



**MORE THAN 24 YEARS OF BRINGING THE NOTTINGHAM DIOCESE TOGETHER**

Published by Bellcourt Ltd, N2 Blois Meadow Business Centre, Steeple Bumpstead, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 7BN Telephone: 01440 730399 Editor Nick Layton E-mail [cn@cathcom.org](mailto:cn@cathcom.org) or [davidl@cathcom.org](mailto:davidl@cathcom.org)

## *Gaza Christians: 'Peace – we just want peace'*



**Holy Family Church in Gaza**

A Sister at Gaza's Catholic parish – now caring for more families following the bombing of the local Orthodox church – has made a heartfelt plea for peace.

Speaking to Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) by telephone, Sister Nabila, who is caring for Christians sheltering in Gaza's Holy Family parish complex, said she is extremely worried.

The parish has no electricity or running water and has resorted to drinking water from a well – which they fear could run dry at any time – or bottled mineral water, which costs three times its original price.

Sister Nabila expressed particular concern for around 100 traumatised children they are caring for and who have known nothing but war throughout their lives.

She said: "We just want peace, peace. We have had six wars in Gaza. Children only know war."

Holy Family parish has been providing aid and shelter to wounded and displaced Christians affected by the ongoing violence over the past two weeks – most of whom have lost their homes.

Along with another six religious Sisters and a Catholic priest, Sister Nabila has been working tirelessly to support the almost

700 displaced persons that they are caring for – including 50 persons living with disabilities.

The number of those taking refuge in the Holy Family's complex increased by around 200 after the compound of St Porphyrios Greek Orthodox Church was hit by a missile that killed 18 people.

Among those killed when the Greek Orthodox compound was hit was a teacher who taught at Rosary Sisters' school, where Sister Nabila is principal, along with her entire family.

Other children who had been attending parish catechesis also died.

Despite the shelling, Sister Nabila remains resilient, saying that "staying busy and helping others is the best way to cope with the devastation".

Sister Nabila told ACN that spiritual support for the people is providing hope.

Mass is celebrated twice a day, and people have been constantly praying the Rosary – seeking peace through the intercession of the Virgin Mary.

She concluded: "Peace, peace, we just want peace. There is so much evil, so much suffering. It's terrible. Right now, we only have God."

**Maria Lozano and John Newton**



## MORE THAN 24 YEARS OF BRINGING THE NOTTINGHAM DIOCESE TOGETHER

The monthly paper for the  
Diocese of Nottingham

# Catholic News

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Bellcourt Limited,

**Publication date:** Fourth Sunday of the  
month for the following month. Opinions  
expressed by contributors are not  
necessarily those of the Editor or the  
Diocese.

**Publishers and Owners:**

Bellcourt Ltd, N2 Blois Meadow  
Business Centre, Steeple Bumpstead,  
Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 7BN

Advertising: tel: 01440 730399

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Views expressed in The Catholic News  
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## Wanted Parish Correspondents

The Catholic News is  
looking for a  
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parish to send in local news for  
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All items to be emailed to  
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before 10th of the month



# SVP and Caritas working together to promote change

The SVP joined together with Caritas last month at St Mary's in Derby to present the Diocesan Justice and Peace Assembly. Titled 'A Revolution of Tenderness' the morning session presented an opportunity for those attending to discover Christ in those in need, deepen their discipleship and build a more just and peaceful world. To set the context one needs to appreciate that we live in times when human dignity is being eroded. Families can't make ends meet. Our economy is undermining the common good. Refugees are turned away. We are handing to our children a ravaged Earth. We have lost the art of civil disagreement.

We have it within our hands to make a difference. Time and again, Jesus sought out the humanity in those he met. He revealed their dignity. He worked miracles of encounter and reconciliation. This is the Good News we are called to believe, live and share.

To show how this could be done, Alessandra Sciarra, the Policy and Public Affairs Manager at the SVP gave a presentation on how the Society is working to promote Social Justice. She has involved regular meetings with MPs from all parties to present a consistent message and keep asking the right questions.

Research by the SVP identifies low salaries and childcare costs as major barriers to people finding employment. With limited household income, the greatest pressure is to pay for food, household items and rent. Alessandra stated that 8.3 million are living in 'poverty', with low pay and insecure employment the main drivers for this. Over

2 million people are claiming Universal Credit with little chance of escaping the poverty trap they find themselves in. The number of requests for help to the SVP has increased exponentially with a 45% increase by the end of October 2023 from the whole of 2022; SVP conferences, backed up by resources from National Office are helping more and more families to meet their basic needs. The need for change is obvious.

So why should we campaign for change?

"You must not be content with tiding the poor over the poverty crisis; you must study their condition and the injustices which brought about such poverty, with the aim of long term improvement."

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam

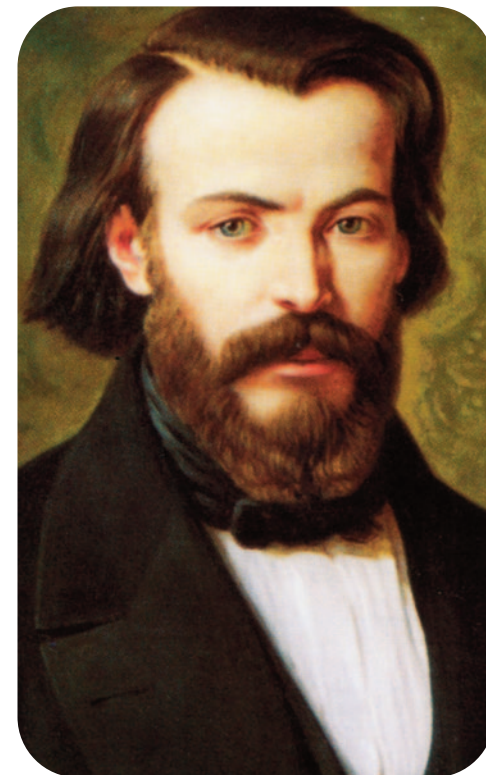
"...As far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life..."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

Catholics, fortified by their faith, can make a difference, particularly when working together. A combined and coherent approach can make 'long term improvements'. Alessandra highlighted the SVP's 4 key policy areas:

- Cost of Living
- In-work poverty
- Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Regional inequalities.

With an election imminent within the next year SVP members along with other Catholic organisations are being encouraged to work together to tell the politicians what they need to hear; the



**Blessed Frederic Ozanam**

message from Westminster is that they are keen to hear what the charities have to say. Alessandra suggested the following 'campaigning' ideas:

- Mobilise numbers to engage with MPs and parliamentary candidates via letter and email.
- Run 'hustings' events to create an 'encounter' where all candidates can be asked the same questions.
- Let the politicians know what is happening in your area with data, research and evidence from the work being done in the community.
- Utilise the media and social media to highlight the areas of concern and what needs to change.

People can make a difference today by deciding to get involved. Get a group together who are prepared to 'take an active part in public life', identify what changes could be made and the right questions to ask. At the earliest opportunity contact the parliamentary candidates and put the questions to them. Attend any hustings events and ask the same questions. Maintain a regular stream of contact to ensure the call for change is loud and clear. Use the Catholic voice to make a difference.

If you would like to learn more about the SVP's Social Justice work please contact Alessandra Sciarra at [alessandras@svp.org.uk](mailto:alessandras@svp.org.uk) If you would like more information about the SVP in the Nottingham diocese please contact Joe Gasan at [joeg@asvp.org.uk](mailto:joeg@asvp.org.uk)

## FRANKLY SPEAKING



Being born in 1944 I have no direct memory of the war years 1939-45. My first knowledge about that conflict came from some hard back books showing vivid black and white pictures of bombed buildings, injured soldiers and wrecked human lives. Little did I realise that all these years later I would witness similar tragic circumstances in full colour through the medium of television which daily inform us of the fractured world in Israel and Palestine.

On Sunday December 3rd the season of Advent commences. Some years ago I well recall my then Parish Priest reminding me the congregation that this was a time for preparation for the coming of our Saviour and not just for the material aspects which can so easily

dominate the coming weeks. This year Advent comes to a conclusion on December 24th. Whilst this will be perhaps a challenge to families with young children it will be a great opportunity to explain the true meaning of Christmas and why the season of Advent is so important.

The references to children and Advent is also a reminder that not all live in the happiest of circumstances. Much has been reported of the tragic consequences of children in war zones. In our own country the need of Food Banks to feed our youngest family members has been well reported by the Trussel Trust. We also have those who sadly seem to be classified at primary school level as "disadvantaged". In early October the National Foundation for Educational Research reported that the

attainment gap between Year 3 and 4 pupils for free school meals and their peers is wider than before the pandemic. So put more simply the children who are poorest are still being left behind in reading and maths.

The Holy period of Advent also encourages us to pray for all who have left the Christian Faith and for those who are suffering. This year sadly the violent conflict so near to the Holy Land should be added to our reflections and if we can, let us send Christmas cards which not only illustrate the Holy Family but also the peace that the world needs.

**Frank Goulding,  
Holy Trinity Parish,  
Newark**



# Journey of Change: A New Way of being a Parish

You may have noticed that due to a reduced number of active priests serving the Nottingham Diocese more parishes are working together or merging under the guidance of one parish priest. This places an extra burden of work and responsibility on the priest and is extra work for any staff and volunteers, so how has The Holy Family Parish in Nottingham managed this change so far?

Our new Parish of the Holy Family was formally created in 2022, merging the former parishes and churches of St Augustine's, Our Lady & St Edward's (both in St Ann's) and Sacred Heart in Carlton; three communities forming a diverse and large geographical area, with three partner Catholic Primary schools. All three churches had already been working together in different ways for several years, so formal merger was a natural progression.

A Pastoral Leadership Team had already been formed, bringing together parish clergy, religious and staff with representatives of all three communities, and a joint PPC had already been meeting for several months. After the formal merger, the most recent change was in April 2023, when we went down to one Parish Priest serving the parish, along with other clergy as part of the Pastoral Leadership Team. We then faced another challenge – to reduce Masses to an achievable schedule for the Parish Priest.

The decision was made by our Pastoral Team and PPC to close the Mass centre in Sneinton, a very difficult decision as there had been a Catholic presence and Mass celebrated in the area for over 80 years. Then we needed to reduce our Masses by another two, so, in April 2023 we went from six Sunday Masses to three. We were worried about the potential loss of congregation, loss of sense of community and also a loss in income. Yes, the process was hard but our initial findings, after 6 months, have been a revelation. The October 2023 Mass count showed that the average attendance over the four weeks was the same as 2022 and our income over the first 6 months... was the same as last year!

Some of our congregation have found a Saturday Mass elsewhere but they are still part of our community and support us in other ways, as we do them, and some attend a weekday Mass and continue on rotas. The churches, with one Sunday Mass in each (no Saturday evening Mass), are even more vibrant communities, all working together, people moving around



**Holy Family Parish: St Augustine's Church, Woodborough Road – Grade II listed building – a gem in the City of Nottingham, embracing the changing face of the Church.**

churches, sharing resources, joining in events, and notably readers and musicians ministering at more than one church. It's great to see full churches – God is definitely present amongst us. Parishioners are making new friends, reviving old acquaintances and there are many more opportunities for people to come together. IT'S WORKING!!!

How did this happen? Our Pastoral Team meets fortnightly, overseeing the parishes areas of liturgy and prayer, catechesis and faith formation, pastoral care and outreach. They deal with the day to day running of the parish and try to resolve any problems. We make mistakes as a team, and so resolve them as a team. The Parish Pastoral Council works more strategically, authorising major expenditure and projects, dealing with buildings, social life and inclusivity. On merger, the finances of the parish were brought together and the Finance Committee keep a close eye on these. Crucial to all of this was the decision taken a few years ago to employ a part-time Adult Formation Coordinator and more recently a full time Community Coordinator. Bringing in professional expertise makes a huge difference to the smooth running of the parish and our ability to creatively engage with the community.

Our Parish Priest's vision; "is that the communities that make up the parish work together to support each other in the daily life of the parish and in having a positive impact on the local area; our churches should be seen as essential places for the local community and part of the wider family of the Church that welcomes people. Alongside our essential Catholic primary and secondary school provision, we have the ability to reach out to and support hundreds of people, so that they become more aware of God's presence in their lives and how belonging to a Church community can make a difference to one's life. A healthy and thriving parish is one in which clergy and lay people work together, so that there is joint responsibility for the running of the parish .... the days of the Parish Priest deciding everything himself are long-gone. Partnership means the priest letting go of some of his authority so that the church is led by those whose church it is."

Why have a Community Coordinator? The role involves all the usual day to day running of the parish and church admin (the list is too long) with added interest in working in the community, meeting representatives from organisations and seeing how we can work together.

Practically, the Parish Priest and Community Coordinator share the same office which is open most days for people to pop in, so we work in unison. Tasks and meetings are dealt with and attended by whoever is available or by both. No two days are ever the same; meetings, discussions, questions, roof leaks in three of our ten buildings, one building with no heating or water but hey-ho, we wouldn't change a thing!! Well, perhaps find a pot of money to fund the extensive essential building and mission work that we have planned. We never stand still.

Yes, it's a busy parish but communication and transparency are key, along with a strong vision and impetus to journey together.

So, a message to those who are about to go through the process or going through the process of merger; trust in the Holy Spirit, embrace the change and find ways to make things work – your community, too, will thrive.

**Diane Williams,  
Community Coordinator, Holy Family  
Parish, East Nottingham**



# Faith Museum in Bishop Auckland

## A must see museum to broaden your understanding of faith

On my first visit to the Faith Museum in Bishop Auckland at the end of October, I was almost overwhelmed at the sweep of the faith-history in the UK. Christianity is a large part of the presentation. But my mind was broadened considerably with the pre-Christian section and gradual growth of our multi-faith society in current times, and the secular challenges to faith, too, which is so much part of today's UK society. It is well worth a visit and I shall definitely be returning soon. One of my favourite images was that of the Virgin Mary wrestling on the ground with the devil – from a 14th Cent. Psalter. I hope that in time the Museum will produce a Catalogue with the full text of the

presentation and photographs of the exhibits. A shop and café as well as spaces to pause and reflect make the whole experience first class.

The Museum is part of the larger Auckland Project, an exciting regeneration project in the area which is gradually going to put Bishop Auckland on the map as an essential tourist attraction – THE place to visit in the North East. If you buy an Annual Pass you gain access not only to the Faith Museum but also to Auckland Castle, various galleries, gardens and parklands. Next time, I'll set aside much more time to enjoy a more leisurely and reflective visit! For more information: [aucklandproject.org](http://aucklandproject.org).

Fr Jonathan Cotton



An exhibition in the faith Museum.



Auckland Castle with the Faith Museum, like a Barn, on the left.

## From: Elston Hermitage.....



Many years ago on a December day 16 year old Gary Schneider and two friends set off on a four day climb of Mount Hood. Nine thousand feet up a snowstorm engulfed the three boys. Soon the snow was drifting over their heads. They tunneled into a snowbank to get out of the driving wind and to sit out the blizzard. Eleven days later the blizzard continued to rage - the boys sleeping bags became wet and lumpy, their food supply dwindled to a daily ration of two spoonfuls of pancake batter each. Their only comfort was a small Bible one the boys had packed in his gear. The boys took turns reading it, eight hours a day. It was an eerie scene, three teenage boys propped up on elbows in sleeping bags in a five foot square cave of snow. The three boys remained huddled together hour after hour, day after day, listening to the Word of God, against a background of howling wind. The Book of Psalms seemed to speak best of the boys situation. David wrote some of them while trapped in situations not unlike the boys

hungry, lonely, not knowing what was ahead, but trusting in God! On the 16th day the weather cleared and the boys crawled out of their snow cave - weak with the experience - a few steps at a time, later that day they caught sight of a rescue party and their long ordeal was ended.

I tell this story, because I believe it gives us a good image of Advent which will begin this weekend beginning a new year in our liturgical calendar.

The season of Advent recalls Israel's long period of waiting for the Messiah Israel could do nothing to hasten his coming, All they could do was wait and pray, as the boys did on Mount Hood. All they could do was trust that God would come to their rescue.

Advent of course is not just a time when we recall and re-live Israel's waiting for the Messiah, Jesus. It is much more than that. Advent is also a time when we recall that Jesus will return at the end of history - at a

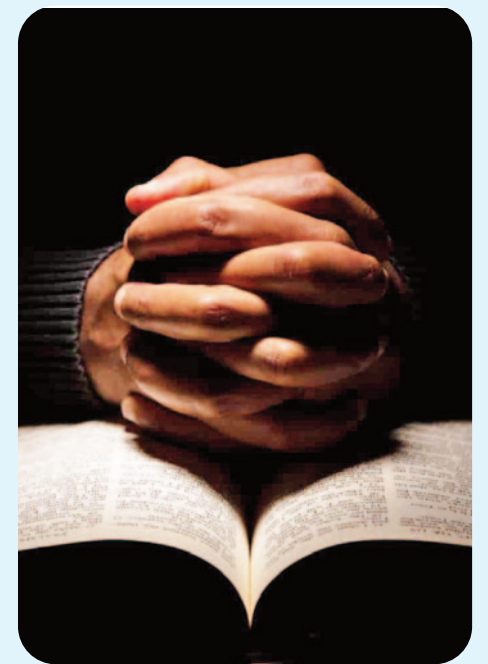
time we least expect, That's why St Mark in his Gospel for Advent Sunday tells us: "Be on watch, be alert.....If Jesus comes suddenly - he must not find us asleep - What I say to you then I say to all: Watch !!"

The second point about Advent is that we live in the important time between Jesus' first coming and his second coming. Perhaps then our job is not to sit and look piously at the sky, recalling Jesus' first coming and anticipating his second coming. Our mission is to complete the work he gave us to do. Before returning to his Father, Jesus told his followers; Go, then to all people's everywhere and make them my disciples; baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to do everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.

Advent is a time to check and see how well we are doing this.

Advent is a time when we call to mind, in a special way, that when Jesus returns he will judge us on how well we worked to spread God's kingdom on earth.

Christ has died - He is Risen - Christ will come again. Until he does, we must be about the work he gave us to do.



The Advent message is - the same Jesus who lived incarnate on earth 2000 years ago, will return at the end of time - at an hour we least expect.

### Are we ready ?

The Advent season hopefully will give each and everyone of us the opportunity to be better prepared Watchful and Alert in prayer!

Have a good Advent.

Fr David + h.d.n. Priest and Hermit



## Over £700 raised for church funds

Following the success of last year's event, the community of St Anthony's at Calverton held their Autumn Fair on Saturday 4th November. It was a very wet morning but that certainly did not put a damper on a wonderful gathering.

The Fair was a huge success. Once again it was a pleasure to welcome many visitors from our neighbourhood and parish as well as from the parishes of the Good Shepherd and Our Lady of Victories.

We all enjoyed the relaxing and warm atmosphere as people chatted over cups of tea and coffee and browsed around the stalls which were beautifully laid out. There were 2 tombola stalls, one for children and one (laden with many bottles) for adults. Both were very popular. We also sold a large number of delicious home baked cakes and savouries.

Many thanks to all who supported this event which was a real team effort. We raised over £700 for church funds.



## Ecumenical service with shared tea

On Sunday 29th October the people of three ecumenically covenanted churches in Chellaston met in St Peter's Anglican Church hall for an ecumenical service with shared tea.

Barbara Rusk of St Ralph Sherwin Catholic community shared a most detailed, historical, personal account of biblical texts which have fed into her daily prayer life.

Barbara stressed that hers was a very personal sharing. That is why she said

she was first drawn to the Psalms, through her love of poetry.

Barbara's final observation rang true to all present that though the study of the Bible is important it will always be secondary to Lectio Divina ——— meeting God through praying Holy Scripture.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. John 1 v 1

**Liz and Terry Spencer of St. Ralph Sherwin Church Chellaston.**

## John Clawson, former Catholic News editor, given award for meritorious service

On 11 November John Clawson, founder and editor of this paper for 24 years, was presented with the St Hugh's Award for meritorious service in the Diocese. The award was presented by Fr Michael O'Donoghue, John's parish priest and the following citation from Bishop Patrick was read:

**It is my great pleasure to bestow upon you the Diocesan St Hugh's Award for meritorious service in recognition of your outstanding contribution to the common good of Catholic educational and community development through publishing.**

**Please accept this small token of our gratitude, on behalf of the Diocese of Nottingham, for your unselfish service.**

**With prayer and good wishes,  
+ Patrick  
Bishop of Nottingham**



**John and his wife Sue with Fr Michael and clergy**

**Photo: Robert Beall**



## Light up Christmas for hundreds of seafarers and fishers.

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

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

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

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





# Scripture Focus

By Fr Jeremy Corley



## Prepare for the Lord's Coming

On the First Sunday of Advent (3rd December), we begin our Advent journey—the Church's countdown to Christmas. In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah asks: "Why, Lord, leave us to stray from your ways and harden our hearts against fearing you? Return, for the sake of your servants."

In numerous parishes, many of our former church-goers have strayed from the practice of their faith, perhaps because they have lost their sense of prayer. During Advent we can beg God: "Lord, bring back the lost and the straying."

The prophet prays for God to show himself: "Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down—at your presence the mountains would melt." Isaiah thinks of how God revealed to the chosen people his majestic power in thunder and earthquake on Mount Sinai, at the time of the exodus. If only God showed himself again like that!

Today we can pray: "Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come

down," to bring peace where there is war and violence, and to bring justice for those living in severe poverty. If only God would show himself, to inspire faith in people who have forgotten him, to bring hope to those in despair, and to bring love to those feeling neglected.

We will only be ready for the Lord's coming if we stay awake, as we are reminded in the Sunday Gospel. At the end time, Jesus will come again in glory, and he has warned us to keep alert.

Using the image of an important traveller returning home, Jesus issues a warning to the house staff: "You do not know when the master of the house is coming—evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn. If he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep."

During the short days and long nights of December, it is easy to feel weary. Festive preparations and Christmas parties can occupy our time. Yet in the Advent season, we hear the counter-cultural call to stay awake.

We are not only waiting for our celebration of Christ's birth. We are also waiting for his second coming in glory. This will be the final reckoning, when he will judge the living and the dead. Are we ready? Many in our society seem to live as if God did not exist.

The call to be prepared resounds on the Second Sunday of Advent (10th December). We hear Isaiah's familiar summons: "Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord." Until now, the red carpet has not yet been laid out, and the location is just a wilderness. Yet God plans to come into this desolate place.

John the Baptist echoes the prophet by calling us to prepare a roadway for the Lord, even in this barren and unpromising place. The wilderness today could be our society, which often seems to have little concern for the things of God. Or the wilderness could be our own hearts, which can sometimes be barren and unproductive.

Isaiah promises: "Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people

shall see it." We look forward to God's glory being revealed, not in a spectacular display of military power, but in a tiny baby, born to save us. The shepherds will behold the newborn Saviour lying in a manger, and they will hear the angels singing: "Glory to God in the highest."

In our own day, we can look forward to God's glory being revealed, when peace replaces war and violence, and when justice comes for those living in severe poverty. God's glory will become visible when faith arises among people who have forgotten him, when hope comes to those in great need, and when love comes to those feeling isolated.

We can pray the Advent hymn to express our longing for the Lord: "O come, O come now, Lord of might, who to your tribes on Sinai's height, in ancient times did give the law, in cloud and majesty and awe. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel."

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## Catholic charity announces new award as part of #RedWednesday



A catholic charity has unveiled plans to launch a new award recognising fortitude and faith in the face of persecution – which will be presented by the papal ambassador to Great Britain.

As part of Aid to the Church in Need (ACN)'s #RedWednesday 2023 celebrations on 22nd November – which are set to include a special evening Mass at St George's Cathedral, Southwark – the charity will be presenting its new Courage to be Christian award.

Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendia, the Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain, said: "It is a great honour for me to be invited to present the first ever #RedWednesday 'Courage to be Christian' award.

"Religious freedom is of the utmost importance and Aid to the Church in Need is doing a wonderful service by honouring those who have shown such extraordinary commitment to their faith in the face of persecution."

#RedWednesday events in London will start at 5.30pm with a gathering in the Cathedral's Courtyard before Mass at 6pm, which will be concelebrated by Archbishop Buendia and Archbishop John Wilson of Southwark.

The presentation of the award will occur at the end of Mass and will be followed by a reception at 7.45pm.

Canon Michael Branch, Dean of Southwark Cathedral, said: "We look forward very much to hosting #RedWednesday here at St George's Cathedral and warmly invite everyone to come and join us to thank God for the life and witness of those who have suffered so much to remain true to their Christian faith.

"The theme of this year's #RedWednesday is the persecuted Church in Africa and I am sure the Mass will have a particular appeal to those with connections to that wonderful continent living in and around Southwark."

In 2022 more than 34 percent of ACN (UK)'s support went to the African continent, where projects, including help for widows and orphans who lost husbands and fathers at the hands of jihadists in Nigeria, have been backed by the charity.

The lead up to ACN's 2023 #RedWednesday events started on Sunday 22nd October when Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme from Maiduguri Diocese in north-east Nigeria led a Rosary service.

ACN is encouraging Catholics to pray 100,000 decades of the Rosary for persecuted Christians in Africa in the run-up to #RedWednesday later this month.

The charity has also launched a £100K4AFRICA challenge calling on individuals, schools and communities to help the charity raise £100,000 for projects by Christmas, with matched funding meaning that every penny donated will be doubled.

Dr Caroline Hull, National Director Aid to the Church in Need (UK), invited everyone to join the Mass and events on Wednesday 22nd November.

She said: "We are very excited about the #RedWednesday Mass and events at St George's Cathedral – a wonderful opportunity to bear witness to the importance of religious freedom and to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with those who suffer just because they are Christian.

"And it is a huge honour that our new Apostolic Nuncio has agreed to lead us by presiding and preaching at the Mass as well as presenting our first-ever #RedWednesday 'Courage to be Christian' award.

"It is amazingly kind of Archbishop John and Canon Michael to open the doors of the cathedral for what will, I am sure, be a fantastic occasion."

John Newton



## Further success for Little Lambs

Little Lambs Baby and Toddler Group, based at The Good Shepherd Church in Woodthorpe, has recently introduced a new initiative called Polly's Storytime. This new reading time for toddlers has been met with great enthusiasm, as Polly, a retired classroom assistant from Margaret Clitherow Catholic Academy in Bestwood, has already captivated the hearts and imaginations of more than 30 children.

Polly's Storytime provides a perfect opportunity for young minds to be immersed in the magic of storytelling. With a selection of captivating books, Polly and her husband David engage the children in interactive reading sessions, fostering a love for books and language from an early age. The sessions are not only educational but also provide a nurturing and welcoming environment for both children and their parents or guardians. The feedback from parents and guardians has been overwhelmingly positive, expressing how their little ones eagerly await each new session.

In addition to the success of Polly's Storytime, Little Lambs Baby and Toddler Group has experienced a significant increase in membership. Since September, more than 100 new families have joined the group, highlighting the positive influence and sense of community it offers. The group's welcoming atmosphere, coupled with the multitude of activities and events, has attracted families seeking a supportive environment for their young children. Little Lambs Baby and Toddler Group also actively engages in outreach work, demonstrating their dedication to making a positive impact on the wider

community. Their recent donation of £60 to the Arnold Foodbank is a testament to their commitment to helping those in need. This contribution will undoubtedly aid the Foodbank in providing essential food supplies to individuals and families experiencing hardship.

In addition to their recent accomplishments, Little Lambs Baby and Toddler Group has received yet another well-deserved recognition. They have been announced as finalists for the much-coveted title of Nottingham's Most Loved Community/Voluntary Group for Baby Toddlers and Parents. This prestigious award acknowledges the exceptional work and dedication of the group in creating a supportive and engaging environment for young children and their families.

The winner of the award will be determined at the Motorpoint Arena on Saturday 4 November. This highly anticipated event is a celebration of community-driven initiatives and will provide an opportunity for different organisations to be recognised for their outstanding contributions.

Little Lambs runs on Mondays during term time, from 10 am to 12 pm and is suitable for babies from birth up to pre-school age. Entry is £5 per family, which includes refreshments, access to Polly's Storytime, and a sing-along at the end.

For more information about Little Lambs, please contact Rebecca Burke, Group Leader, at [little.lambs@virginmedia.com](mailto:little.lambs@virginmedia.com) or visit the group's Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter (X) page.

Cheryl Broodryk



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# View from the Pew

By Dr Jay Kettle-Williams



## Live and Let Live

Hinduism is an Indian religion described as the oldest religion in the world. A distinguished Hindu gentleman, whom I met some years ago, quickly picked up on my amateur but keen interest in comparative religion. He explained that Hinduism evolves by adopting and adapting characteristics which it admires in other faiths. In that way, he went on to explain, Hinduism develops its dharma, the cosmic law underlying the correct behaviour and the ensuing social order espoused by its adherents who will continue, he insisted, to grow 'pan ethnically' in number. At that point I backed off from potentially stumbling onto the geopolitics pathway. However, the Hindus do currently number 1.2 billion or so, constituting some 15% of the global population.

Judaism, on the other hand, is an Abrahamic, monotheistic and ethnic religion, although not necessarily ethnically restrictive. It comprises the collective spiritual, cultural, and legal traditions of the Jewish people. Judaism originated as an organised religion in the Middle East evolving from Yahwism some seven or eight thousand years ago. The Judaism we recognise today retains observance of the Mosaic covenant established all that time ago between God and the Israelites. The current Jewish population worldwide stands at a little more than fifteen million. The Abrahamic group of religions also includes Christianity (with currently some 2.4 billion adherents worldwide) dating back over two thousand years, and Islam (with some 1.9 billion adherents) dating back some thirteen hundred years. All three religions are of comparable ilk

centring as they do around the worship of the God of Abraham, the Hebrew patriarch often mentioned in the religious scriptures of each of these three Abrahamic religions.

To an outsider, to a Hindu holy man such as a sadhu for instance, it must be unfathomable that these three Abrahamic religions, so closely related and with so much in common, have so often been fragmented and at such variance over time in internecine strife ... perhaps that's no more so than over the last one hundred years, yet still ongoing as recent calamitous events attest.

Nobody can but despair of war, particularly of the conflict and horrendous carnage of late in the Middle East, across the very land where Christ was born, where Christ fulfilled his mission, supported by his ever-growing band of disciples, to bring peace and understanding to humankind. Therein lies the sick irony of our Middle Eastern tragedy.

But Hindus and others of faith or none can't fail but recognise the commonality which Jesus represents for those of us actively worshipping within the Abrahamic tradition. Jesus, whether He be hailed as a teacher - as Jews have come to accept - or as prophet - as He is among Muslims - or as the Saviour, to give him his place among Christians, is therefore recognised as a personage common to all. Moreover, Muslims believe that Jesus, apart from being a prophet of God, was born to a virgin (Mary), and that He will return to Earth



before the Day of Judgement to restore justice and to defeat 'the false messiah', the Antichrist.

As of today's date in our Christian calendar, Mary - having shown herself submissive to the will of God - is heavy with child, and we anxiously await the Virgin Birth as the period of Advent moves on.

But this year as in many years previous, Commercial Christmas took root and a firm hold early. Some stores put up trees and other decorations as early as September prefacing Advent by three months, effectively reducing the Christian celebration to a mere act of Mammon. So, when the new-born Jesus opens his eyes, just think what He'll be looking at in our world of today. What will the fresh eyes of an omniscient observer make of things?

Hopefully the forthcoming birth of a teacher, a prophet-cum-saviour will bring those of us in the Abrahamic tradition further focus, new life, a fresh start and renewed hope

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**Dr J L Kettle-Williams is an  
experienced business  
communications consultant  
and wordsmith (tutor,  
writer, translator).**



# Pope Francis: Pray for me! Favourably!



**In The Pope Video November edition, Francis opens wide his heart to admit that he needs the faithful people's prayer to be able to carry out his mission. "Pray to the Lord that he will bless me," the Bishop of Rome states before admitting that "your prayer gives me strength and helps me to discern and to accompany the Church, listening to the Holy Spirit."**

**Here are the Pope's words in full:**  
Pray to the Lord that he will bless me.

Your prayer gives me strength and helps me to discern and to accompany the Church, listening to the Holy Spirit.

The fact that someone is Pope doesn't mean they lose their humanity. On the

contrary, my humanity grows each day with God's holy and faithful people.

Being Pope is also a process. The person becomes aware of what it means to be a pastor.

And in this process, he learns how to be more charitable, more merciful, and, above all, more patient, like God our Father, who is so patient.

I can imagine that at the beginning of their pontificate, all the Popes had this feeling of trepidation, apprehension, knowing that he will be judged harshly.

For the Lord will ask us Bishops to give a serious account.

Please, I ask you to judge benevolently. And that you pray that the Pope, whoever he might be, today it is my turn, may receive the help of the Holy Spirit, that he may be docile to that help.

Let us pray for the Pope, so that in the exercise of his mission, he may continue to accompany in the faith the flock entrusted to him by Jesus, always with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Let us make, in silence, this prayer: your prayer over me.

And pray for me! Favorably!

To watch The Pope Video visit [thepopevideo.org](http://thepopevideo.org)

## Former Faiths Minister says lockdown of churches was "outrageous"

Former Minister of State, Lord Greenhalgh, has told the Catholic Union that the closure of churches and other places of worship during the pandemic was "outrageous".

Lord Greenhalgh, who had responsibility for Government policy on faith and communities between 2020 and 2021, said that "people at the heart of power did not understand faith".

His comments come as the UK Covid Inquiry hears evidence from senior advisers and civil servants about the decisions taken during the pandemic. Last week, former Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Helen MacNamara, told the Covid Inquiry that decision makers had suffered from a "narrow perspective".

Last month, the Catholic Union launched a survey on the impact that the closure of places of worship had on people's lives. Over 700 people have taken part in the online survey so far. The results will shape the Catholic Union's written evidence to the Covid Inquiry.

Speaking to the Catholic Union, Lord Greenhalgh said that places of worship did a "phenomenal job" at controlling the spread of the virus, especially compared to rates of transmission in other settings that weren't subject to the same restrictions.

Lord Greenhalgh's comments add further pressure to the Chair of the Covid Inquiry, Baroness Hallett, to properly consider the decisions around the closure and reopening of places of worship as part of the independent inquiry.

Catholic Union Director, Nigel Parker, comments: "Before Covid, few of us could have imagined our churches being forced to close by law. Yet that is the situation we faced at times during the dark days of the pandemic. The inquiry into the UK's response to the pandemic needs to consider the decisions around the closure and reopening of places of worship, which had such a huge impact on so many people. The Catholic Union led the charge in getting our churches open again, and we're now committed to making sure they are never forced to close again. I encourage everyone to take part in our survey to make sure the voices of Catholic are heard as part of this Inquiry.

To complete the survey search online for Catholic Union Covid Survey.

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# Book Reviews



## Holy Hour Altar Edition

By Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

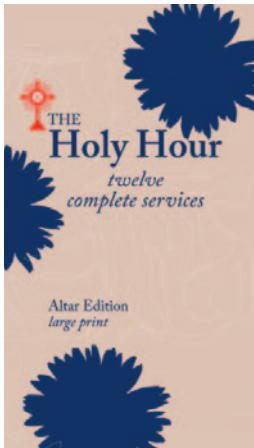
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Product Code: 1790

ISBN NO: 9780852315187

www.rpbooks.co.uk

The Holy Hour: twelve complete services will rejuvenate the Eucharistic Adoration in parishes and encourage a greater love for the mystery of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. It will engender a deeper understanding of the place of the Eucharist in the life of the Church. Includes hymns.



## Called by God: Preparing for my Child's Baptism

(Keepsake)

By Ellen McBride & Sr Margaret Jones

£3.95

Product Code: 1869

ISBN NO: 9780852315576

www.rpbooks.co.uk

Called by God seeks to reclaim the real meaning of baptism as the beginning of a new life in Christ. With scripture readings and reflections, a detailed look at the elements of the rite of baptism, and discussions and advice on raising children to know the person of Christ, it aims to meet parents wherever they are in their own journey of faith. The parents' booklet gives time and space for parents to reflect on the sessions and will act a reminder and keepsake of this time spent preparing for their child's baptism.



"A really good approach to working with parents in preparing for their child's baptism. A very timely, valuable and comprehensive resource for catechists. The reflective and prayerful sessions will encourage parents and catechists to search deeper into the real meaning of baptism."

Mary Crowley, Catechetical Adviser, Agency for Evangelisation, Westminster

"A really helpful pastoral guide to prepare families for the baptism of a child which provides a basis for evangelisation. With real insights into the history and development of the sacrament of baptism, Called by God will be invaluable to those tasked with sacramental preparation."

Canon David Wallace, Director of Pastoral Liturgy, Archdiocese of Glasgow

## Stick with Love

By Arun Arora

£10.99

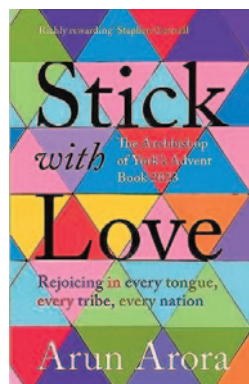
Product Code: 111644

ISBN NO: 9780281089857

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The Archbishop of York's Advent Book for 2023.

Martin Luther King famously declared that 'I have decided to stick with love . . . Hate is too great a burden to bear'. In these luminous daily readings, Arun Arora helps us consider the biblical picture of the Church as the people of God, drawn from every tribe, every tongue and every nation.



Themes of racial justice, hospitality and welcome are explored alongside the stories of saints from across the globe. Beginning with reflections from Isaiah and Revelation, the meditations lead us on to consider the missionaries, martyrs and mystics who light our Advent way.

## Diary 2024 Through the Years with 12 Parables of Jesus

By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R

£7.96

Product Code: 1960

ISBN NO: 9780852316399

This stunning hardback diary features a thought-provoking reflection by Fr Denis McBride on twelve parables of Jesus. Through the parables we learn that inside

the story of our everyday life lies the deeper story of our salvation.



If the parables work, they leave us wondering not just about the dynamics of an interesting story but about deeply personal and social questions we face every day. Parables are not fictional diversions from real life but deliberate probes into the lives we actually live. They call us to think again about how we see and how we behave, to think again about attitudes and behaviour in our community or society that we accept lazily or uncritically. The parables of Jesus make the ordinary important: Jesus speaks out of a theology of ordinariness when he begins his theological thinking with things as they are. Religion is not primarily about special cultic activities or secret wisdom; it is about loving the God who created us and loving the neighbour we find ourselves beside. Liturgy can be left to one side when more important business, like forgiving our brother or sister, is waiting as the real religious agenda.

Our 2024 diary is A5 in size and has a practical full week to view across a double page spread.

Included in the diary is an introduction from Fr Denis, year planners for both 2024 and 2025, key dates and feast days, notes pages, and a ribbon page marker. All of these features make it the ideal faith companion, appointment organiser and thoughtful gift.

## Seeing the Pandemic with Eyes of Faith

Fr Ivano Millico

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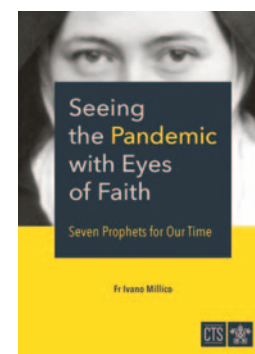
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Fr Ivano Millico looks at the Covid pandemic through a prophetic lens enlisting the help of Saints who have lived through moments of great personal or societal crisis.



So much has been said and written about the Covid Pandemic which has generated more heat than light, criticising the government or the Church and dividing people into believers or deniers.

Fr Ivano Millico looks at the events of the last year through a prophetic lens enlisting the help of Saints who have lived through moments of great personal or societal

crisis. St Therese of Lisieux, Job, St Charles Borromeo are just some of our guides as we search together for what God is saying to the Church and the world through the ongoing Pandemic. These words of hope and warning aim to ensure that this time brings each one of us closer to God and neighbour.

## SYCAMORE: The Catholic Faith Explained

Fr Stephen Wang

£16.95

CTS Product Code: DO944

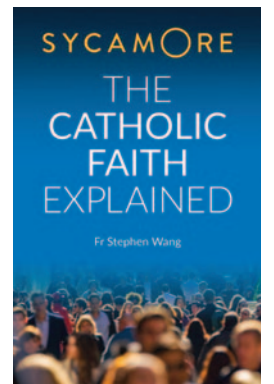
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In SYCAMORE you will find answers to the most common questions about life and faith, whether you want to deepen the faith you already have or are exploring the faith for the first time. Written in a conversational style with beautiful colour images.



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In addition to the essential questions about life, SYCAMORE explains simply the central beliefs and practices of Catholic Christianity. Understand the seven sacraments, the moral and social teaching of the Church, the Christian vocations, the Virgin Mary and the saints, life after death, and the hope of heaven.

Comprising twenty short chapters, SYCAMORE is written in a conversational style, using stories and examples to bring the ideas alive. Questions for reflection are also included, alongside specially selected passages from the Bible, and over a hundred beautiful images.

This book can be read on its own or used by those who are following a SYCAMORE course in their parish or community.



# Pupils and staff at English Martyrs' Catholic Voluntary Academy are celebrating after winning a national sustainability award

The school, in Long Eaton, won the Sustainability award, and £2,500, at the Department for Education's Education Estates Awards.

The school's entry for the awards detailed a number of sustainability projects that pupils and staff have been involved in since 2021.

These include acting as a lead school for sustainability across 25 schools in the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust.

Gemma Ellis, Headteacher at English Martyrs', said: "I am so proud that the school has won this award. It is a real reflection of the amazing work of the staff and pupils on our sustainability journey. To be recognised for the work we are doing with the children to help them understand the world they are part of, starting with our community, just warms our hearts."

Jo Pettifer, Let's Go Zero – Climate Advisor and former Sustainability Lead at the St Ralph Sherwin Trust, said: "The strength of

this project lies not just in the incredible work achieved at English Martyrs' but the way in which inspiration rippled between all SRSCMAT schools.

"I'm privileged to be taking that momentum and energy with me to Let's Go Zero, a charity supporting schools to become carbon zero by 2030. That's a huge challenge but transforming our schools will help safeguard the planet for future generations."

"All SRSCMAT schools are now signed up to receive free advice and practical support from the LGZ climate action advisors, to help us all carry on our award-winning winning sustainability journeys!"

Projects at English Martyrs' include a pre-loved uniform exchange, a drive to minimise food waste, sustainable transport weeks and a Vegan Thursday lunch for staff every week.

Wildflower seeds were scattered in parts of the school grounds to boost bio-diversity and a commitment was made to become a zero waste school by ensuring that hard-to-recycle waste was collected for recycling.



One of the school's biggest projects was creating an eco-garden with funding secured from East Midlands Airport. English Martyrs' was one of eight schools across the Trust which bid successfully for the EMA funding.

The school also created an online action platform which links all 25 Trust schools on an interactive map. To date, 343 sustainable actions have been replicated across the Trust.

## I was a stranger and you welcomed me ...

In the October issue of Catholic News there was an article 'Prisoners Sunday' which encouraged us, as individuals and as parish communities, to reflect on and pray for those affected by imprisonment and drew attention to the work of Pact. Pact, a Catholic charity supporting prisoners and their families, runs a workshop called Just People, created in collaboration with the charity T4CG (Together for the Common Good).

During the zoom workshop, held throughout the year and most recently 25th October, a video is shown of a former prisoner telling of how two different faith communities welcomed him after his release and the effects of their varying attitudes. A small charity called The Welcome Directory is also mentioned on the course, it is an organisation that seeks to assist prisoners who are about to be released find a faith community where they will be welcomed, helping them to integrate back into the community. Support, post release, is recognised as important for reducing reoffending rates. Only twelve Catholic parishes in England

and Wales are registered with the directory, four of which are in our Diocese.

Welcome is an important ministry in any parish and perhaps welcome of people from marginalised groups, such as released prisoners, is something to be considered more intentionally. Pope Francis thinks so. Stigma and fear are still common in relation to those convicted of crimes, not just in society but in our church communities too, even though our Lord Himself was arrested, imprisoned and executed. The workshop covers Scripture and Common Good principles and specifically how they relate to prisoners and their families. After the course it occurred to me, another way to reflect upon those in prison and those walking free is to consider how some actions are deemed illegal and others are not (at least in this particular society and moment in time). Earlier this year the UK parliament voted into law the Public Order Bill, which rendered silent prayer under specific circumstances a punishable crime ... there but for the grace of God!



**"Parishes should be places...with their doors always open to those who are excluded...not a club for the few...Please let us be daring."**

*(The Pope Video, February 2023)*

Approximately 20% of prisoners continue to practice their faith after leaving prison. On Prisoners Sunday, 8th October, a local parish priest mentioned in his homily how he had recently baptised a prisoner into the Catholic Church shortly before his release. One wonders, what welcome did he receive in his new faith community and what welcome would he receive in each of our parish communities? Will he add to the 20%?

The workshop is educational and thought provoking and highlighted how it really is for the common good of any community, for everyone to have a place and for no one to be left behind.

More information about the work of each charity, future events and parish involvement can be found by visiting their respective websites ([prisonadvice.org.uk](http://prisonadvice.org.uk) and [welcomedirectory.org.uk](http://welcomedirectory.org.uk)).



# A midday supervisor is set to retire after over 40 years at St Thomas' Catholic Voluntary Academy in Ilkeston

Pat Attwood first joined the school as a volunteer, reading to children, and then became a midday supervisor.

Although the 75-year-old has finally decided to retire, she is not planning on staying away for long.

She said: "I've been at the school for over 40 years as I first came as a volunteer to read with the children. Then I got the job as midday supervisor, I said I was only going to stop for a little while but I just carried on. It was easy work and the best thing about it is interacting with the children. The dinners have definitely changed, they were much more traditional, like a roast dinner, years ago.

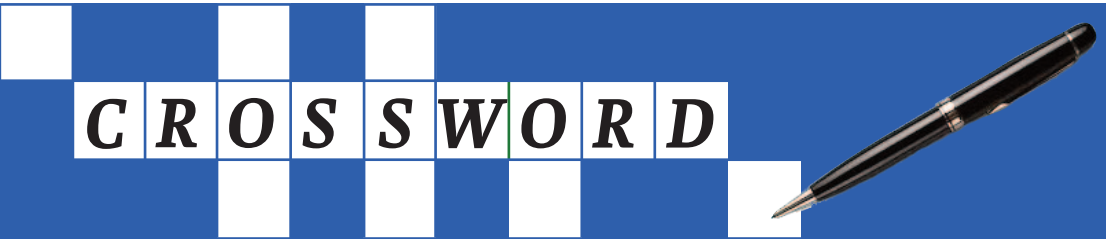
"I am retiring but I will be coming back to read with the children again. I've seen generations of families come to the school. I was here when three current staff members were pupils. My son and daughter came here and they are now in their 40s."



Michael Sellors, Headteacher at St Thomas', thanked Pat for her years of service to St Thomas'.

He said: "After over 40 years as a midday supervisor and volunteer at St Thomas', Mrs Attwood has made the decision to

retire. She has given such great service to school and helped hundreds of children to eat their lunch, administer first aid and supervise play.



You can use both sets of clues to solve the puzzle: the solutions are the same.

**CRYPTIC Across**

- 4 One of the twins seen tucking into Lincolnshire sausages (4)
- 5 British sect's on edge (6)
- 8 Number, including the Queen, he fiddled, so some say (4)
- 9 Subordinate created with care, it's said (8)
- 10 Complex soggy eagle, or a great seabird... (7,5)
- 12 ...low mental age resorting to a noble pastime (4,4,4)
- 13 Headgear of Oregon revolutionary angry medic donned earlier (8)
- 15 Menaham's dad soldier imprisoned today (4)
- 17 Party members after allegations, lose face (6)
- 18 Yeats's land in Ulster, knowledge of the Scriptures will bring it all back (4)

**CRYPTIC Down**

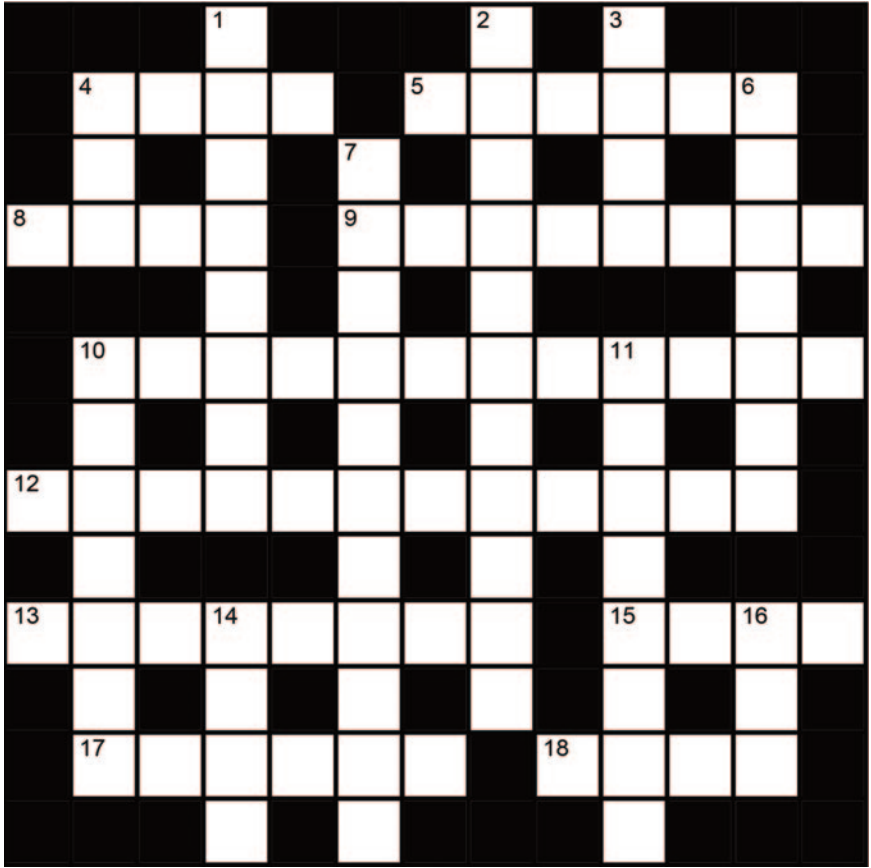
- 1 Nothing in vehicle list is of the age of the new king (8)
- 2 Philistines prevailed here, but Mongolia is free (5,6)
- 3 First family: one on bridge,... (4)
- 4 ...for the other, it's the brink, mate (3)
- 6 Publish again in the matter of offspring (7)
- 7 Neal's Harems: massages for old Assyrian kings (11)
- 10 Push off and lose one's way (3,4)
- 11 Fruit in here has variety enclosed by old railway (8)
- 14 One pub promoted Italian port (4)
- 16 One of twelve in Israel to get higher than black belt (3)

**QUICK Across**

- 4 Isaac's firstborn (4)
- 5 Rim;frontier(6)
- 8 Roman emperor between 37 and 68 AD (4)
- 9 Female domestic servant (8)
- 10 Common seabird of Europe; ancestor of many domestic breeds (7,5)
- 12 Variety of football played at a particular public school (4,4,4)
- 13 Headgear associated with Mexico and SW USA (8)
- 15 FatherofMenaham(4)
- 17 British political party members: Irish RC 17th century outlaws (6)
- 18 Poetic name for Ireland (4)

**QUICK Down**

- 1 Pertaining to two dynasties in 17th century Britain, and one in the 21st century (8)
- 2 Site of King Saul's last stand (5,6)
- 3 Robert ----, Scottish architect and furniture designer (4)
- 4 Verge;threshold(3)
- 6 Releaseoncemore(7)
- 7 Assyrian king, the fifth of his name, who captured Samaria and took the Israelites into exile (11)



- 10 Go away and stay away (3,4)
- 11 Building, greenhouse, associated with fruit (8)
- 14 Italian Adriatic port (4)
- 16 Son of Jacob and tribal ancestor (3)

**SOLUTION**

Across: 4 Esau, 5 Border, 8 Nero, 9 Handmaid, 10 Greylag Goose, 12 Eton Wall Game, 13 Sombrero, 15 Gad, 17 Tories, 18 Erin. Down: 1 Caroline, 2 Mount Gilboa, 3 Adam, 4 Eve, 6 Reissue, 7 Shalmaneser, 10 Get lost, 11 Orangery, 14 Bari, 16 Dan.