

# Hallam



# News

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## What can I give him?



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## 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.

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#### 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.  
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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

**Joy, prayer and gratitude are 3 ways that prepare us to experience Christmas in an authentic way.**  
**Pope Francis**

As we prepare for Christmas - we inevitably think about what gifts we are

going to give to those around us. We may also wonder what can we give Jesus - as this is His celebration.

Celebrating Christmas in an authentic way is a good gift to give - not only to Jesus, but to all those around us. Pope Francis gives us 3 very good ways of to prepare to do exactly that. We hope this

edition of the Hallam News will help.

One other gift you can give, is sharing your thoughts about the Church through the Synod. There is plenty of information about the Synod in this paper and copies of the survey have been delivered to your parish with the Hallam News - so do fill it in and send it back to share your opinions.

## Synod at St Mary's, Penistone

We started in early October with general publicity prior to the opening by Pope Francis on the 9/10/21 and then the opening on the 17/10/21 at the Cathedral in Sheffield with Bishop Ralph.

Our first Church meeting followed on November 6th when fifteen lay people gathered on the Saturday morning for an hour to pray, listen to scripture and then listen to each other in small groups in reflection on the scripture passage.

Time was also given to general comments and questions about Synod. We left with questions to ponder before our next meeting in early December.



We also held a short meeting following our monthly Taize Prayer on 16/11/21. This regular Prayer meeting is Ecumenical and on this occasion the group consisted of 2 members of our church, 4 members of our local Anglican Church and 3 members of our local Methodist Church. They were very interested in the questions being considered and were open to contributing to the process as fellow Christians in our community. In fact in the following week, at a Churches together meeting, the opening prayer

to the meeting was the Synod Prayer. Follow up is planned at our next Taize Prayer on 21/12/21.

We are looking forward to the next steps on this journey.

## Millennium window of St Mary's, Penistone

This photo was taken at this Saturdays Autumn Fair Which with the dedicated work of many in the parish and support of other parishioner and their family and Friends managed to raise in excess of £900. The window showed all its brilliant colours with the sun shining through, which energised everyone's day.



## Why not send in your photos from around the Diocese?

### 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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# Synod update



Hallam synodal process is journeying along nicely across the whole of the diocese. Just to remind you what it's all about, Pope Francis has invited everyone to let him know how you are getting on with the church, meaning your local parish, the diocese and the universal church and ask where you think the Holy Spirit is inviting the church (you, us) forward.

Processes to encourage listening and participation are ongoing in various ways in different parishes; meetings, leaflets through letterboxes, ordinary group meetings spending some time with the synodal questions. It's very exciting and interesting to hear about the different processes and also increasingly now, about some of the themes that are emerging.

A challenge for everyone is to find ways of making sure as many people as possible hear the invitation and have the opportunity to respond. One way is to invite a response in writing. Alongside this month's edition of Hallam News, there is a written synod survey/consultation document for anyone to complete and return if they think this would be a good way to have their voice heard. The survey is also on the Hallam Diocese website if that's your preferred way of responding. Share it with your Christmas visitors, fill it in together as a family, pass it on to your neighbours who have stopped going to church or belong to a different faith community.

Enjoy the synodal conversations, and have a grace-filled, peaceful Christmas

**Fionnuala Frances and Kevan Grady**

## An Invitation to respond to Pope Francis

"I dream of a 'missionary option', that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation" Pope Francis (Evangelii Gaudium n.27). What do we need to transform in our parish community? We are approaching the final phases of the synod process within the Diocese with only 9 weeks to submit our responses after the Christmas Holiday.

Make sure that your voice is heard by either joining the discussion in our parish or going along to one of the open meetings in either Wickersley on 22 January or Sheffield on 5 February 2022 10:00-12:30. Book on Eventbrite. Additionally, make sure you submit your response in the questionnaire included with the Christmas issue of the Hallam News or via the Synod pages of the Diocesan Website [www.hallam-diocese/synod](http://www.hallam-diocese/synod). The deadline for responses is 7 March 2022

## New Care for Creation role in Hallam Diocese

'Good custodianship of the environment is a cornerstone of our faith and we should make our voice heard.....' (Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, Environmental Advisory Group).

'The care of Creation is contemplation of God'. Saint Augustine.

The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales have asked all dioceses to appoint an environmental lead to support the Catholic community's efforts to protect God's creation. Two members of the Hallam Diocese Justice and Peace Commission have volunteered to work together on this, and been entrusted by Bishop Ralph with developing the role. (Angela Powell and Columba Timmins. contact email: [environmentalleads@hallam-diocese.com](mailto:environmentalleads@hallam-diocese.com))

We will try to support parishes, schools and diocesan institutions with resources and practical ideas for individual and community action. Many such resources can already be found on the Diocese of Hallam website under 'Bishop's Commissions - Justice and Peace.' ([hallam-diocese.com/about-doh/](http://hallam-diocese.com/about-doh/)) From January next year, we shall start

contacting all parishes in the diocese to introduce ourselves. Of course you don't need to wait to hear from us: we think there is already a groundswell of Care for Creation growing across the Diocese, whether in liturgy or through practical action, and we can derive much hope and encouragement from each other.

We may feel small and insignificant at times, but we are not alone - the movement to care for Creation is very much a global one. The Laudato Si Movement counts 220,000 parishes in the worldwide Catholic family. Think what can be accomplished with our combined faith and hope!

The Vatican is promoting a 7 year action plan we can embark on together and the recently launched Laudato Si' Action Platform ([laudatosiplatform.org](http://laudatosiplatform.org)) provides an online resource for institutions, communities, and families to develop their learning and consider such a plan. Check it out for a sense of the worldwide community. Registration with the platform can establish a broad support network for action, while Cafod's well established Live Simply principles tie in perfectly, and are an excellent starting



point for parishes and schools. ([cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Livesimply-award](http://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Livesimply-award)).

This global call to come together as a faith community to examine our relationships within God's creation, finds echoes in the global call to journey together in Synod. Both provide hope through facing up to our mistakes and challenges. Both ask us to pause and contemplate. Both urge us to leave behind our assumptions and preferences whatever they may be, and open our hearts to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Please contact us if you feel inspired to join us as a team. Bringing together ideas across each deanery would enrich the work, and availing of the thoughts and energies of people of all ages is vital.

## Around the Diocese

### Parish Hosts its first Advent concert since last year

St. Peter-in-Chains, Doncaster, hosted its first Advent concert since last year's lockdown. The evening was led by local singing sensation Sally Glennon.



Sally, who has supported Daniel O'Donnell and tours extensively, generously gave of her time to entertain guests with a wonderful range of carols, gospel songs and traditional Irish tunes.

The socially distanced event was organised by Suzanne and Martin Frain, who also supported Sally on the Irish bagpipes. The fundraiser was in aid of church funds and raised £664.

Fr. Darren Reid, who contributed to the entertainment with two songs of his own, thanked Sally Glennon for a very entertaining and enjoyable evening.

### Caritas in Concert

Robert Barraclough and his musical ensemble, 'Caritas' are hosting a concert of musical theatre and Christmas favourites in Holy Rood Church Hall, Saturday 18th December, 7.30pm. Tickets are £7 (concessions £5) and can be reserved on line at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/caritas](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/caritas)



### Padley Housing Association

The Padley Housing Association is a Catholic charitable organisation which offers apartments to elderly people on low incomes.



Padley Housing Association is run by a Committee of volunteers though the day-to-day management of the flats and tenants is carried out by professional estate and letting agents.

The Management Committee meets about four times a year and is in need of new members. Would you be prepared to give up a small amount of your time to support Padley's valuable work? Primarily, you need to have good judgement, sympathy for the poor and be prepared to contribute in meetings of the Management Committee. You do not have to live in Sheffield. For further information please contact the Chair of the Association, John Donnelly on 0114 288 4652.

**Send us your news**  
[hallamnews@cathcom.org](mailto:hallamnews@cathcom.org)





# View from the Pew

By Dr Jay Kettle-Williams



## PARIS REVISITED

There's a Polish saying, I am told, that starts off along the lines of 'We spend our lives learning ...', much the same as the English expression 'You live and learn'. The Polish then continues with 'only to die stupid'. But I prefer to stick with 'The more you know, the more you know how little you know'. The point was keenly brought home to me on a recent family trip to Paris when, for the very first time, I visited the Musée d'Orsay on the South Bank. I'd never heard of Tarsicius till that chilly winter's day in Paris.

The musée stands on the Left Bank of the Seine barely disguising the fact that it is housed in the former Gare d'Orsay, a Beaux-Arts railway station built between 1898 and 1900. The museum holds French art dating mainly from the periods of Arts & Crafts, Art Nouveau and Art Deco, notably 1848 to 1914.

As I was to learn, Tarsicius or Tarcisus, a martyr of the early Christian church, is featured in a work by the sculptor Alexandre Falguière.

Not a lot is known about Tarsicius, who lived in the 3rd century. What little we do know comes from a metrical inscription by Pope Damasus I, bishop of Rome from October 366 to his death in 384, who compares Tarsicius with St Stephen: St Stephen was stoned to death by a crowd; young Tarsicius, reputedly an acolyte carrying the Blessed Sacrament to condemned Christians in prison, preferred death at the hands of a mob rather than hand over the Blessed Sacrament he was carrying.

From the Musée d'Orsay it's not such a long walk, crossing one of the many bridges festooned with padlocks left clamped by couples to the railings in testimony to their love for each other, to Île de la Cité (an island in the Seine River) where stands Notre-Dame. You can't ever be in Paris and not visit the Cathédrale de Notre-Dame - generally referred to simply as Notre-Dame - especially since the horrendous fire of 15 April 2019 which, to the dismay of Catholics worldwide, destroyed a large part of the ancient roof and the spire: the misfortune tempered in part by the reports of what could be salvaged. Still temporarily closed, the Cathedral attracts streams of visitors either paying homage in prayer or simply curious as to how the ongoing reconstruction is developing. As I return along the north bank, the



Reconstruction continues at Notre Dame.

stunning edifice of La Madeleine comes into view. It's at L'église Sainte-Marie-Madeleine - less formally, just La Madeleine - that I like to attend Mass for what I always think of as public affirmation of personal conviction. La Madeleine occupies a commanding position in the 8th arrondissement of Paris and looks south down the Rue Royale towards the Place de la Concorde.

To the east is the Place Vendôme, and to the west Saint Augustin. The Madeleine Church was designed in its present form as a temple to the glory of Napoleon's army, and later named for Jesus' companion, Mary Magdalene.

At Communion, attending Mass that Saturday evening after my visit to the Musée d'Orsay and then to the Île de la Cité, I looked at the host in the palm of my hand and thought how much others had had to suffer for me to receive the host without me perhaps really appreciating their sacrifice on my behalf.



St Tarsicius, patron saint of altar servers and first communicants



The altar at La Madeleine



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# Brush Strokes

By Fr Tom Grufferty



## Echoes of a Parish Priest

Long before the famous fire I was once in Notre Dame de Paris. At 9.30 am I was joined by a group of about 400 people queueing to get inside the famous building. Once inside, it became instantly clear that the greater part of the crowd gathered to gaze at the three Rose Windows in the building. These windows must be the greatest masterpieces in glass in the whole world. People of all religions and none, were transfixed as they absorbed the vibrant colours. In many ways, this is a powerful way of prayer. As I looked at these people, I could see immediately that some, if not all, were praying.

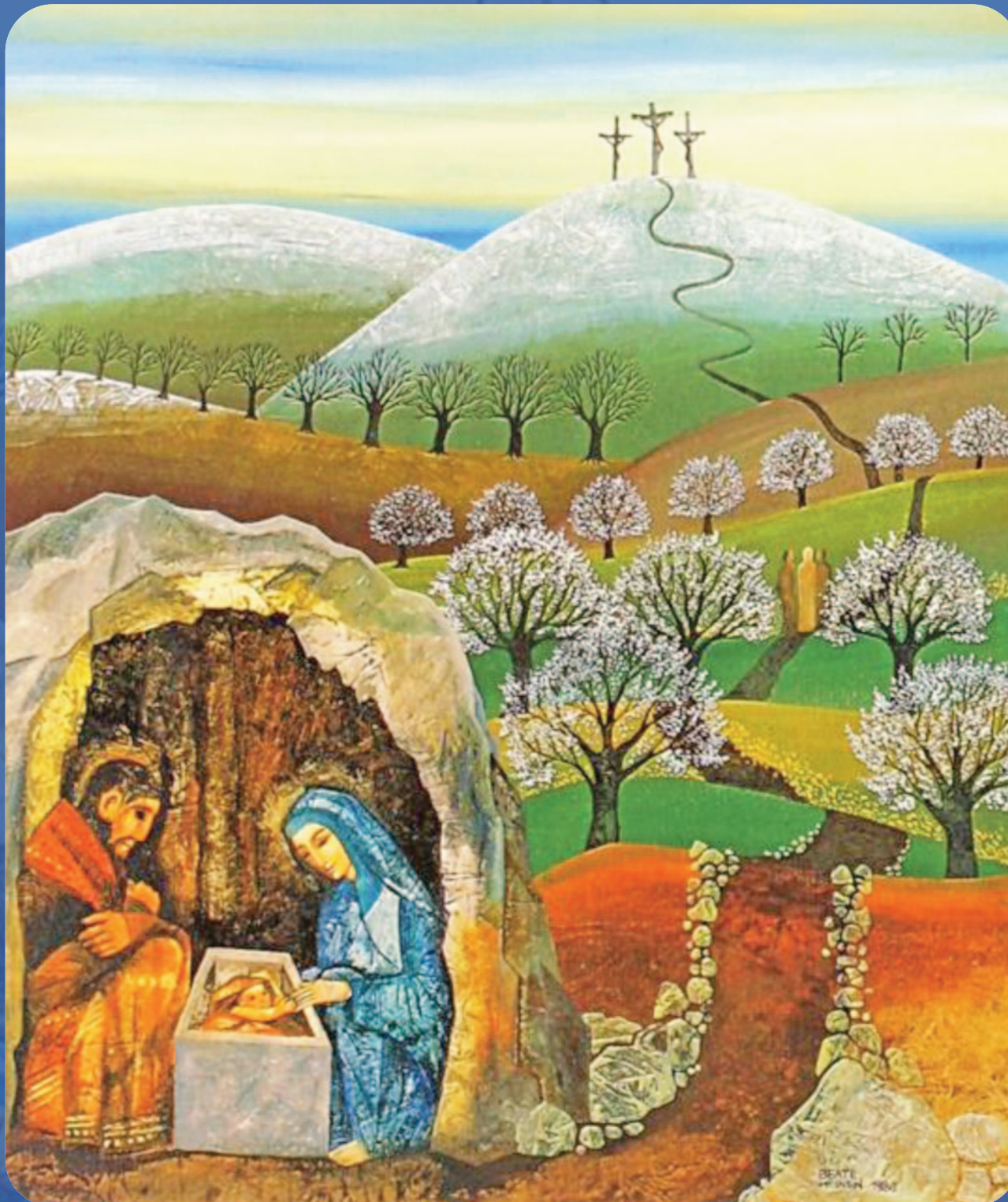
Of course, we have prayed with images for centuries, and we are sometimes ridiculed for it, the Reformers and the iconoclastic movement being two examples. I would like to invite you to pray this Christmas with this painting. Mary Huntley, who is a friend, sent me this Christmas card many years ago. From the moment I first saw it, I loved the symbolism and I have kept the card in my treasure chest. It is by a German artist called Beate Heinen who created the work in 1986.

Before you read any further, just spend a few minutes looking at what the artist has done. Pause for a little while. Now read the Nativity Story, as told in Luke's Gospel (2:1-20) very carefully. Stop to ponder whenever you wish. Now look again at the painting. Your eyes are immediately drawn to the nativity scene. It is small, compact and easy on the eye. Like most nativity scenes, you are drawn to the crib. Hold on to some of the things that Luke has just said to you personally. Notice that the scene is full. Mary is in blue as you would expect, Joseph is dressed in brown. Mary lovingly touches the hand of her Son. Look at Jesus. The crib is a marble coffin, which comes as a shock. But all will be made clear shortly.

Imagine you have the powers of a panoramic photo electron lens and move your eyes out to capture what the artist really wants you to see. The immediate surroundings are full of vegetation, colour and vibrancy. This is strangely unseasonal for the middle of winter in the Northern Hemisphere.

The first thoughts that came to my mind were that there could be some surprises in store in this painting. In the wider panorama, we have winter when it should be spring. Here the landscape is cold, bleak with snow and frost. Then you see the three crosses on Calvary ...winter has become spring and spring has become winter.

The artist knows only too well that the crib and the cross are integral parts of the same story. Christmas and Good Friday come together. This contradiction leads us to Jesus Himself when He explains the chief reason for the Incarnation. In John's Gospel, Jesus says to Pilate: "I was born for this, I came into the world for this, to bear witness to the truth and all who live by the truth listen to my voice" (John 18:37). Just before His crucifixion, death and resurrection, Jesus takes us to the Christmas Crib. What does Christmas really say to you? How can you pray Christmas? We can only pray



Christmas in the context of Calvary, and at the empty tomb. The crib is full, the tomb is empty. There is a powerful and inseparable correlation between the two places.

Now look at the painting again. Did you notice the Road of Life? There are three people on it, and I do not know who they are. Peter, James, and John, perhaps? They were with Jesus at least on Mount Tabor and in the Garden of Gethsemane, so why not here?

But I would really like to think these are three women for they look like women. Mary the Mother of Jesus, His great friend Mary of Magdala and Mary of Cleopas in John 19:25

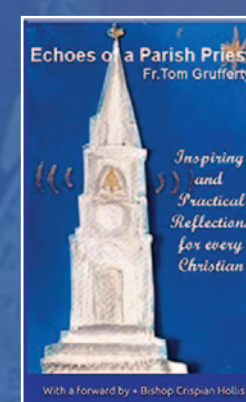
All three are directly connected with Christmas and Easter. Mary as Mother is central to the crib, Mary

Magdala is central to the crucifixion and Mary of Cleopas is engaged directly too.

But let me lead you into THE MOST PROFOUND contemplation ---the three people are us. You and me on the road of life between birth, death, and the RESURRECTION!

Even in these pandemic days there is hope, love, mercy in our journey between death and eternity.

Taken and adapted from "Echoes of a Parish Priest" by Fr. Tom Grufferty. Published by Amazon UK, Kindle Direct Publishing.





# Exploring St Marie's art and the lives of its benefactors

The Cathedral Church of St Marie contains many beautiful examples of religious art, given to the church by a range of benefactors - most notably, the Dukes of Norfolk.

One of the most compelling examples is the Guardian Angel in the South Transept, by the entrance to the Norfolk Chapel. The angel, known by many as 'The Bernasconi Angel,' was carved from translucent alabaster and painted in such a way that it glows with colour when the sun's rays falls in the right direction. The Bernasconis - who also appear in local records as 'Bernascone' and 'Barnascone' were among the major donors to the Cathedral.

They donated no fewer than three of St Marie's stained glass windows. The Bernasconis also contributed towards the Cathedral's eight bronze bells; the monument to Fr Charles Pratt, the priest who was instrumental in the construction of St Marie's, but died before its completion; and to a number of local Catholic causes.

### But who were they?

The family originated in the small Swiss town of Mendrisio, about six miles from the Italian border and city of Como. Lewis Bernasconi and his wife, Martha, came to Sheffield in around 1820. They established an opticians, cutlery and hardware business in Waingate and by 1841 had been joined by Lewis' nephew, Quirico and his wife Carolina.

Martha died in June 1844, aged 46, and was buried in the churchyard of what was

then the Catholic chapel which preceded St Marie's. Her gravestone can be seen on the wall of what is now the Cathedral car park.

Quirico took over running the firm when Lewis died and was joined by his brother, Henry, who went on to marry Savina Rimondi, the daughter of Charles and Constance Rimondi, to whom the St Joseph window, on the spiral staircase leading to St Marie's Lady Chapel, is dedicated.

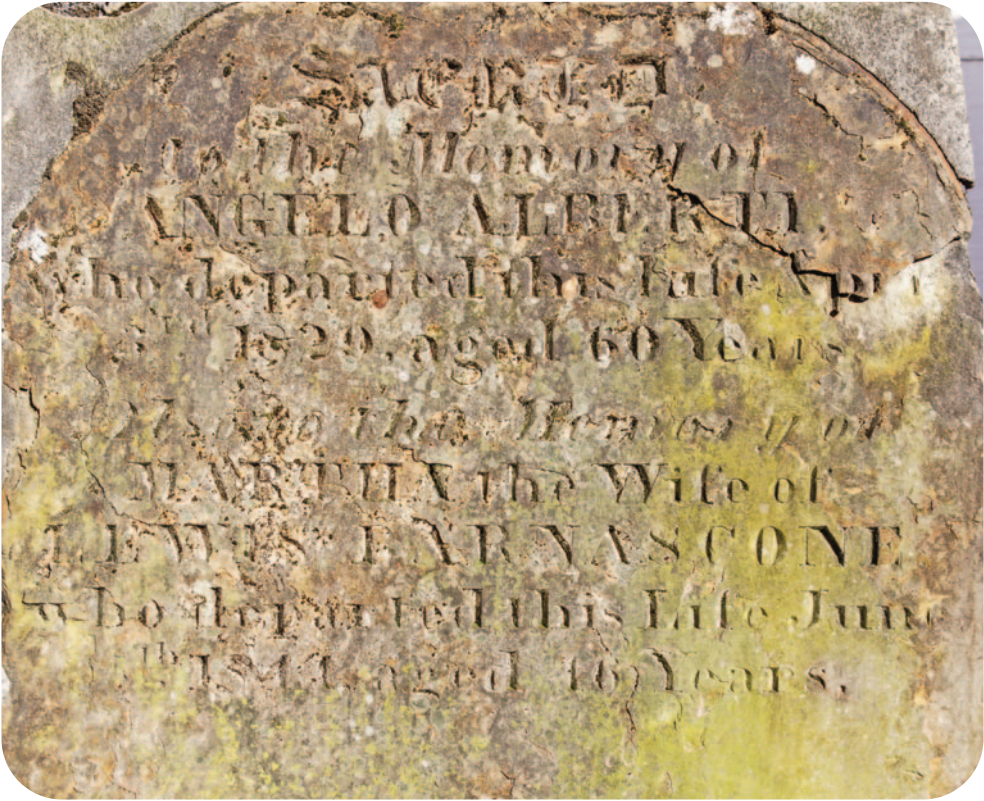
The neighbouring window shows the Annunciation and bears a dedication to Henry and Savina Bernasconi's third child, Carolina, who died, aged 15, of typhus fever, while attending a school in Loughborough.

By the time the windows were installed, Henry Bernasconi had been running his own business, selling cutlery, for just over a decade and had brought his son, Charles Henry 'Harry' Barnascone into the firm.

Henry may have been encouraged to start his own business in 1868 because, by then, Quirico had three sons, John, aged 18, who was already involved with the family business and Lewis, 16, and Charles, 13, who were destined to join him.

In 1874 John presented a High Altar Crucifix to St Marie's, on the occasion of his marriage to Mary Lavinia Thorpe, whose family ran a confectioners, restaurant, cafe and catering business at 13 Fargate, on the corner of what is now Chapel Walk.

Continued on page 7



Martha Barnascone's tombstone, in the courtyard between the Cathedral and Cathedral House.



The St Joseph window in the spiral staircase to the Munster Chapel, erected in memory of Charles and Constance Rimondi, parents of Savina Rimon, who married Henry Bernasconi.



# Exploring St Marie's art and the lives of its benefactors

Continued from page 6

Like the Bernasconis, the Thorpes were also major donors to St Marie's and Lavinia had been the first pupil when Sheffield's Roman Catholic girls' school, Notre Dame, opened in 1856.

When Quirico died, aged 62, in February 1877, John, Lewis and Charles continued to run the family business.

Lewis relinquished his share in 1906 to concentrate on a branch the family had opened in Paris, in the Rue de Braque -



Window showing Christ with the little children, erected by Lavinia Bernasconi in memory of her mother, Jane Thorpe



The Annunciation Window in the spiral staircase to the Munster Chapel, viewed from the South Transept of St Marie's Cathedral, Sheffield.-Annunciation Window

not far from where the Pompidou Centre stands today.

The Paris business sold 'specialties anglaises' -bicycles and automobiles - and Lewis remained there until he died in 1925.

Charles, meanwhile, died by drowning in 1909.

John Bernasconi continued to run the family business until he retired in 1927, having been involved with the business for 60 years and its sole proprietor for 20 years.

In 1901, his wife, Lavinia, donated the window at the north end of the west wall which shows Christ blessing children in memory of her mother, Jane Thorpe. In 1919 Mrs Bernasconi was among a number of women who received the Medaille de la Reine Elizabeth from the King of the Belgians for the work she had done on behalf of Belgian soldiers and refugees who escaped to Britain during the First World War.

Five years later, John and Lavinia Bernasconi marked their Golden Wedding by donating the window showing Christ being baptised by John the Baptist, flanked by Saints Simon the Zealot and Jude, found on the south wall of St Marie's bookshop, which was, at that time, the church's baptistry.

When John Bernasconi died in May 1930, the Sheffield Daily Telegraph reported: "Although his parish church was St Wilfrid's, he was chiefly associated with St Marie's. He was a great benefactor of that church and was associated with the

philanthropic work of Catholics in many ways. The high position which he and his wife occupied in the Church was indicated on the occasion of their golden wedding, five years ago, when they received a telegram of congratulations from the Pope."

Both John and Lavinia Bernasconi were major benefactors to Catholic causes across Sheffield. In his will, John Bernasconi left a total of £2,325 (equivalent to £155,890 now) to Catholics.

Lavinia, went on to fund the entire building costs for the Sacred Heart church at Hillsborough, in addition to commemorating her husband's life by paying for the alabaster statue of a Guardian Angel.

In 1936, Lavinia Bernasconi, by then aged 87, was guest of honour at the unveiling of a marble statue of Blessed Julie Billiart, the foundress of the Notre Dame congregation at the school, where she had been the first pupil.



The Bernasconi Angel commemorating the life of John Bernasconi, beside the Norfolk Chapel.



# Scripture Focus

By Fr Jeremy Corley



## The Joy of God's Word

Many people have a favourite Scripture passage, such as the 23rd Psalm: "The Lord is my shepherd." A beloved Scripture text can give us consolation when we feel downcast and wisdom when we are perplexed.

The prophet Jeremiah felt the joy of discovering God's word for himself: "Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart" (Jer 15:16). On the Sunday of the Word of God (23rd January), we will hear how God's word brought joy to the Jewish people after they had returned from exile. Men, women, and children gathered at a public square in Jerusalem, and Ezra read to them from the first five scriptural books (Neh 8:2).

The people heard the story of how God created the world, but it was spoilt by human sin. They heard of how patriarchs and matriarchs grew in their knowledge and trust of God. They heard how God rescued their ancestors from

Egyptian slavery. And they heard Moses' call to the Israelites to follow God's law.

As the people listened to Ezra reading the Torah, at first they were filled with sorrow. They realised how far they had fallen short by not keeping God's teaching, and they started to weep.

But their attentiveness to Ezra's reading of Scripture was a sign that they wished to make a new beginning. So Ezra told the people that this was a sacred day, when there was no need to be mournful. Since they were responding to God, this was a day for celebration: "The joy of the Lord is your stronghold."

Just as Ezra's reading of Scripture led to joy for the Jews in Jerusalem, so Jesus proclaimed good news to the people in the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:16). When he was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, he found a passage offering hope: "The Lord has

sent me to bring good news to the poor, to set the downtrodden free, and to proclaim the Lord's year of favour" (Isa 61:1-2).

Luke's Gospel goes on to narrate the joy experienced by those who welcomed Christ, such as the tax collector Zacchaeus. The poor rejoiced when they heard his teaching and saw his miracles, just as Mary rejoiced with Elizabeth when they were both expecting their promised child.

Luke's second volume (the Acts of the Apostles) also tells of the joy experienced by many early converts who heard God's word, such as the Ethiopian eunuch. Luke also reports the transformation that occurred in the life of Saul, who became Paul.

On 25th January we celebrate the conversion of St Paul. From persecuting Christ's followers, Paul became a great apostle and witness. His life was turned around when he

encountered Jesus speaking to him personally.

Paul tells of the transformation in his life: "Whatever gains I had—I have come to regard these as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil 3:7-8).

In these months of pandemic caution, it is not so easy for us to gather as freely as the Jews in Ezra's day or the people of Nazareth in the time of Jesus. Even so, we have access to the same Scriptures that brought joy to those people of biblical times.

The enforced isolation caused by COVID can give us an opportunity to develop our familiarity with Scripture. We could simply read the Mass readings for the day and ponder on them. If you do not have your own Missal, the daily readings are available online ([universalis.com/mass.htm](http://universalis.com/mass.htm)). Scripture offers us great treasures. Let us read and discover for ourselves.

## Synod Icon

Joseph is a regular attendee at St Marie's Cathedral, often to be found at The Rosary, and evening prayer as well as at Mass. He has been delighted with the beautiful icon displayed at and since the opening service at St Marie's Cathedral on 17 October for the start of the Synod. Synod representatives, parishioners & visitors will also have seen the beautiful icon donated by a generous benefactor of the cathedral for the synodal journey Hallam Diocese is undertaking with the universal church.

Joseph refers to it warmly as "Our Lady of the Synod" and for him, it is a reminder & an encouragement that Mary "Mater Ecclesia" journeys with us on our synodal journey. He is grateful for this encouragement in the process of getting everyone to participate on this synodal journey towards becoming a "listening church". Joseph says admiringly that the parish representatives Candida & Onesmus along with the parish synod team soon set about engaging the parish in the synod process, resulting in synodal initiatives notably a group of multi-lingual,



multi-cultural parish listeners to assist with the synodal encounters. Joseph is confident in the maternal intercession and patronage of "Our Lady of the Synod" as the synodal process goes forward, the Diocesan phase formally ending in April 2022, but the fruits of the synodal journey available to nurture the whole Church into the future.

**Have you got an icon that holds a special significance for you or for your parish? It would be good to have some stories about icons in the Hallam News in the New Year. If anyone feels moved to offer a story, please do get send it in to [hallamnews@hallam-diocese.com](mailto:hallamnews@hallam-diocese.com)**

## Words to live by...

“

"Mankind is a great, an immense family. This is proved by what we feel in our hearts at Christmas."

**Pope John XXIII**

“

"Christmas is built upon a beautiful and intentional paradox; that the birth of the homeless should be celebrated in every home."

**G.K. Chesterton**

“

"Christmas is most truly Christmas when we celebrate it by giving the light of love to those who need it most."

**Ruth Carter Stapleton**

“

"Probably the reason we all go so haywire at Christmas time with the endless unrestrained and often silly buying of gifts is that we don't quite know how to put our love into words."

**Harlan Miller**

“

"The birth of Jesus brings us the good news that we are loved immensely and uniquely by God"

**Pope Francis**



# NIGHTSTOP SOUTH YORKSHIRE – DEPAUL UK

By Mark Preston, Nightstop co-ordinator

I work for Nightstop South Yorkshire which is part of Depaul UK, a national youth homelessness charity. The first Nightstop started in Leeds in 1987 after the Archbishop of Canterbury's Faith in the City report.

Nightstop provides emergency accommodation for people who find themselves without a safe place to stay in the homes of volunteers. Through this, often same day, intervention of providing a 'safe night' we are able to work with other support agencies to secure more permanent accommodation.

As an organisation we rely on volunteers to provide a safe place for young people. Nightstop Hosts are volunteers who provide a private room in their own homes for Guests to sleep in, a warm meal, access to washing facilities and are available to talk, should the Guest wish to do so; many

are simply exhausted from their trauma and just want to take the opportunity of a safe place to sleep. We provide all the training a volunteer needs to accommodate a young person, with any additional, specialist training that may be required.

All young people are subject to thorough background checks to make sure Nightstop and the volunteer are comfortable accommodating them. Being a Nightstop Host is a flexible commitment, volunteers may offer anything from one night up to a whole week of accommodation and can change this on a week to week basis.

During the COVID-19 pandemic Nightstop adapted to ensure that we could still offer safe places to those who needed it and manage the risks around transmission of the disease. Demand on all homelessness support services is very high and we



want to ensure that the Nightstop service reaches as many people as possible by increasing the number of hosts we have available in Sheffield.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and if you need any further information or should you come across anyone who you find to be in need of accommodation

For further information please go to <https://uk.depaulcharity.org/nightstop/>

*This article is an extract from Dr Paul Dixon's forthcoming book, The Road Pilgrim. Over the coming months we shall be publishing extracts. For more details, email: [info@theroadpilgrim.com](mailto:info@theroadpilgrim.com)*

## The Road Pilgrim Journeys

### Journey beginnings:

Why do we drive, ride or walk? Why do we do anything? In tapping into our inspiration for starting a journey, what will we find? We might be travelling to work, visiting family, going on holiday, or enjoying a solitary walk—yet a common thread underpins all our journeys, both on the road and along the highway of life. We want to be happy!

Are you happy? Could you be happier? Aquinas taught that when we choose what makes us truly happy it leads to God; but when we choose what does not make us truly happy it leads away from God. Is God at the beginning of your journeys through life?

### Journey planning:

You are going on a journey so you work out a route. You might circle places on a map, marking points along the way to your planned destination. Things, however, rarely go to plan. Roadblocks make you take a diversion, weather conditions slow you down, and other road users may bump into you, perhaps even try to force you off the road. Yet, without some sort of plan, one's journey would be aimless. It is the same with life; we need a plan, but a flexible one. Where are your marked circles as you contemplate your journey through life? The roadblocks on life's highway that frustrate your plans by taking you on detours may actually turn out to be the roads God wants you to travel. Be patient and have faith. In the

future, you will be better able to discern the hand of God, the hand of love, at work in your current present.

What is your true heart's desire? What are you truly passionate about? Is your heartfelt desire/passion helping you circle-dot the map of your future life? Jim Manney, S.J., explains that a key insight of Ignatius of Loyola was that in discovering what we really want, we thereby discover what God wants for us, since God places these desires in our heart.<sup>1</sup> This truth applies to everyone, yes, everyone, including you!

As a child, I loved doing numbered dot-to-dot pictures, keen to discover the image that lay hidden. I often struggled to find the next dot, and sometimes got them out of sequence. Yet by the end, I could usually make out the image—even if a little distorted through my mistakes. In following the mapped dots of our life's unknown, we journey in trust, knowing we will get some of the dots wrong. Nevertheless, by following our passion, our heart and pursuing what we really want, we will have sketched upon the canvas of life a portrait of our true self, the person God wants us to be.

### Journey or pilgrimage:

On the pilgrimage of life, journey and destination coalesce. By walking with God, the pilgrim lives 'thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'. God's kingdom of love is both a future



perfect reality and a present imperfect reality. 'Run when you can, walk if you have to, crawl if you must but never give up' is a popular inspirational quote. It applies to the spiritual life too. Never giving up is great advice, but remember the spiritual journey will require changes to routes already taken if they are not now, or perhaps never were, leading to the God of love.

The gravestone dash (—) between date of birth and date of death, reminds us of the importance of making the most of life—your dash! 'The Dash' poem by Linda Ellis addresses this very point. On a pilgrim's tombstone, the dash functions more like an arrow (→), pointing the way through death's door to one's heavenly destination → the God of love.

### Journey homeward:

Homeward bound! Finding one's vocation brings a sense of coming home, a belonging, a sense of doing what you are supposed to be doing. Where is the path of love leading you? Who are you? In calling you home, what is the God of Love asking you to begin, to continue, to complete?

<sup>1</sup> Jim Manney SJ, What Do You Really Want (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 2015).

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# The Church becoming synodal

## Part 2: The preferential option for the poor and the way forward by Cardinal Michael Czerny SJ

**Following his discussion of the way in which the language and practice of synodality has shaped the life of the Church in recent years, Cardinal Michael Czerny SJ considers how such a framework for relating to the gospel supports a preferential option for the poor. The future life and mission of the Church must be grounded in a prayerful listening to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth, which Pope Francis himself models.**

The ‘preferential option for the poor’ is conveyed strongly by the Prophets and in Matthew 25 and is expressed, in similar words, in the first sentence of **Gaudium et spes** (GS, 1965): ‘The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.’ (GS §1, emphasis added) It became a focus of the 1971 Synod, ‘Justice in the World’, and St John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI mainstreamed it into Catholic Social Teaching. If it is a hallmark of this papacy, it is not as a novelty but due to the vigour with which Pope Francis embraces its implications for proclaiming the gospel. Let’s see how the ecclesiology of communion, and collegiality and synodality play essential roles in implementing the option.

For Francis, the Church’s preferential option for the poor (**Evangelii gaudium** [EG] §48) follows the overwhelming logic of the Incarnation of the Word. Likewise, it flows from what the Word, Jesus Christ, taught us, in word and in deed, about the poor. Accordingly, the Church must recognise in this predilection the fundamental prerogative of the service of charity. The pope specifies that this is not a sociological preference but a properly theological one, because it leads back to God’s saving action: ‘Without the preferential option for the poor, “the proclamation of the Gospel, which is itself the prime form of charity, risks being misunderstood or submerged by the ocean of words which daily engulfs us in today’s society of mass communications”.’ (EG §199)

Furthermore, it is not an expression of a naive ‘do-goodism’, which takes shape in some activity, or a sort of a proclivity, but without actually representing an essential characteristic of the life of the Church. Rather, it must be recognised as an integral part, not only of the gospels, but also of the process of ecclesial transformation desired and initiated by Vatican II. The Council Fathers, in fact, recognising in the history of the least and the derelict a ‘sign of the times’, argued that the Church was called to pass from a charity of welfare handouts where the poor are reduced to mere ‘objects’ of care, to recognising them as ‘members’ of the People of God and ‘subjects’ of their own liberation.

In the encyclical **Fratelli tutti** (FT), among all the situations of fragility that characterise today’s social fabric and require an urgent response, the pope places at the forefront the emergency faced by refugees, migrants and internally displaced people, otherwise defined as the emergency of ‘borders and their limits’ (FT §129-32). Everyone in the Church and society is called to ‘welcome, protect, promote and integrate’ those who, for

various reasons, are forced to leave their homeland, renouncing ‘their right not to emigrate’ (FT §38,129).

This means passing from a conception of society in which the stranger is discriminated against to an understanding of social coexistence in which full citizenship is guaranteed to all. Rather than ‘implementing welfare programmes from the top down’ (FT §129), it is necessary to offer effective and concrete possibilities for integration: granting visas, humanitarian corridors, access to essential services and education, religious freedom (FT §130).

The words of Francis, therefore, lead us back to the awareness with which Vatican II recognised, in the need to favour the poor, an appeal of the Holy Spirit to convert both the intra-ecclesial structures and the very way of relating to the gospel (**Lumen gentium** [LG] §8; GS §1). Granting the poor a privileged place among the members of the People of God (EG §187-96) not only means recognising them as privileged recipients of evangelisation but considering them as its subjects, its active agents.

Evangelii gaudium encourages all the baptised to consider the encounter with the poor as a favourable opportunity to allow themselves to be evangelised by Christ (EG §121,178). The contours of the distinction between the evangelisers and the evangelised are blurred: ‘We ought to let others be constantly evangelising us’ (EG §121,174). The poor are also evangelisers because, as members of the People of God, they have much to give and much to teach (EG §48). As Francis told the poor members of grassroots movements, ‘to me you are social poets because, from the forgotten peripheries where you live, you create admirable solutions for the most pressing problems afflicting the marginalized.’

Encouraging the faithful to start again from the peripheries – not only the geographic but also existential ones – takes many forms. It can mean attention to social injustices and the personal sufferings of those in desperate situations – pain, poverty and misery. It can mean to take on everything in Matthew 25 and the rich tradition of the works of mercy. It can mean to appropriate the complex richness of the Amazon Synod’s single theme, ‘New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology’, with its two elements intrinsically interdependent and linked.

From the Church’s vocation expressed in LG and its synodal path flow evangelisation, human promotion in all its forms and care for our common home. And when this new way of engaging the problems of the human family (EG §30) is taken up vigorously, as a matter of essence and necessity, the Church is helped to decentralise and impelled towards the peripheries. The Church, the People of God, should walk together, taking upon itself the weight of humanity, listening to the cry of the poor, reforming itself and its own action, first by listening to the voice of the humble, the anawim of the Hebrew Scriptures, who were at the heart of Jesus’s public ministry.

We can regard all this as a hermeneutical key that informs and redefines the synodal practice. It becomes necessary ‘to put all things in a missionary key’ (EG §34) and to

adopt a multidimensional model of ecclesial and social unity (EG §234-37), reflecting a renewed intra-ecclesial and ecumenical sensitivity.

The reform that Francis invites us to accomplish works if it is ‘emptied’ of every worldly logic, that is, of the ideology of change as much as the ideology of staying put. The world values the ability to do things or to effect change institutionally always and everywhere and whenever. The reform encourages everyone to discern times and opportunities of ‘emptying’ so that the mission makes Christ shine through better. Now, when Francis calls ‘all Christians’ (EG §3) and ‘every person’ (Laudato si’ [LS] §3) ‘regardless of where he or she was born or lives’ (FT §1), to assume the responsibility summed up in ‘concern for the vulnerable’ (EG §209-216), he directs his attention not only to ‘poor’ people and also to the ‘poor’ earth.

Becoming sensitive to the ‘cry of the poor’ enables us to hear the cry of ‘sister earth’ (LS §1). Francis insists on the relationship between care for the environment and attention to the poor (LS §49), and he returns to it with ever greater clarity in **Querida Amazonia** (QA §52) and in his catecheses from August and September 2020. The connection between the poor and the environment allows us to focus on how the future of all humanity is intimately linked to that of the environment, and hence protecting the interests of the weakest coincides with safeguarding creation. ‘Everything,’ as Laudato si’ proclaims, ‘is connected’ (LS §16, 91,117,138,240).

Listening to the People of God, listening in them to the cry of the abandoned poor and of the maltreated earth, makes it possible for the Church to avoid the danger of projecting a preconceived scheme onto reality. The mistake occurs when, intent on reform, the Church pursues some ideal project which comes from desires, even good ones, which vehicle self-centredness. Were it so, it will end up obeying yet another merely ‘worldly’ ideology of change. When the Church accompanies the poor in their liberation, they in turn help the Church to liberate itself from the risks inherent in her own institutionalisation.

How to make synodality grow in the Church The fundamental challenge that the synodal process poses to the Church’s life is that of a renewed understanding of ‘communion’, understood in terms of ‘inclusiveness’ of all the components of the People of God, especially the poor, under the guiding authority of those whom the Holy Spirit makes pastors of the Church, in such a way that everyone can feel co-responsible in the life and mission of the Church.

But how can synodality grow in the Church? Surely processes of conversion, that is, of ‘discernment, purification and reform’ (EG §30), need to get going so that everyone can acquire and internalise the principles of a spirituality that is open to ‘inclusive’ communion rather than a spirituality limited to seeking individual perfection. Without a real conversion in our ways of thinking, praying and acting, without an effective metanoia which involves a constant expansion of mutual acceptance,

the externals or means of communion – the synodal ecclesial structures that developed from the conciliar event – could prove insufficient for achieving the purpose for which they were established.

The pope does not have prefabricated ideas to apply to reality, nor an ideological plan of ready-made, prêt-à-porter reforms. Rather, he advances on the basis of prayer and spiritual experience that he shares step-by-step in dialogue, in consultation, in concrete responses to so many human situations of vulnerability, suffering and injustice. This is, as St Ignatius would say, his ‘way of proceeding.’ Francis is establishing the structural conditions for real and open dialogue. These are not pre-packaged institutional improvements, nor armchair strategies for obtaining better indicators or statistics.

Maybe we still have a long way to go in understanding this deep reform of our institutional existence as followers of Jesus gathered in the Church. There is much more to understanding the semper reformanda Church in relationship with the times – including the current pandemic – in which we are living, trying to put together and appreciate the local, national, regional and continental Church, not to mention how, with hope, to imagine the future of Christianity.

Evangelii gaudium is written ‘to all the members of the Church with the aim of encouraging ongoing missionary renewal.’ (LS §3) Such reform consists in the never-ending synodal and evangelising conversion of each member of God’s People and of God’s People as a whole.

In her synodal life, the Church offers herself, deliberately, in diakonia or service of promoting an economic, social, political and cultural life marked by fraternity and social friendship. The priority undertaking and criterion of every social action of the People of God is to listen to the cry of the poor and that of the earth (LS §49), urgently recalling, when determining society’s choices and projects, the fundamental principles of the Church’s social teaching: inalienable human dignity, the universal destination of goods, the primacy of solidarity, dialogue aimed at peace and care for our common home.

The encouragement of Pope Francis, that ‘the Synod of Bishops must increasingly become a privileged instrument for listening to the People of God’ (EC §6), is at the same time a prayer and invocation: ‘We ask the Holy Spirit to grant the Synod Fathers the gift, first of all, of listening: to listen to God so as, with him, to hear the cry of the people; to listen to the people so as, amongst them, to breathe in what God wills and calls us to.’

Let us pray, then, for whoever has responsibility in the Church, for whoever is involved in religious life, in Catholic education and in other services, to receive the same graces: to listen, to walk, to serve.

**Cardinal Michael Czerny SJ is Under-Secretary of the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.**



# In-work poverty 'blights the lives of children and young people'

**"I worry that when I grow up, I won't find a good job, and that if I find a job that doesn't give me much money, I will be poor and homeless"**  
... Boy, 10

The apprehension and fear of a generation has been laid bare in a new report compiled by the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) on the effects of in-work poverty on children and young people.

The report pulls together existing research on in-work poverty and captures the voices of some of the children and young people the volunteering organisation supports through its Mini-Vinnies groups, as well as those of the SVP volunteers, staff and St Vincent's community support centres who help people living in poverty every day.

Stealing futures – In-work poverty and its impact on children and young people shines a light on "one of the most daunting silent issues facing the UK today", with the impact on children and young people often going undetected and ignored.

The report quotes a recent Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) study on the rise of working poverty which suggests the trend has been growing under successive governments since 2004. The IPPR study found that rates of poverty in working households increased to a new high of 17% in the first quarter of 2021, equivalent to more than one in six households.

The SVP report also points to a shift in welfare policy over recent decades to one which focuses on work as the main route out of poverty. However, the SVP suggests this is

only possible if "work in today's Britain is adequate, provides a fair wage and sufficient flexibility."

While acknowledging that unemployment levels were lower than expected when the pandemic first hit, and that wages are rising in some sectors, the SVP report highlights that "the reality is that rising housing costs, low wages, unaffordable childcare costs, compounded by growing inflation and the pandemic are leaving a rapidly growing number of working households in poverty."

At the end of 2020, the Trussell Trust reported a spike in the number of people using foodbanks for the first time. This has been corroborated by the SVP's frontline services across the country. The SVP report also quotes figures from the Office for National Statistics which state that as of April 2019 there were over 4.2 million low-paid jobs in the UK; equivalent to 6% of all jobs. The SVP suggests that "with working-age adults making up approximately 60% of the UK population, addressing in-work poverty should be a priority for policymakers."

In Spring 2021, the SVP ran a listening exercise across the country to speak with children and young people, aged between seven and 17, and their teachers to understand their personal experiences of living in, or supporting, households affected by in-work poverty.

"Growing up in a household experiencing in-work poverty has a deep and lasting impact on children," comments SVP National President Helen O'Shea. "The experiences of

the children and young people we heard from were striking. Many spoke about the extreme hardship of having to be almost entirely isolated due to Covid restrictions, and how that led to mental health issues, anxiety and a deterioration in their physical health. Many children were also aware of the pressure on families living on low incomes who are struggling to afford food and digital equipment for school."

Helen O'Shea continues: "Of major concern is the fact that many of the young people we spoke with expressed a real fear of not being able to find a 'good job' which would allow them to be financially stable and 'not homeless'."

The report found that children as young as seven were very aware of the importance of achieving good grades to get a 'good job'. The report notes that while this demonstrates ambition, it also reveals the very real anxiety increasingly expressed by younger children in terms of financial stability and employment. It also displays their real concern about ending up in low-paid employment and about their fear of homelessness as a result.

The SVP report points to the much-anticipated Employment Bill as "a good opportunity to put in place measures aimed at tackling in-work poverty." The SVP has set out three policy approaches to tackle the blight of in-work poverty for adults and children alike, including provisions which ensure employees have access to suitable working arrangements such as flexible working from day one, and secure work arrangements which prohibit zero-hour contracts.



The SVP also suggests that high childcare costs are one of the compounding reasons for low-income households falling into poverty, and it calls for an extension to free childcare provision. The SVP is also calling for a stronger social security safety net, including the re-instatement of the £20-per-week increase in Universal Credit. The widespread adoption of a Real Living Wage would also address in-work poverty, suggests the SVP.

Helen O'Shea concludes: "We believe that charity is not the solution to in-work poverty. We need a strong commitment from the Government to tackle this hidden crisis, including policies to tackle insecure work, the high cost of childcare and low wages. These measures will go some way to improving the quality of life and the opportunities for children and young people, and ultimately the health and prosperity of the nation. In the meantime, the SVP will always be on hand to support people in poverty of any kind through kindness and dignity."

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CRYPTIC Across

- 1 Carol's flooring instructions for college residences? (4,3,5)  
8 We take any duo at random to get to Number One (3,3,1)  
9 Name removed from material in the Greek market place... (5)  
10 ...a meeting place for Romans of the Foreign Office to drink (5) 11 What 7 may have been doing in 1521 is fasting? (2,1,4)  
12 Delusion from Nicotiana Hull put out... (13)  
15 ...is moonlike, almost a nervous disorder that makes one mad (7) 17 The hard bit in the slush of a family film (5)  
19 Prepare to study something unknown (5)  
20 Blame every gremlin that comes to the fore (7)  
21 Heroine's holiday, an apocryphal tale according to some? (4,2,6)

CRYPTIC Down

- 1 Final judgment maybe Sunday? (3,2,3,4)  
2 Bird-song's heavy with dog about to get rook... (5)  
3 ...a bird from S America with a mouth most can face (7)  
4 One who makes cuts with one leading reservation? (6-2-5) 5 A graduate gets a question on a Jordanian port (5)  
6 Pope number twelve is embraced by a great one (3,4)  
7 Hitler, Truman considered, was one revolting chap (6,6)

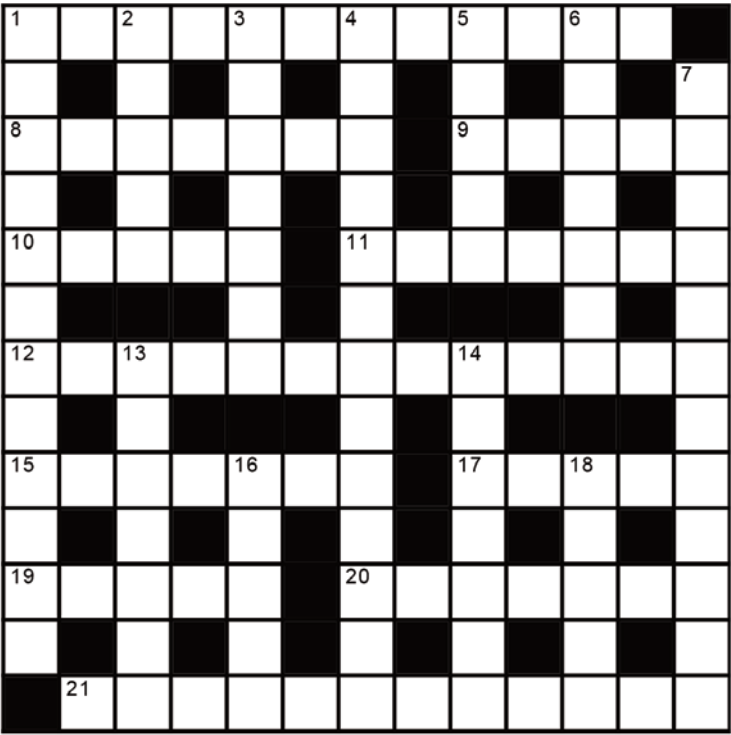
- 13 Issues stock (7)  
14 Takes senior policeman to see distressed pets (7)  
16 Secret meeting in Coventry's team-room (5)  
18 Alternatively you can turn up at a church to carp (5)

QUICK Across

- 1 Welsh carol (4,3,5)  
8 We! (7)  
9 Greek meeting place... (5)  
10 ...and a Roman one (5)  
11 Fasting (7)  
12 Trip; delusion (13)  
15 Madman (7)  
17 In anatomy, part of a structure resembling a horn (5)  
19 Prepared; waiting (5)  
20 Charge a public official (7)  
21 Section of the OT Jerome moved out of sequence in his Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible (4,2,6)

QUICK Down

- 1 Another term for Judgment Day (3,2,3,4)  
2 Trill bird- or insect-sound (variant spelling) (5)  
3 Inconspicuous South American bird with proportionately small wings (7) 4 Newspaper leader writer (6-2-5)  
5 Jordan's only port, on the Red Sea (5)  
6 Pope, 795-816 (7)



- 7 German theologian at the forefront of the Reformation (7,5)  
13 Ancestry, genealogy (7)  
14 Receives; admits (7)  
16 Clandestine meeting (5)  
18 European fresh-water fish (5)

SOLUTION

Across: 1 Deck The Halls, 8 You and I, 9 Agora, 10 Forum, 11 On a diet, 12 Hallucination, 15 Lunatic, 17 Cornu, 19 Ready, 20 Impeach, 21 Rest of Esther. Down: 1 Day of the Lord, 2 Churr, 3 Tinamou, 4 Editor-in-chief, 5 Aqaba, 6 Leo XIII, 7 Martin Luther, 13 Lineage, 14 Accepts, 16 Tryst, 18 Roach.

Facts and Figures

No one knows what day or month Jesus was born. The earliest evidence for the observance of December 25 as the birthday of Christ appears in the Philocalian Calendar, composed at Rome in 336.

The crew of NASA's Gemini 6A space flight got into the Christmas spirit and made history when they played "Jingle Bells" on December 16, 1965, earning the jolly jingle the Guinness World Record for being the first song ever played in space. Well, as far we know, at least...

The X in Xmas was not originally intended, as some people believe, to "take Christ out of Christmas." The written symbol X was frequently used to represent the letter in the Greek alphabet called Chi (the first letter in the Greek word Christos). In many Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, X abbreviates Christos (Xristos).

The North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) has been tracking Santa's journey around the world since 1958. In 1955, a young child accidentally dialled the unlisted phone number, believing she was calling Santa Claus. The commander on duty saw an opportunity to create a little Christmas magic, and assured the youngster that they would guarantee Santa a safe journey, sparking the idea to track his travels.

In Ukraine, spiders are considered symbols of good luck at Christmas. Families often add spider web decorations to their trees as a nod to a lovely seasonal story about the critters once using their silky string to decorate the tree of a poor widow and her children.

The most valuable Christmas card in the world, sold for £20,000, is "considered the world's first Christmas card," according to Guinness World Records. It "was sent by Sir Henry Cole, a Bath-born businessman, to his grandmother in 1843

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