were making donations to SVP of uniform items they had bought from the supermarkets, or of used but still good uniforms they had at home.

At one time we shared a Church Hall with a charity from Worksop called From the Heart who were conducting a similar project, and people flocked to get new and nearly new outfits for their children. The uniforms were given away, but most

people were more than happy to make a small donation to the charities.

There was then the question of what to do with the surplus! The project had snowballed as concerned people had continued to donate more new and used uniforms. Their kindness was staggering. That led to our Conference President and some SVP members taking a stall on one of Retford's market days, to make sure all families had had a chance to get a school uniform in time for September. The stall was a huge success. And we have promised to do it all again next year, whenever there is the need.

If you have issues with hardship or loneliness and want to contact SVP in Retford, or if you would like to join us, just call 07795 285424. Otherwise there are 19 SVP Conferences in Hallam and another 22 in the Nottingham Diocese. Find them via Google. You will always be treated with respect and confidentiality.

Written by
Sally Hill

Bishops' Statement: Honouring Sunday

During the pandemic, public worship was suspended for a time and there have been restrictions on parish life. As a result, people have been exploring other ways to practice their faith including Spiritual Communion via live streaming.

As people begin returning to more regular patterns of parish life and following the first face to face meeting of the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales in Leeds, the bishops have issued the following statement about the importance of honouring Sunday:

Honouring Sunday

As the Synodal Pathway of listening and discerning unfolds, we the bishops of England and Wales, are paying particular attention to the hopes and fears, the joys and anxieties of all who are sharing their thoughts and feelings with us.

Longing for our Lord

We are attentive to the experience of the last year or so, when we have lived our faith through the limitations of the pandemic. We have heard of the longing which some express as a "homesickness". We want to be in the presence of the

Blessed Sacrament. We yearn to celebrate the sacraments together, especially the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We desire to be nourished by our Lord in Holy Communion. The live streaming of the Mass and the remarkable response of our Catholic communities to those in need, have provided comfort, sustenance and resilience.

The Eucharist, source and summit

The Eucharist is the source and summit of our spiritual and pastoral life. Many people have said to us that they have appreciated the noble simplicity of the Mass at this time, which has allowed the mystery and majesty of our Lord's sacrificial love to shine through. The central appeal of the Mass, its beauty and its transcendence, raises our minds and hearts to God in an unambiguous and compelling manner. Our Lord Jesus invites us to receive anew the gift of Sunday as the preeminent day, the day of the Resurrection, when the Church gathers to celebrate the Eucharist. Here we stand together before our heavenly Father, offering our thanksgiving and prayer, through our Saviour in the Holy Spirit. Here we receive Christ in his Word.

Here we are nourished by Christ in his precious Body and Blood. This is our primary joy, for which there is no substitute, and from which we draw our strength.

The Gift of the Sunday Eucharist

The Sunday Eucharist is a gift; as God's holy people we are called to praise and thank God in the most sublime way possible. When the Church speaks of the Sunday obligation, it reminds us that attending Mass is a personal response to the selfless offering of Christ's love. At this time, we recognise that for some people there may be certain factors which hinder attendance at Sunday Mass. The pandemic is clearly not over. The risk of infection is still present. For some, there is legitimate fear in gathering together. As your bishops, we recognise that these prevailing circumstances suggest that not everyone is yet in the position to fulfil the absolute duty to attend freely Sunday Mass.

Responding to the Gift

We now encourage all Catholics to look again at the patterns which they have formed in recent months with regard to

going to Mass on Sundays. This would include consideration and reflection about what we might do on Sundays, such as sports or shopping, or other leisure and social activities. This review, and the decisions which arise from it, fall to every Catholic and we trust this will be done with honesty, motivated by a real love for the Lord whom we encounter in the Mass.

The Sunday Mass is the very heartbeat of the Church and of our personal life of faith. We gather on the "first day of the week," and devote ourselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers (Acts 2:42). The Eucharist sustains us and spurs us on, renewing our gratitude and our hope. When we say "Amen" to Christ in receiving his Body and Blood, we express the love of God which is deep within us, and at the end of Mass, when we are sent forth, we express our love for our neighbour, especially those in need. These two dimensions reveal the full meaning of our faith. We are gathered together and sent out, we pray and are fed, we worship and we adore; these are intrinsic to our lives as those baptised into Christ.

Holding monthly Zoom meetings



Throughout lockdown, Sheffield Hallamshire Catenians had been holding monthly Zoom meetings and running online events to raise money for CAFOD. It is amazing what can be done virtually, examples included on-line bingo, quizzes, a carol concert and a talk on the statistics of COVID-19. The Catenians also raised money with a Lenten Fast. When we were at last allowed to hold in-person meetings we were delighted to invite Angela Powell, our local CAFOD coordinator, to come and give us an after-dinner talk in September on the work of CAFOD and Caritas International. She spoke of the valuable work CAFOD is doing throughout the world, including work done in

Afghanistan. Climate Change and raising awareness of its consequences are a key concern for CAFOD, since it will affect poor countries far more than rich ones. More than ever CAFOD are in urgent need of funds. The photo shows the past President Mike Campbell giving a cheque for £1400 to Angela, with the current President David Bellamy presiding. The Catenian Association always welcomes new members and details are on the Sheffield Hallamshire website www.sheffieldcatenians.org.uk

Mike Campbell
President Hallamshire Circle
2020-2021.

Caritas Hallam Annual Marriage Mass



Bishop Ralph Heskett, Charles and Jane Perryman, Volunteer Marriage Presenters and Sue Tym Caritas Hallam Marriage & Family Life Co-ordinator.

The annual Mass in thanksgiving for marriage took place at the Cathedral on Sunday October 31st. A full Cathedral, many of them couples celebrating significant anniversaries, received a blessing from Bishop Ralph and were given a small gift and prayer card to mark the occasion. This year's Mass was made particular special as Bishop Ralph

presented Bene Merenti awards to Jane and Charles Perryman for their lifetimes service to the vocation of marriage. They have provided marriage preparation courses to more than seven hundred couples over forty years. If you are a married couple and would like to be part of this ministry, please contact stym@hallam-diocese.com

The Lunch Club is now up and running again!



Carmel Care Centre Hillsborough Sheffield
The Lunch Club is now up and running again!
For £3.50, guests enjoy a freshly prepared meal on the last Monday of each month.
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Lunch Club picture shows guests, Gill (MasterChef) and volunteer helpers.



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Is doing something about climate change a moral obligation for Catholics?



In 2015 Pope Francis wrote the encyclical letter *Laudato Si* (LS). The key idea behind LS is that of “integral ecology”, i.e. that people and planet are part of one family where the Earth is our common home. It

invites people to protect God’s creation for future generations, to embrace a lifestyle change for their own good, and to take care of those who are poor and more vulnerable. The essence of LS builds on a

long history of Catholic teaching. For years, many Catholics along with people of other faiths and none have felt passionate about taking action to deal with the climate crisis, but what LS did was to ground that concern at the core of what it means to be a Catholic.

The current crisis is reflected in the dramatic rise in global temperature due, in large part, to the emission of greenhouse gases that we have been producing since the industrial revolution. Such warming has devastating effects on many levels, including food production, extreme weather events and water shortages alongside rising sea levels. This results in stronger and more devastating natural catastrophes of all kinds, causing death, destruction and displacement of people and animals, overwhelmingly affecting the most vulnerable people.

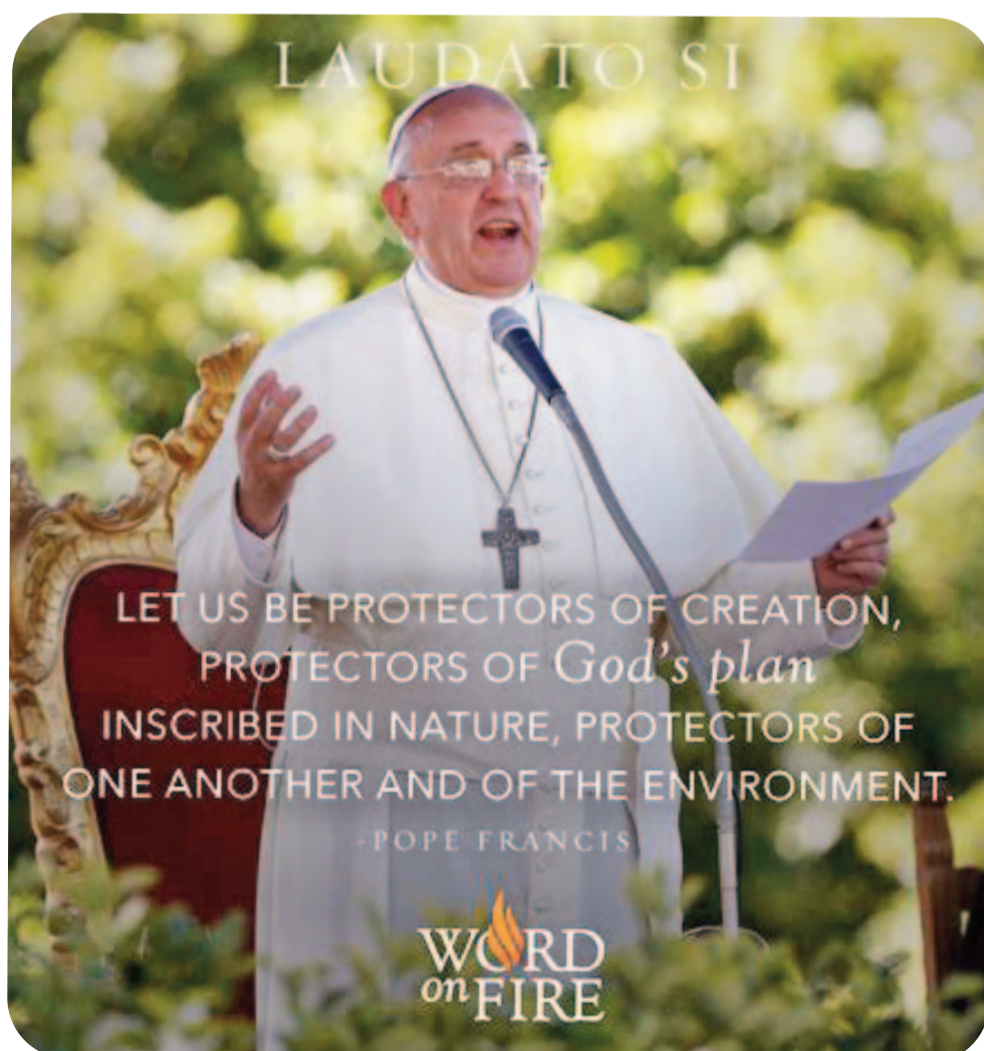
Throughout LS Pope Francis points out that climate change is a moral issue in which all “Everyone’s talents and involvement are needed.” The Pope tells us that to have a true care for the environment, we must also have a care for the most vulnerable. He says “(A) true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” LS [49].

Catholics are called to act

Some months ago myself and Columba Timmins took the six week on-line programme to become *Laudato Si* Animators. The free training is provided by the global ‘*Laudato Si*’ Movement’, formerly known as the ‘Global Catholic Climate Movement’. The course helps Animators feel connected with thousands of passionate and like-minded people during these difficult times. Animators learn from world-renowned experts about the root causes of the climate crisis and the core messages of *Laudato Si*’ in order to help Catholics, and others, better understand the problem and the possible solutions.

All of us can do something to address the challenge. We can pray. Small gestures and acts can grow into something bigger the more people are involved. So many people are already living their lives within the spirit of the Cafod ‘Live Simply’ message, it would be great to hear what changes, however big or small, people in the Hallam Diocese have been making in their own lives. It is easy to feel defeated and downhearted by the huge challenges the world faces but knowing that we are walking alongside like-minded people can sustain us and encourage us on that journey.

Ann Burke



Synod Poem

Yvonne O'Donovan

Synod in Synthesis or 'A Road Back'

This is my body broken and pure
Woven through history, herstory too
Synodical syntax, so.. What do we do?
Watch and deliver, Listen and see,
Break open to piercing
our own certainty.

'Syn' meaning 'with' and not 'sin' meaning 'bad'
words have no truth now or not what they had.

Renewal, reversal, reflect and review
What are we willing to release to redo?
Were our errors ordained or distractions, deviations?
Or necessary paths on the roads of salvation?

Use hands, feet and wit to get out of the rut
Be simple so others may simply not rot,
Plant your dreams in the bones of ancestors and saints;
Just like us they were scared and confused and in doubt
But they plaited new bridges for others to cross.
They wove cloaks for the frames of the freezing and cold
Knowing kindness not cash is the true shining gold
They bound up our wounds and piled cairns on our losses
And howled at the moon when the sky filled with crosses
As crows circled high in the sky overhead
While famines and pestilence piled up our dead.

So reveal who you are and do not be afraid
Give up obfuscation, put down the charade,
Of litany unearthed and liturgy sprayed
In the dead repetition of inanimate decay.

Get out of our aisles and our temples of power
Go down in the soil and relinquish the tower
Of ego and greed and denial of the real:
Notes of the biosphere, the Other, the Us
We are One, we are all, we are atoms of unity
Head, heart and Hand aligned in the Trinity.

Light up your own life to offer to all
Awaken to true hope and stop simply crawling
The surface of Life on a belly of wishes
Stand up and be counted, Sell all you have
For the treasure eternal ..
Don't stall or wait.
The gate it is opening.. just push and accept
You do nothing alone
Grace has already knocked down the gate.

Whether COVID or plague or some new global dread
Whether climate or chaos or forest fires red
Or warfare or AI, genetic mutation
Or whatever passes for civilization...

Only 'Love one another' can light up the
skies with warmth, peace and justice...
Then we might just get by.

As Nature restored to both balance and beauty
We can showcase our hope of the Way,
This our Duty.

Synodos, synodic, assembly, communion:
Unborn generations,
As in union they stand...
Down a future we won't live to see,
May inherit some inherent grace
Sown in our bones with the seeds we now plant.

This is our body broken and pure
Woven through history, herstory too.
In truth, we know what
To do.

"We recall that the purpose of the Synod, and therefore of this consultation, is not to produce documents, but "to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands ..."

REVIEWS

LET US DREAM: THE PATH TO A BETTER FUTURE

Pope Francis in conversation with Austen Ivereigh

Hardback ISBN: 978-1-3985-0220-8

eBook ISBN: 978-1-3985-0221-5

This is a truly prophetic work which challenges us as to how we should live as Church in the 21st century in a post Covid world. If we are attached to the idea of 'we've always done it this way so don't ask me to change' then this is definitely a book to avoid. But if you are ready to have your boat well and truly rocked, and to be inspired to live out your faith in new and challenging ways then this is a book that you must get your hands on. In this short but inspiring book, Pope Francis shares his profound faith in the power of God to redeem and to guide us to a better future if we are open to his working: 'Covid 19 is our Noah moment, as long as we can find our way to the Ark of the ties that unite us: of love, and of a common belonging'.

The book is divided into three main sections. In the first section, 'A Time to See', Pope Francis encourages us to become more aware of the people around us, of their hopes and fears and of the difficulties and sufferings of their lives: 'In this past year of change and crisis, my mind and my heart have overflowed with people. People I think of and pray for, and sometimes cry with: people with names and faces...' But not stopping with this challenge Pope Francis takes us further still, with an urgent call for us to leave our comfort zones and reach out to the margins, not just out of a sense of charity but because it is at the margins that we find the paths to a new future: 'When God wanted to regenerate creation, He chose to go to the margins - to places of sin and misery, of exclusion and suffering, of illness and solitude - because they were also places of possibility'. And again, 'You have to go to the edges of existence if you want to see the world as it is.... You have to go to the margins if you want to find a new future.'

In the second section, 'A Time to Choose', Pope Francis reminds us of the vital importance of prayerful discernment, so that we, as Church, are truly responding to the guidance of the Holy Spirit: 'We need too, a healthy capacity for silent

reflection, places of refuge from the tyranny of the urgent. Most of all we need prayer, to hear the prompts of the Spirit and cultivate dialogue in a community that can hold us and allow us to dream.' And this process discernment is to be undertaken by all in the Church including those whose voices are often not heard: 'To discern of a different future we need to choose fraternity over individualism as our organising principle.... Such a union preserves and respects plurality, inviting all to contribute from their own distinctiveness, as a community of brothers and sisters concerned for each other.'

In the third section 'A Time to Act' Pope Francis is careful to avoid being prescriptive as the actions that Church communities will take are the fruit of their own discernment process. However, he gives three clear pointers for our guidance. Firstly, our actions should be informed by a spirit of service: 'The Church's role is played out in the service of the Lord and the peoples of the earth where she is sent, not by imposing or dominating but as Christ does, in the washing of feet.' Secondly our actions should reach out to the poor and to those on the margins: 'If the church disowns the poor, she ceases to be the Church of Jesus; she falls back on the temptation to become a moral or intellectual elite. There is only one word for the Church that becomes a stranger to the poor: "scandal". The road to the geographical and existential margins is the route of the incarnation: God chose the peripheries as the place to reveal, in Jesus, His saving action in history.' Thirdly Pope Francis places great emphasis on the importance of community: 'No one is saved alone. Isolation is not part of our faith. God attracts us within a complex web of relationships and sends us out into the middle of the crossroads of history.' This is a book for our times; it speaks

powerfully of the need for us to wake up, see the reality of the world around us to reach out in service to all, especially to the poor, to the excluded and to those on the margins of our society. It is a book that bears reading slowly, more than once, reflecting on what it means for us as Church communities in the circumstances in which we find ourselves - rather in the manner of the ancient Christian practice of Lectio Divina.

LET US DREAM

THE PATH TO
A BETTER FUTURE

POPE FRANCIS



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Scripture Focus

By Fr Jeremy Corley



Waiting for our Saviour's Arrival

December is a time of year when we expect to see cool days and cold nights. The daylight ends quickly, and we can sometimes find the dark evenings long. This can sometimes be a situation we try to escape with activities or entertainment.

But perhaps in the winter gloom we can pause to take stock of our lives. Perhaps we can use this time as an opportunity to enter into the Advent season. Perhaps we can use these December days as a time of real preparation for our Saviour's arrival.

In this time when we can sometimes feel lonely, we await the company of a Loved One, and we long for the Saviour, whose coming the Advent Scriptures announce. In this time when we can sometimes be isolated and separated from others, we await someone who will bring us together.

Many of us have found these months of the pandemic difficult. Even if we face a future with various reasons for apprehension and fear, we await someone who will give us real hope. When we are without music, we await someone who will give us reasons to sing.

In fact, for many people, the experience of these months has been a kind of enforced Advent experience. We have been waiting hopefully for the day when we can freely regather without worrying about infection.

We are often weighed down by our own sadnesses and the sorrows of the world, but we await someone who will lift our spirits and bring us good news. We are often oppressed by the mistakes of our past, but we await someone who will open up a new beginning for us.

The Advent readings use images of desert and exile to depict our need for God's salvation. Some of the Advent readings contrast the emptiness of the desert with the fulness of God's promised salvation. Other readings contrast our sorrowful situation in exile with the joy of being restored to our homeland.

One of the biblical images for the Advent season is the wilderness or desert. John the Baptist in the desert calls us to prepare the way of the Lord and make our hearts ready to receive him. At this season

the commercial world puts pressure on us to spend, spend, spend. Can we find time to pray and reflect, opening our hearts to the coming Saviour?

These weeks before Christmas can get busy with preparations for the festive season and arrangements to make. But the Church calls us to think about the Person we wish to honour in our celebrations, so as to be ready to welcome him.

Another biblical image for the Advent season is the time of exile. We await the day when our Saviour will regather us and bring us home to him. As many families prepare for a hoped-for get-together at Christmas (Covid permitting), we await the joy of celebrating our Saviour's birth.

In the coldness of a December night we await the warmth of a newborn baby. And in the stillness of a December night we await a baby's cry. In this cry we will hear the long-expected Word of God coming to save us.

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Hallam News looks at the word "Advent"

Advent is a season of the liturgical year observed in most Christian denominations as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Christ at Christmas. Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year in Western Christianity, and is part of the wider Christmas and holiday season.

The term "Advent" is also used in Eastern Orthodoxy for the 40-day Nativity Fast, which has practices different from those in the West.

The name was adopted from Latin *adventus* "coming; arrival", translating Greek *parousia*. In the New Testament, this is the term used for the Second Coming of Christ. Thus, the season of Advent in the

Christian calendar anticipates the "coming of Christ" from three different perspectives: the physical nativity in Bethlehem, the reception of Christ in the heart of the believer, and the eschatological Second Coming.

History

It is not known when the period of preparation for Christmas that is now called Advent began – it was certainly in existence from about 480 – and the novelty introduced by the Council of Tours of 567 was to order monks to fast every day in the month of December until Christmas. It is "impossible to claim with confidence a credible explanation of the origin of Advent".

Words to live by...

“

"At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving the others with God's own love and concern."

- Mother Teresa (St Teresa of Calcutta).

“

"Advent is the spiritual season of hope par excellence, and in this season, the whole Church is called to be hope, for itself and for the world."

- Pope Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger)

“

"The Lord is coming, always coming. When you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you will recognize him at any moment of your life. Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord."

- Fr Henri Nouwen.

“

"The waiting of Advent teaches us to live in increments, in small pieces rather than large chunks. Waiting also teaches us to measure our progress slowly."

- Holly Whitcomb.

“

"Advent is a journey towards Bethlehem. May we let ourselves be drawn by the light of God made man."

- Pope Francis.

Give the gift of kindness this Christmas, urges the SVP



The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) is urging people across Sheffield and South Yorkshire to 'give the gift of kindness' this Christmas as it launches its Christmas Kindness Appeal.

The appeal, which launches on Giving Tuesday on 30 November and runs through December, will raise money for the SVP's work at grassroots level, and thanks to the generosity of some of the Society's major donors, all donations received to the Christmas Kindness Appeal will be matched pound-for-pound up to a total value of £56,250.

SVP National President Helen O'Shea says: "Every Christmas many of us spend time searching for the perfect gift to give our loved ones, and all too often end up giving them something they don't really need, or perhaps even want. But make a donation to the

SVP this Christmas and you can be sure you are giving someone who has very little exactly what they need most.

"We know that is true because we spend time with every person we help and support, listening to them, understanding their situation and finding out how we can best help them cope with the challenges in their lives.

"So, whether it's a piece of furniture in a child's bedroom, an emergency food parcel for a hungry family, or a cup of tea with a lonely older person, we'll turn every donation into the perfect gift."

Though the national economic landscape is stabilising, millions are struggling to cope as they are left behind financially following the end of the £20-a-week rise in Universal Credit. Low pay and the rising cost of living is increasing incidences of in-

work poverty, and the inevitable toll this takes on mental health.

According to figures from the Legatum Institute, poverty in the UK is a "significant long-term issue". The figures suggest that prior to the pandemic, more than one in five people in the UK (22%) lived in families in poverty, which equates to 14.4 million people. The situation is predicted to get worse for millions, and with official Government figures on poverty not expected until 2022, the harsh reality of poverty in the UK is brought alive through the stories of people experiencing hardship first-hand, including the thousands of SVP members and staff providing essential support on the ground.

The SVP's St Vincent's Sheffield centre provides furniture and household essentials to families and

individuals experiencing hardship in all its forms, supporting people to turn their house into a home and a place of safety. For almost 35 years St Vincent's Sheffield has been a haven of welcome for the people of the city and transforms thousands of lives.

The Christmas Kindness Appeal will fund the work of the SVP in communities across England and Wales at grassroots level while informing and feeding into the national conversation on poverty and social justice.

Helen O'Shea concludes: "When you donate to the SVP this year, you can be sure you will be giving the perfect gift to someone who really, really needs it, because you will be giving the gift of kindness."

To donate to the Christmas Kindness Appeal please visit <https://bit.ly/3H57fAx> or call 07593 384429.

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The Church becoming synodal

Part 1: *Lumen gentium* and the inverted pyramid by Cardinal Michael Czerny SJ

'Pope Francis has underlined how "synodality" grounds, shapes and empowers both the life of the Church and the witness and service it is called to render to the human family', writes Cardinal Michael Czerny SJ – but what does the term really mean? He explores the roots of synodality in Vatican II, and the way in which it necessitates the participation of all the baptised in the life of the Church, in this first part of a rich presentation of a synodal Church.

When the term 'synodality' is applied to the Church, it is not meant to designate a mere decision-making process. It is not about collaborative decision-making that reviews alternatives, makes choices, distributes responsibilities and carries out programmes. Rather, synodality expresses a fundamental characteristic of the Church's identity: its essential communal dimension, its essential evangelising mission, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

As a manifestation of communion that originates in the mystery of the triune God, the Church presents and realises herself by gathering as the 'People of God' who walks together. We could say that synodality is the form in which the Church's original vocation and intrinsic mission are historicised: to call together all people on earth, of every time and age, and make them participants in the salvation and joy of Christ.

On several occasions, Pope Francis has underlined how synodality grounds, shapes and empowers both the life of the Church and the witness and service it is called to render to the human family:

To walk together is the constitutive way of the Church; the figure that enables us to interpret reality with the eyes and heart of God; the condition for following the Lord Jesus and being servants of life in this wounded time. The breath and the pace of the Synod show what we are, and the dynamism of communion that animates our decisions.[i]

Synodality – the 'way', 'path' 'breath', 'condition', 'key' for life in faith – is the *modus vivendi et operandi* with which the Church prepares all its members to share responsibility, develops their charisms and ministries, intensifies their bonds of fraternal love.

For Pope Francis, the reform of the Church starts from within, that is, by virtue of a spiritual process that changes forms and renews structures. Drawing on the legacy of Ignatian spirituality, Francis emphasises the intimate connection between the inner experience, the language of faith and the reform of structures.[ii] Initiating processes of conversion is, therefore, a radical praxis

of governance that offers the only real guarantee that the institutionally structured Church can set out on and successfully pursue the communal path of following Jesus, that is, synodality. The insight is this: not only does the Spirit want us to make good decisions but, through the process of synodality, the Spirit will help us to.

Graced with the dignity of being sons and daughters, and graced too with the gift and the responsibility of proclaiming the gospel to all, lay people are called to participate in the governance of the Church according to their own duties, roles and ways of acting. The Spirit bestows special charisms and graces on them, making them 'fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church' (LG §12). In fact, they are 'permitted and sometimes even obliged to express their opinions on those things which concern the good of the Church.' (LG §37)

The Holy Spirit is the principle of unity that brings all members of the Church, with their different vocations, missions and ministries, together in a single dynamic subject. As the many grains become one bread, the Eucharist is the 'fount and apex' of the believing community (LG §11; Sacrosanctum concilium [SC] §10). Vatican II thus indicates in the action of the Spirit who vivifies the Church through sacramental grace, especially in the moment of celebration of the Eucharistic assembly, the original source from which the ecclesial 'we' springs and flows.

Synodality and collegiality in the Church: the inverted pyramid

Francis uses the term 'synod-synodality' in a broad sense, that is, to translate theological orthodoxy into pastoral orthopraxis. 'Synod' does not exclusively refer to the ecclesial structure headed up by the collegial government, but it is the visible form of communion, the path of ecclesial fraternity, which all the baptised personally participate in and contribute to in their own way. A Church that, in its striving towards universality, wants to protect the diversity of cultural identities, considering them an indispensable asset, cannot but assume synodality as that connection or intermediary between the unity of the body and the plurality of members.

Adopting the ecclesiological perspective of Vatican II and following the teaching of *Lumen gentium*, Pope Francis affirms that 'this path of synodality' is precisely what 'God expects of the Church of the third millennium.' [viii] He stresses that synodality 'offers us the most adequate

interpretative framework for understanding the hierarchical ministry itself' and traces the image of a Church which – like 'an inverted pyramid', where the peak is beneath the base – harmonises all those involved in it: the People of God, the episcopal college, the Successor of Peter.[ix]

In *Evangelii gaudium* (EG), Francis gave new impetus to the doctrine of the *sensus fidei fidelium* (EG §119), stating that the path of synodality represents an indispensable prerequisite for infusing the Church with a renewed missionary impulse: all the members of the Church are active subjects of evangelisation and 'missionary disciples' (EG §120).

The laity represents the overwhelming majority of the People of God, and there is much to be learned from their participation in the different expressions of the ecclesial community: popular piety, commitment to ordinary pastoral care, competence in the different areas of cultural and social life (EG §126). And if the status and experience of clerical life generate certain unconscious biases, we can hope for a devoted laity to play the attentive, loving observer who helps everyone become conscious of them. When asked about the role of the laity, St John Henry Newman replied: 'The Church would look foolish without them.' [x]

It is therefore necessary to overcome the obstacles that come from a lack of formation and the harmful effects of the clerical mentality that risks relegating the lay faithful to a subordinate role, by opening up spaces in which the laity can express themselves and share the wealth of their experience as disciples of the Lord (EG §102).

The co-responsibility of the entire People of God for the mission of the Church requires beginning consultative processes in which the laity participate and speak more actively. This is not a question of establishing a sort of 'lay parliamentarism,' since the authority of the episcopal college does not depend on the faithful delegating it by an electoral process; but it appears rather as a particular charism with which the Spirit has endowed the ecclesial body. This means making full use of the resources and structures that the Church already has.

From this perspective, on 15 September 2018, with the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis communio* (EC), the Holy Father made all the characteristic steps along the path of a 'constitutively synodal Church' normative. Compared with



Vatican II, then, the Apostolic Constitution represents Spirit-led progress: while we owe gratitude to the Council for having recovered the ecclesial subjects and their ministerial nature, this document translates the theoretical arguments into ecclesial practice. The keystone is listening: every synodal practice 'begins by listening to the People of God,' 'continues by listening to the Pastors' and 'culminates in listening to the Bishop of Rome, who is called to speak as "pastor and teacher of all Christians"'. [xi]

This consultation of the faithful must be followed by 'discernment on the part of the Bishops'. Attentive to the *sensus fidei* of the People of God, they must be able to perceive the indications of the Spirit and distinguish them 'from the changing currents of public opinion' (EC §7).

This way of proceeding is communal discernment, a practice dear to Pope Francis, who frequently mentions it, drawing from his own Ignatian spirituality: it is attending to God's will in history, in the life, not of an individual person, but of the whole of God's people. Although it takes place within the heart, the interior, its raw material is always reality echoing and reverberating in the inner realm. It is an interior attitude that pushes us to be open to dialogue, to meeting, to finding God wherever God may be found, and not only within predetermined, well-defined and enclosed parameters (EG §231-33).

Episcopalis Communio lays out the synodal practice in three phases: preparation, discussion and implementation; and each Synod during the current pontificate – on the family (2014, 2015), on youth (2018), on the Amazon (2019) – has sought increasingly to carry them out. 'The synods held every two or three years here in Rome,' the Holy Father himself observed, 'are freer and more dynamic, giving more time for honest discussion and listening.' [xii]

For the current Synod, Pope Francis has chosen as the theme: 'For a synodal Church: communion, participation, and mission.'

A generation of young children are missing out on an education at Mutemwa, Zimbabwe

This year, JBMS Christmas Appeal is focussed on providing education to all the children living at Mutemwa in Zimbabwe.

Mutemwa is a community which not only cares for the needs of the patients, but also their families.

By sponsoring a child at Mutemwa to go to school is a life changing experience and can break the cycle of poverty. Education is key to unlocking the door of freedom in Zimbabwe. It benefits not only the child, but also the family and wider community.

Gaining a proper education in Zimbabwe is challenging for underprivileged families, like those living at Mutemwa. That's why we need your help in sponsoring a child to go to school.

* Just £30 will provide an education for 1 primary age child for one term at school.

* By donating £50 we will be able to buy 1 bike for a child to get to school everyday.

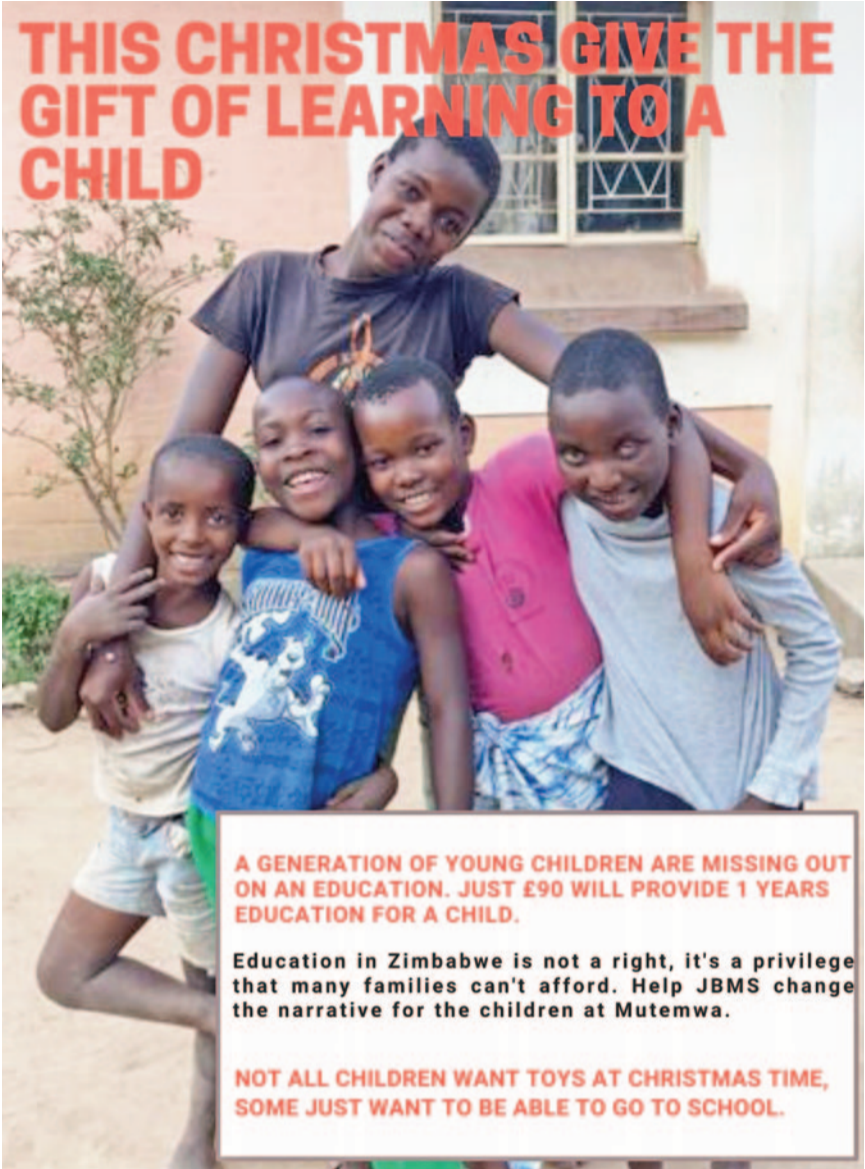
* A donation of £65 will buy the school uniform and shoes for a child.

* A £90 donation will provide fees for 1 primary age child to go to school for one year.

* Just £100 will pay for 1 secondary school child to gain an education for one school term. We need sponsors like you to donate this Christmas to provide a child the gift of learning today for a better life tomorrow.

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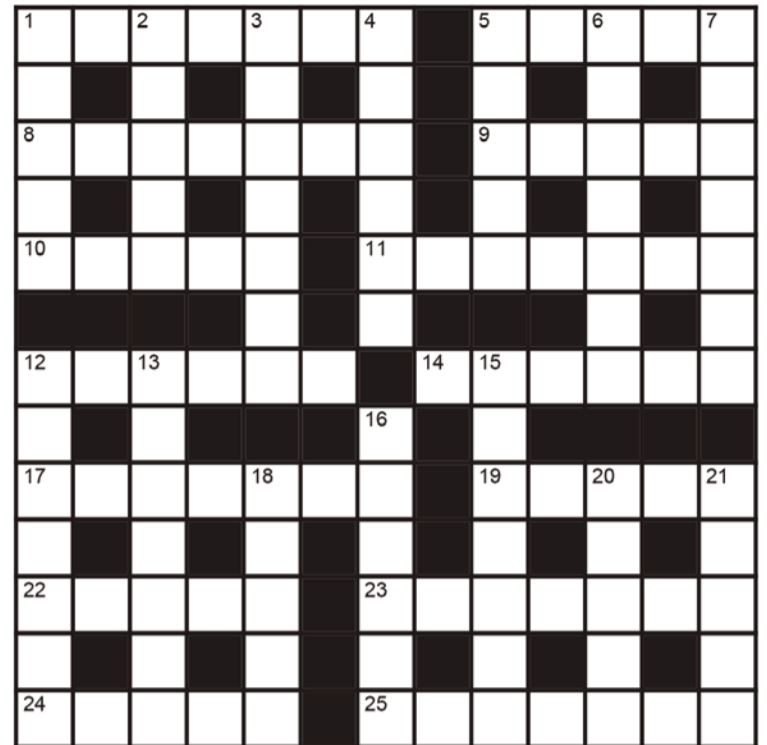
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JESUIT SCHOOLS



You can use both sets of clues to solve the puzzle: the solutions are the same.
 So, if you want to try the CRYPTIC puzzle, for instance, but are unsure, use the QUICK clues to help you work out the solution.
 Similarly, if you try the QUICK clues, use the CRYPTIC clues to help you prove the solution



CRYPTIC Across

- 1 Angel of the bottomless pit's one rotten fellow (7)
- 5 Check car's tyres at the front (5)
- 8 Picnic things are put in this stylish con tainer (4,3)
- 9 Poke around firm in Israel (5)
- 10 It amplifies the matter of fruit on the turn (5)
- 11 Within visual range for observation (7)
- 12 Total lack of interest to cross a yard by track (6)
- 14 Zambia's evacuated, following small brown lines on a page (6)
- 17 Say farewell to lion-hearted after salute... (7)
- 19 ...awards partly leave them mystified (5)
- 22 The rise of Southwell? (5)
- 23 Rat one that double-crossed (7)
- 24 Somewhat dark Welsh river seen in a wasted day (5)
- 25 James' and John's dad, retiring bishop, drifted away during last Letter from America (7)

CRYPTIC Down

- 1 Racing here is one from an Aberdeen, perhaps (5)
- 2 Bother with navy getting deck out (5)
- 3 Judge's board he upset (7)
- 4 Note number on top have the spirit to support head (6)
- 5 How meats are cooked in France, on Sunday, in early summer months (2,3)
- 6 One of ten sides last month suffering no end (7)
- 7 Dorcas the Greek gets to name it on headgear, but not all (7)
- 12 Charged with using cue cards, Rabbi pulled out (7)
- 13 On English vessel find a set forever young (7)
- 15 Jesus Christ the Gambler, said John? (3,4)

QUICK Across

- 1 Hebrew version of the Greek Apollyon (7)
- 5 Inspect (5)
- 8 Insulated container which keeps food cold (4,3)
- 9 Progenitor of the Israelites (5)
- 10 Electronic receiver that detects and demodulates and amplifies transmitted signals (5)
- 11 Perception (7)
- 12 Absence of emotion or enthusiasm (6)
- 14 Group of lines in a poem, play, etc (6)
- 17 Toodle-pip! (7)
- 19 US TV Awards (5)
- 22 Increase in size, magnitude, number, or intensity (5)
- 23 Someone who betrays his country (7)
- 24 Dark-skinned (5)
- 25 Father of apostles James and John (7)

QUICK Down

- 1 Racing venue in Berkshire (5)
- 2 Festoon (5)
- 3 In the Book of Judges, the only female judge (7)
- 4 Small measure of spirits; mug (6)
- 5 Of meat cooked in its own gravy (French) (2,3)
- 6 Ten-sided figure (7)

- 7 Woman in Acts, from Joppa (7)
- 12 Defendant in a criminal proceeding (7)
- 13 Eternal (7)
- 15 Euphemism for Jesus Christ in John (3,4)
- 16 Hernando -----, 1486-1547, conquistador (6)
- 18 Pass on (5)
- 20 Subdued (5)
- 21 Ranees's wrap (5)

SOLUTION

Across: 1 Abaddon, 5 Audit, 8 Cool bag, 9 Jacob, 10 Turner, 11 Insight, 12 Apathy, 14 Stanza, 17 Cheerio, 19 Emmys, 22 Swell, 23 Traitor, 24 Dusky, 25 Zebedeo.
Down: 1 Ascot, 2 Adorn, 3 Deborah, 4 Noggin, 5 Au Jus, 6 Decagon, 7 Tabitha, 12 Accused, 13 Ageless, 15 The Lamb, 16 Cortez, 18 Relay, 20 Muted, 21 Saree

Facts and Figures

In the 5th Century, Advent began on 11 November (St Martin's Day) and took the form of a six week fast leading to Christmas. During the 6th century, Advent was reduced to its current length and later the fasting was dropped.

Rainforests are being cut down at a rate of 100 acres per minute. If this trend continues, the world's rainforests will be gone by 2100.

Over the past 100 years, the number of Catholics around the world as tripled from 291 million in 1910 to 1.1 billion in 2010. Percentage wise, the population has remained relatively stable, constituting 17% of the world population in 1910 and 16% in 2010.

About 71% of the earth is water. The oceans hold approximately 96.5% of this water and the ice caps hold about 2%. The remaining water exists in rivers, ponds, glaciers, ice caps, lakes, as water vapor and our taps, among other water bodies. Only 1% of the earth's water is safe for human consumption.

The crime rate in Vatican City is 133.6%, which means there are more annual offenses than there are people in the Vatican (about 500 people). Most of the crimes, though, are committed by visiting tourists.

The fish, or ICHTHUS, is the symbol used by early Christians to identify themselves in times of persecution. In Greek, ICHTHUS is a monogram for the first five letters of the words "Jesus Christ Son of God, Savior."

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