

MORE THAN 26 YEARS OF BRINGING THE NOTTINGHAM DIOCESE TOGETHER

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Young Adults Gather in Illuminated Cathedral

The Bishop of Nottingham has appealed to the youth of his diocese, to be "Ambassadors for Hope" while celebrating Mass, during Nottingham's annual Light Night Festival.

During a powerful homily, reflecting on the Jubilee Year of Hope, Bishop Patrick McKinney said: "Pope Francis has especially highlighted the importance of young people - young adults - because as he says they are the joy and the hope of the Church and of the world. And that's why I would like you to think of yourselves not just as pilgrims of hope but also as ambassadors of hope."

An estimated 100 young people from across Nottingham Diocese, congregated at Saint Barnabas Cathedral on Friday February 28, which was spectacularly illuminated for a late-night Mass, in honour of the city's annual event.

Reflecting further on the city's celebration of light, Bishop Patrick told the young adults: "Hope is like a light shining in the dark. Look around you this evening at the light. Hope is like a light shining in the dark, reminding us that God is very much present. Hope is the reassurance that the darkness we all face at times will not overwhelm us if we hold on to and place our trust and confidence in the truth; this wonderful truth that since our baptism, God is always close to us."

This is the third year in which the cathedral has participated in the city-wide tradition, when buildings and streets are illuminated after dark, to showcase Nottingham's landmarks.

Bishop Patrick was inspired to participate, when he learned of a growing tradition in the French town of Lile, where young adults meet at 10pm every Tuesday, for Mass by candlelight at their university's chapel.

Following Mass, there was time for Eucharistic Adoration in which young people were invited to meditate on the Scriptural passage, about the bleeding woman who touches the hem of Christ's garment.



Every young person present, elected to touch the garment, in recognition of their need for Christ's healing in their lives.

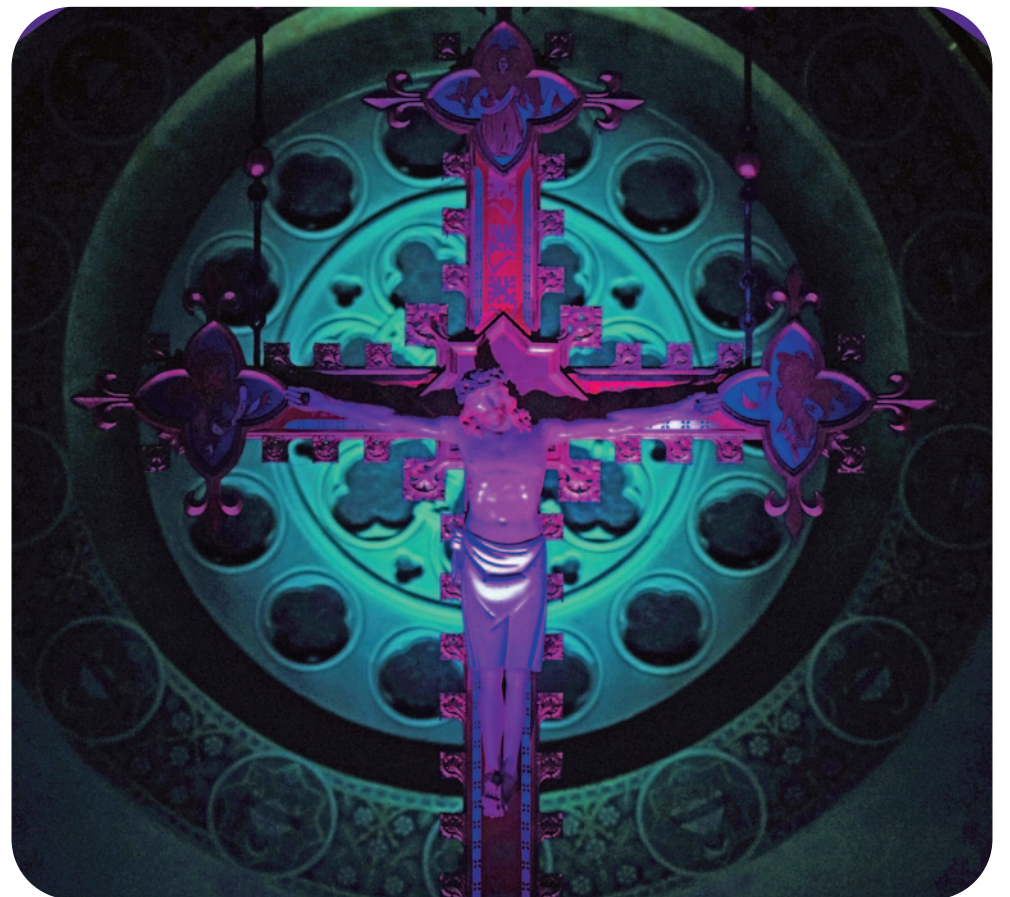
Reflecting on the evening, Charles Archer, Diocesan Young Adult Ministry Lead, commented on how inspiring it was to see every single young person present themselves for healing. "Everyone came forward and dedicated time to kneeling before the Lord," he said. "It was really beautiful."

A young adult, Clement, who attended and helped with the running of the event as an Altar Server, added: "It was amazing! I loved the Adoration at the end, and it was nice to see the cathedral lit up so beautifully."

To find out about more events and opportunities for 18-35 year olds, please contact Charles Archer:

charles.archer@dioceseofnottingham.uk

Photographs courtesy of
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The monthly paper for the
Diocese of Nottingham

Catholic News 

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The One with Four Stories

Thanks once again to Jon Cornwall from the SVP for this article where he offers a reflection on how we might relate to a story we hear from the Bible.

'This is a bit of a dated reference sadly but I promise I am making an important point. In the TV show Friends, which ran from 1994-2004, there was a very interesting naming pattern for each episode. Names included, 'The One With The Race Car Bed', 'The One With The Jellyfish' or 'The One Where Rachel Finds Out' which is not to be confused with 'The One Where Ross Finds Out'. The avid fan of Friends would be able to take that title and suddenly place themselves back in the story, they will know exactly why the race car bed is important, or the jellyfish.

F.R.I.E.N.D.S

Every weekend, or perhaps every day for the especially devout we are introduced to a Gospel reading. I wonder how many lines into that Gospel we get before we borrow the same nomenclature... "One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets Lk. 5:1-2".... if your memory hasn't already kicked in, this one was from "The One Where Jesus Calls Fishermen To Become Disciples".

St Ignatius of Loyola would encourage his community to place themselves inside the Gospel, to imagine the words of Jesus

spoken to you in your context today, to be inspired and affirmed but also to be challenged and emboldened. This cannot happen in the heart of someone who has just rushed to complete the story in their head but instead demands from the listener the capacity to be re-awed by the words. Prepared to find new ways to be inspired by familiar words.

Some years ago I met an ex-nun who was



St Ignatius

committed to say the Lord's prayer and each day she would begin Lectio Divina at the start of the Our Father and pray until she found something to reflect on, or an obstacle to trip over. Then aged 87 she was stuck somewhere around "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done".

For this reflection, on reflecting, I wish to leave you with a number of familiar stories, each from a different season, alongside a potentially new line of reflection.

Matthew 14:22-33 - The One Where Peter Lived Up To The Name Rock - it is easy to think about Peter's failure but how many seconds do you think it had been before he failed, how long after his rebuke did memory of fleeting success become a comfort and confidence?

Mark 7:31-37 - The One Where We Get To See If The Reader Can Pronounce "Ephphatha", consider the human condition here, the more we are told not to do a thing the more likely we are to do so loudly, Jesus knows this about us right?

Luke 5:17-26 - The One Where Jesus Worked Two Miracles On The Same Person - While placing yourself as bystanders in the story, imagine the story now having been the homeowner.

John 2:1-12 - The One Where Jesus Turned Water To Wine - imagine having been one of the servants while the Chief Steward is left flummoxed.

And if we bind them all together, what might we learn? Jesus understands His people, we are invited to see miracles and to take part in them, these stories should shape our lives and be ongoing. Any chance to serve Christ and be changed by so doing should be grabbed with both hands in the moment and reflected on long after our lives have been redefined.

FRANKLY SPEAKING



As we look forward to the great feast of Easter this year it will not be easy to ignore what is happening in the world and our country today. Our young people may or may not make the progress necessary in their education. The world of today concentrates on the successful, those who like me cannot pass exams may well join the increasing number of not in education, employment or training. I was extremely fortunate to obtain employment lasting 40 years in 1960 when we had a Prime Minister telling the country that most people "have never had it so good."

If we compare that period with the present time despite new technology and now AI our most young vulnerable children need extra support in and age when they can easily be led astray. Those in our communities who have Special Educational needs are most at risk of being groomed into criminal or sexual exploitation and serious violence.

This year the controversy over private education as against state schools has been much debated. I do wonder if we have forgotten how difficult a task we have given our teachers in the fast changing world today and let us not forget how they coped in the buildings that were affected by unsafe concrete in the Autumn term of 2023. Let us also never forget to speak up for our Catholic schools who educate our children so well.

In 1970 the United Nations promoted the figure of 0.7 percent of our money should be donated to Overseas Aid. A then young politician late the Foreign Secretary was elected supporting this commitment in the party manifesto of October 1974. To the best of my knowledge the 0.7 figure was not achieved till around 2013. We now have the support of most of our politicians to the reduced amount of 0.3% of our GDP, this is the second reduction in recent years. This latest adjustment is to boost defence spending. I am, I believe well aware of most

of the arguments and can only quote from the resignation of the Aid Minister, "remove food and healthcare from desperate people." Leaders can only make up their own minds.

At the time of writing this article the Holy Father is in hospital and many in the world are praying for Pope Francis. During his historic leadership he has gained the respect of many who also need to follow his concern for the dangerous world in which we live. I close on the message he gave to our young people at the World Youth Day. Speaking to the gathering of 1.5 million at Lisbon in 2023 the Pope said, "The Church and the world need you, the young as much as the Earth needs rain."

A happy Easter to all readers.

Frank Goulding,
Holy Trinity Parish,
Newark

Work starts on the new Church and community hall in Melton

After five long years of planning, preparation and fundraising, Melton Catholics are at last celebrating the start of work on the new church and community hall next to St John's Church on Thorpe End. After the announcement was made last Sunday, members of the church community were on site at 7 am on Monday, waiting for the historic moment when the builders' vans would arrive to start rebuilding a hall on its original Victorian site.

The parish priest, Monsignor Tom McGovern, was also present to give a special blessing for the building site, praying that the hall to be built would help to achieve God's will in the town. He also prayed for the builders, that they would be strong and dedicated in their work. He said, "This is a very historic and a very important event in the history of this Parish. We are once again establishing a Parish Centre on the site where historically we started. But we must not forget that the Bible says, "If the Lord does not build the house, the builders labour in vain." This is not about building a showpiece for the architectural benefit of the town, however important that

may be. Here, now, it is about building the kingdom of God."

St John's Church was built in 1842, when the laws against Catholics were just being repealed, and it is one of the oldest churches in the Catholic Diocese of Nottingham. It was the return of legal Catholic worship to Melton Mowbray for the first time since the reformation and it has remained in use for the same purpose constantly ever since. A hall was built next to it in 1844, and was demolished in 1985.

Frances Levett, chairman of Friends of St John's Church, said, "Many difficulties and problems have been encountered and overcome in the last five years, and we are delighted that work has now begun. It is of course of great historical importance to the Catholic community, but this hall will be a tremendous benefit to all the people of Melton. It will be available for use by the whole community, and will provide benefit for the deprived, elderly and lonely. It will truly be, "A Hall at the heart of the town" and this is a very happy day for all of us. Work is scheduled to be completed before Christmas."



Monsignor Tom McGovern blessing the building site

St Mary's Derby enjoy a night of Barn Dancing

There was an impressive turn out at St Mary's Church barn dance, people arrived keen to get into the swing of the dancing. Plenty of laughter was had along with the jigs and the do-si-do.

Malcolm Jowett was the caller with great music from the 'Celebration Barn Dance Band.'

The evening raised £815 for Church funds, much needed after the lead thefts and damage to the historic stained glass in 2024.

Everyone had so much fun the Church are hoping to make it an annual event."

Fran Hazel



An Uber Delivery

During the period of 23rd - 28th February, Stephen Hoyland, a roving spiritual director from the Jesuit Institute, delivered for the first time in Lincoln, with the assistance of two colleagues, a week long introduction to Ignatian spirituality and guided prayer, called a 'retreat in daily life'. The retreat, although initially aimed at students of the University of Lincoln, was opened out to include parishioners of St Hugh's Church.

Whilst residential and on-line retreats are available through St Beuno's Jesuit Spirituality Centre in Wales, this retreat, brought to your doorstep, is an affordable and accessible way for people, who may not otherwise be able to do so, to make a retreat and discover St Ignatius. Overall, seventeen people, a mix of students and non-students, embraced the ubertastic opportunity presented. The week involved a commitment to thirty minutes of prayer daily, plus a thirty minutes meeting with a trained prayer guide each day. The meeting could either be on-line or in person (at St Hugh's Church or on the universality campus). In addition to opening and closing sessions for retreatants, there were two evening talks open to the whole parish, one on prayer, the other on discernment. Both talks were very informative and worth

attending, even if not participating in the retreat.

From discussions at the closing session, feedback was overwhelmingly positive and for several participants, this time of led prayer proved transformative, with opening up new ways of praying, re-establishing commitment to prayer, receiving healing and rediscovering the presence of God in life and the joy that brings, being just a sample of the fruits. Apart from encouraging prayer and discipleship with God, the experience also brought people together, helping create and strengthen fraternity within the parish community and, in particular, facilitated students and non-students coming into contact with one another in a way that rarely happens but was mutually beneficial. In a similar way, as an ecumenical initiative, a parish could invite a nearby church of a different denomination to take part.

A great success, hopefully this was the first, but not the last, parish based retreat in Lincoln. A massive thank you to Stephen and colleagues for coming to the city and giving generously of their time, expertise and enthusiasm, as well as to the Catholic Students Chaplain, Helen Townsend,



Stephen with colleague, Colette

together with Fr Eddy Jarosz, parish priest of St Hugh's Church, for organising the retreat and making it available to all. For further information about Ignatian spirituality, or if this article has whet your

appetite and you would like a retreat in daily life delivered to your parish, please check out the website: www.jesuitinstitute.org

Jo

From: Elston Hermitage.....



Here at the 'hermitage' daily we follow the Rule of Our Holy Father Saint Benedict. In the 48th Chapter of his rule he suggests that during the days of Lent the brothers should find something extra to read. This Lent we are reading the 2025 Lent book Healing Wounds by Bishop Erik Varden Bishop of Trondheim, a former Abbot of Mount Saint Bernard Abbey. Alongside this we have other spiritual reading which we dip into each day. One of my favourite is the Imitation of Christ by Thomas A Kempis, the author places the cross at the centre of the Christian life, he says "the Cross is at the root of everything, there is no other road to life, to true inward peace, but the road of the Cross"

St. Theodore the Studite the ninth century monk tells us "precious is the gift of the Cross, how wonderful for us to contemplate it."

Pope St Leo the Great told his hearers "true reverence for the Lord's Passion means fixing the eyes of our hearts on Jesus crucified."

The words of the Gospel for the fourth Sunday in Lent tells us "The Son of man must be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life" - an invitation from the Lord himself to contemplate with the eyes of our heart this precious gift of the Cross. The monk Theodore's contemplation of the Cross led him to affirm that "the Cross is the glory of all the apostles, the crown of the martyrs, the sanctification of the saints. It is then by the Cross we put on Christ and cast aside our former self."

Since the Cross is the source of all blessings and the cause of all graces, St Paul declared, "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block for the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, but for those called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Inspired by these words St Augustine exhorted the faithful. "Let us fearlessly acknowledge and openly proclaim that Christ was crucified for us, let us confess it, not in fear but in joy, not in shame but in glory."

These words are then addressed to us Christians today. In our world today the Cross is often a stumbling block, it is still unacceptable to many. The readings the Church sets before us in this season of Lent accompany us along the way of the Cross. On the first day of Lent Ash Wednesday the Lord sets the Cross before us and asked us to choose.

"Whoever would come after me, must deny self and take up the cross daily and follow me."

The Lenten season is then a time to renew our determination to live our lives with responsibility and not let our senses become numbed or even deadened by our lifeless routines or the seeking of an undisturbed comfortable existence. We have the standard of life to follow. That of the Cross. Let us not arrive after the 40 days of Lent and admit we have not done all we hoped to achieve. By the time this article is published we shall be halfway through our Lenten journey, there is no time to be lost!

St Benedict encourages in the Prologue of his Holy Rule; "Let us ask God that he may be pleased, where our nature is powerless, to give us the help of his grace. And if we would escape the pains of hell and reach eternal life, then must we, while we are in this body and can fulfill all these by the light



St. Theodore the Studite

of this life, hasten to do now what may profit us for eternity."

The Rule of St. Benedict written in the fourth century still has a great deal to offer and is very compatible with our world today.

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

The 'Silver Squire of Eastwell' lives again!

Something very strange was happening at the Catholic Church in Melton on the weekend before Ash Wednesday. As the congregation were leaving, one of them said, "I don't think I've ever seen us do anything like this before." Because instead of putting their change into the collection basket, they were all taking coins out of it! What was it all about?

To find out, we must go back to 1855. 170 years ago, the Stamford Mercury carried the obituary of John Exton of Eastwell, the founder of St John's church in Melton, "A man whose unbounded charity for more than half a century obtained for him the appellation of the 'Silver Squire.'" He was well known to all the begging paternity and upon his visits to Melton on market days he was always beset and followed by them. He would not allow them to be driven out of the inn yard wherever he stopped. Being a zealous Roman Catholic, his first business on arrival was to engage in prayer, after which he generally changed from two to four or five sovereigns (Note: in today's value, £275-£700) into half crowns and shillings. He then went into the town and first one and then another would ask him for alms, which were given with his hand placed behind his back. It almost always happened that a woman with a child would get half a crown, therefore, it was a common occurrence to borrow one another's children. This indiscriminate distribution of money used formerly to keep the town and neighbourhood full of beggars of the worst description. His own house was a scene where a multitude of such characters congregated daily, and all used to be relieved with silver. Amidst of this chaos Mr Exton's heart and purse were ever open to the necessities of his neighbours, and his almoner (a faithful servant) has ridden many a mile at all hours to relieve and succour the distressed, particularly the widow and

orphan. Although a strict member of his own church, he never stayed the hand of charity from those who are not so: the distinction of creeds had no influence on his generosity. He was the builder and supporter of two or three schools and the principal contributor to the Catholic course in Melton. Mr Exton was a man very highly respected by his neighbours, and although given to some eccentricity, it may be a long time ere we shall look on his like again.

Melton's current Parish Priest, Mgr Tom McGovern, said, "We Catholics should be rightly proud of this good man. I am sure he is with God." To honour the memory of this kind and generous man, the heritage charity "Friends of St John's church" gave every member of the congregation a silver chocolate coin as they left church. They were very well-received, and not just by the children! Congregation member Catherine Dunn said, "It was very interesting to learn about our history, and the chocolate coins were delicious. They were big too!"

At this very time, work has started to rebuild the hall which John Exton built next to the church in 1844 and which was demolished in 1985. A new hall is being built on the original site and it is intended that this will be a venue for free meals for the deprived. Friends of St John's chairman Frances Levett said, "It's so appropriate that we are doing this in this anniversary year. John Exton would be delighted. We hope that many people, and not just from our own congregation, will be inspired to imitate his generosity and love for the poor."

Offers of help with the meals project are very welcome. Anyone interested can email franceslevett@gmail.com for more information.

Frances Levett



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Blessed Carlo Acutis: Touching the Heart of Wales
 Gwen Wiseman

This powerful symbol of Carlo's deep devotion to the Eucharist resonated profoundly with people of all ages and backgrounds, uniting them in a vibrant Eucharistic revival.

Across the Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menai, opening South and Mid Wales and Herefordshire in England, the recent pilgrimage of Blessed Carlo Acutis elicited a profound renewal of faith among the faithful, especially the young people. Blessed Carlo, a remarkable teenager whose holiness and inspiring life continues to captivate hearts worldwide will be canonized on April 21, 2025 in Rome as the first Millennial saint.

The precious relic-the pericardium of Carlo's heart-was personally brought from Assisi, Italy, by Monsignor Anthony Figliorello, Director of International Affairs for the Diocese of Assisi, accompanied by his dedicated team, Gwen Wiseman, also based in Assisi and Jacqui Stacey, UK Carlo Acutis National Apostolate. This powerful symbol of Carlo's deep devotion to the Eucharist resonated profoundly with people of all ages and backgrounds, uniting them in a vibrant Eucharistic revival.

The pilgrimage opened at the Metropolitan Cathedral of St David in Cardiff, warmly welcomed by Canon Michael Doyle, Archbishop George Stock presided over the opening Mass to a packed church attended by the faithful primarily students from Catholic secondary schools from across the region. During his heartfelt homily, Archbishop Stock recounted Carlo's heritage and his connections to British-born in London in May 1998 and baptised at the Parish of Our Lady of Dolours on the Fulham Road, under the pastoral care of the Servite Friars. He fondly joked that had Carlo's family remained in London, "maybe Carlo would have been a Chelsea fan!" He also revealed an intriguing yet little-known additional fact about Carlo's family ties to the UK-Blessed Carlo's paternal grandparents lived in the capital and were married in Westminster Cathedral in 1963, strengthening further the link between this blessed youth and the British Isles. After the opening Mass, Monsignor Figliorello joyfully encouraged all students "Go home and tell your parents, we met a saint today!"

This opening Mass set the scene for the next four days of prayer, retreat and renewal to the Eucharist. The days were marked by Masses, individual blessings with the relic, Eucharistic adoration, praying the rosary, and multiple opportunities to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation. Throughout the pilgrimage, the faithful were invited to write their petitions to Carlo. Indeed, all the petitions from each place visited were brought back to Assisi and will be placed at the Tomb of Blessed Carlo to continue to ask for his intercession.

Each place of pilgrimage revealed stories of hope and ignited powerful personal testimonies. Students from St David's College, Cardiff shared what Carlo meant to them. One young woman, who had only recently discovered Blessed Carlo, admitted she doesn't often attend Mass but expressed a newfound inspiration to return with her parents to the evening Mass to learn more about this "saint in the making." Others were particularly moved by Carlo's innovative use of technology to evangelize, especially through the website he created on Eucharistic miracles. "He is reliable. He is like us," they remarked. "Not a saint from centuries ago."

A particularly moving testimony came from a 17-year-old who explained he is the only practicing Catholic in his family. Ten months ago he fully embraced Catholicism, deciding to follow Jesus. Now, inspired profoundly by Carlo's example, he is actively discerning a vocation to the priesthood just like Carlo did with his parents; there was a profound sense of the young people becoming beacons of hope to lead their families back to Church.

Continued on page 4

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Polish scouts celebrate world thinking day

at The Good Shepherd Church, part of the parish of St John Paul II, Nottingham



World Thinking Day (Dzien Mysli Braterskiej in Polish) is an international scouting celebration which takes place annually on the anniversary of Robert Baden-Powell's birthday during which over 10 million scouts in 153 countries celebrate scouting; its founders, its values and especially the friendships that bind all scouts throughout the world.

The Polish Scouts in the UK are no different. This year's celebrations of the "Mazowsze" and "Wroclaw" Districts (i.e. Polish Scouts in the Midlands) took place on Sunday 23rd February 2025 at The Good Shepherd Church in Woodthorpe, part of the Parish of St. John Paul II, Nottingham.

Polish Scouts from all over the Midlands came together to celebrate. The day started with Mass in the presence of the relics of the patron of the Polish Scouts, the Blessed Stefan Wincenty Frelichowski aka, "Wicek"

and was celebrated by a special guest. Father Artur, who is a Chaplain for the Polish Scouts in the U.S.A. and who brought a uniquely scouting feel to the Mass.

Lunch was prepared by the Nottingham Parents' Circle followed by activities led by the young people. The day ended with a traditional "kominek" (campfire singalong) where, accompanied by guitars the scouts sang many of their songs and took part in their favourite dances.

The day was especially meaningful for the Troupe as, after 6 years of leading the Mazowsze District, Kasia Miqda passed the roll of District Commissioner on to Jola Maczkiewicz.

Kasia was thanked for all her hard work and will be greatly missed.

Fr Philipp Ziomek



Scripture Focus

By Fr Jeremy Corley



The Dignity of Christ, the Merciful Martyr

On Palm Sunday (13th April) we hear the long gospel of Jesus' passion and death according to Luke. Whereas Mark emphasises the horror of the cross, where Jesus is abandoned by his twelve disciples and seemingly forsaken by God, Luke focuses on the dignity of Christ, who patiently accepts his suffering to fulfil God's saving plan.

Luke's account highlights Jesus' mercy towards his enemies, because he prays for their forgiveness. Jesus also shows mercy towards his weak disciples, who will later be restored when Simon Peter strengthens them.

At the Last Supper, Jesus commends his disciples for having stood by him faithfully—even though they will soon abandon him. Jesus warns that they will be sifted like wheat, but his prayer for Simon Peter will enable him to strengthen the rest of them—yet only after he has first denied his Master.

Luke's description of the Gethsemane scene is noteworthy. Whereas Mark focuses on how the disciples could not stay awake when Jesus was praying in the garden, Luke makes an excuse for them: they were sleeping because they were overcome with sorrow. Moreover, God's mercy towards his Son is evident during his agony. When he is sweating blood in his prayer, an angel from heaven comes to strengthen him.

Soon Jesus is arrested and taken to the high priest's house. Meanwhile, Peter is outside warming himself by the fire, where he denies Jesus three times. At this point, Luke mentions a poignant moment, when "the Lord turned and looked at Peter." No words are exchanged, but Peter knew that Jesus was right to say: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." Peter's weeping led to a change of heart for him.

When Jesus is sent by the Roman governor Pilate to be questioned by the local king

Herod Antipas, he says nothing, but perhaps he is praying for his persecutors. At the end of this questioning, Herod Antipas and Pilate make up their differences and are reconciled.

At the end of his trial before Pilate, Roman governor makes a clear statement: "I have found in him no crime deserving death." Luke highlights the innocence of Christ, who bravely suffers unjust death as a martyr. The murderer Barabbas is released, but the peacemaker Jesus is led out to be crucified.

Luke reports the distress of the women of Jerusalem, who are pained to see what is happening. Even at this stage, Jesus shows concern for them. He warns them that when Jerusalem is later attacked, they will be weeping for themselves and their children.

From the cross, Jesus begs God to pardon his executioners: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And he

utters words of forgiveness for the violent criminal being executed alongside him, who begs: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." The man hears the merciful reply: "Today you will be with me in Paradise."

Luke emphasises the dignity of Christ who dies as a martyr. As he is dying on the cross, he prays: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." His prayer shows that he has accepted the will of his heavenly Father, right to the end.

Even with this terrible death, we hear of one of the Jewish authorities who disagreed with the decision to have Jesus eliminated. After Jesus has died, Joseph of Arimathea gets permission from Pilate to take down the body from the cross and to give Jesus a decent burial before sunset. The holy women also see the tomb where Jesus is buried. This will become important on Easter morning.

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View from the Pew

By Dr Jay Kettle-Williams



Blood will out?

Judas Iscariot intrigues me, and for reasons even preceding his arrival on the scene.

Gaius Julius Caesar was born one hundred years before Christ. Christ may well have known about Caesar and the Ides of March, a time associated with misfortune and doom - around 15 March in our Gregorian calendar - when Caesar was assassinated in 44 BC. Christ may well have learned of the assassination and of Brutus' hand in the deed but the term 'Et tu, Brute', as popularised in the play Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616), may not have so readily come to His mind. Brutus had been seen as a supporter of Caesar. So, who was to know that he had it in him to do what he did? What resentment he must have harboured and let fester in his heart, resentment which was to bind him to the other conspirators.

Judas Iscariot, just as Christ and the other disciples, was a subject of the Roman Empire which Caesar had helped to develop and consolidate. The name 'Iscariot', perhaps being a descriptor of some type, defies any firm consensus as to its meaning or significance. Could it refer to a personal characteristic, place of provenance or a group identity as is the long-established practice here in the UK and elsewhere? A probability proposed in some quarters is that Judas was Ish Keriath (→ Iscariot?), a 'man from [the town of] Keriath' of the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:25-27). But of the life of Judas before the appearance of his name in the lists of the apostles absolutely nothing is known.

I am certainly no Bible scholar, not by a long chalk. However, when it comes to Judas' character, some maintain that he could have been a sort of Barabbas, a bit of a brigand, on the reflection that not all the disciples came from backgrounds deemed whiter than white. So, is what Judas did by betraying Jesus any indication or reflection of his character? The existentialist argument that we are the sum of our acts could hold firm at this point. On the other hand, Judas, irrespective of his true nature,



could have been simply trapped in and trapped by inevitability, a hostage to the destiny with which, as Jesus recognised, Judas was going to comply: 'What you are going to do, do quickly' (John 13:27 JB).

Judas couldn't have been a totally bad guy, surely. After all, Jesus had picked him to be one of the twelve, the group reputedly symbolic of the twelve tribes of Israel which were named after the 12 sons of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. According to biblical texts, Jacob (also known as Israel) was chosen by God to be the patriarch of the Israelite nation. His twelve sons form the patriarchs for the twelve tribes of Israel. Listed oldest to youngest those sons were: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin. According to the Hebrew Bible or Tanakh also known in Hebrew as Miqra, the tribe of Judah, and to which Judas would have belonged, was the first tribe to take its place in the Land of Israel where it was to be found in the southern region. It was a member of that first tribe who was then destined to betray Jesus and subsequently to commit suicide.

Judas' fate, however his suicide was prompted and administered, could have been down to his character or otherwise dictated, forced upon him by circumstance. Was it to atone that he tried to return those

pieces of silver? Albeit an oblique reference to 'nature or nurture', we are surely faced with a dilemma: are we looking at Judas' remorse for the inevitable deed he was to commit or his despair at the predicament he had been obliged to create, figuring so prominently in the ensuing scenario?

One thing is for sure: without Judas as a major actor, crucial in triggering Jesus' path to crucifixion, the Easter story of resurrection as we know it would not be there for us.

So, Happy Easter to one and all!

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

Heading for Rome, on a Jubilee Year pilgrimage

In mid February, Father Eddy, Deacon Kevin and over twenty parishioners, from the Catholic churches in Lincoln, ranging from preschool to retirees, set off in the early hours of a Monday morning, heading for Rome, on a Jubilee Year pilgrimage. The next few days provided a jam packed itinerary, combining spiritual sustenance with historical sightseeing, together with socialising over pizza and gelato! Like a flock of sheep, by name, we were called, led, fed, rounded up and protected by guide Giorgio, aided by his dulcet tones and his son. New sights and places of refreshment and restoration abounded and nothing was too much trouble for him. With his help, we escaped clergyman's knee and successfully navigated the bus system, avoiding perilous fines (other passengers were not so fortunate). Whilst with over 900 churches in the city, we were never far from the dwelling place of the Lord.

Before the trip, many looked forward to seeing a different good shepherd, Pope Francis, at the Papal Audience, however his hospital admission meant that was no longer possible; instead we had to settle for a sight of his portrait in a roundel at the Basilica of St Paul Outside The Walls. Despite the cancellation of the Papal Audience and daily anxiety about his health status, Giorgio adjusted the timetable as necessary and a good time was still had by all. The highlight of the pilgrimage differed from person to person and for some it was impossible to pick only one, but walking the route up to and through the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica, led by Giorgio carrying a pilgrim cross and ending at St Peter's tomb was a special and unforgettable experience.

After a wonderful week, home and normal life beckoned and we returned, refreshed and strengthened in faith, hope and charity, with Giorgio on our mind! We thank the Good Shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ, for



providing for us, through the pilgrimage. A big thank you also to Giorgio for being our guide (his caring presence and good humour each day are missed) and to Father Eddy for making the pilgrimage happen. Moving forward, we continue to hold each other and our Pope in prayer; may the Good Shepherd carry, strengthen and comfort him (and all of us) with His presence.

Mr Bailey



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Lessons in Democracy

The Good Shepherd parish and School have always had close connections with our Local Civic Authority of Gedling Borough Council, with the school regularly responding to invitations to visit the Civic Centre and Council Chamber.

This was expanded recently when the The Good Shepherd School enjoyed a visit from our local Member of Parliament, Mr. Michael Payne MP. Michael had previously been deputy leader of Gedling Borough Council for many years until his recent election as MP for Gedling. Michael enjoyed a morning in the school, highlighted by sharing a full School Assembly. The children were fascinated by his explanation of the work of a Member of Parliament and fired many questions as they engaged in a lively discussion with him. Our thanks to Michael for his time in a busy schedule for sharing his experience and supporting our children in their Citizenship programme as they journey toward the future.



St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy has been graded Outstanding by Catholic schools' inspectors

The school, on Broadway, Derby, underwent its Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection, which is the national framework for the inspection of Catholic schools, over two days in January 2025.

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school, Catholic life and mission, religious education and collective worship were all graded Outstanding.

Inspectors said: "Pupils enjoy coming to St Mary's school and appreciate all that it has to offer. They are happy, confident and secure, relishing their environment close to nature, fully embracing the Catholic identity and mission of the school."

The report said that Executive Headteacher Amanda Greaves had driven her vision for St Mary's to outstanding outcomes, with an unrelenting focus, through a difficult period in the school's history.

"She (Mrs Greaves) has been fully supported by the commitment of the leadership team, staff and governors," inspectors said.

St Mary's original building, on Broadway, burnt down in October 2020 and pupils and staff were based at St James' House, on Mansfield Road, Derby, from April 2021. They moved back to a new biophilic school – the UK's first – on Broadway in December 2023.

Pupils' behaviour was described as excellent and relationships between them "very good."

Inspectors said: "Leaders ensure it (the curriculum) meets the needs of different groups of pupils, conscious of the diversity that exists. [Pupils] work with independence and sustained concentration, collaborating easily and productively with one another. They produce high quality work, that is well presented. They show an innate curiosity in their studies and are actively engaged in their work."

"They actively participate in the Catholic life of the school: they display understanding of their sense of worth, valued as made in the image and likeness of God. Pupils have an easy acceptance of each other."

Understanding of the school's mission statement was praised and the impact it has on the school community was highlighted.

Inspectors said: "The school mission statement, the mission prayer and the SPIRIT expectations have a significant impact within the school community: they are deeply rooted in the Word of God, and give clear expression to how the school must live out its daily activities. Staff commitment to the mission is absolute, and their enthusiasm and commitment to the Catholic mission is plain to see."

The school's welcoming culture was noted by inspectors who said: "A culture of welcome has been firmly established, embracing whoever comes to the school. The excellent behaviour of pupils is a result of the impact of the consistent modelling of staff members, significantly influencing relationships across the school. The pastoral care of pupils shows a concerted commitment to serve the most vulnerable, and this is outstanding."

Amanda Greaves, Executive Headteacher, said: "I am delighted to share our pride in achieving an Outstanding grade from the Catholic Schools' Inspectorate. This recognition is a testament to the dedication, hard work, and commitment of our staff, leadership team and governors, all of whom have worked tirelessly to ensure our school provides the very best education and nurturing environment for our pupils."

"The report highlights our pupils' happiness, confidence, and strong sense of belonging within the school community. It is especially rewarding to see our shared Catholic values and mission being embraced so fully by everyone at St Mary's. As we continue to build on the incredible progress made in recent years, I am incredibly proud of what our school has achieved through strong partnerships with parents, the parish, Trust, Diocese and the wider community."



"Our focus on providing a curriculum that is inclusive and meets the needs of all pupils, alongside the strong pastoral care we offer, underpins everything we do at St Mary's. We remain committed to ensuring our school is a place where everyone is welcome and every pupil can thrive academically, socially and spiritually."

"I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this success, and I look forward to seeing our school continue to flourish."

The school's positive culture was highlighted, along with pupils' behaviour

Pupils' education was not disrupted at a Derbyshire school which was split across two sites for almost six months due to RAAC, according to Ofsted.

Inspectors visited St Edward's Catholic Academy, in Swadlincote, in January 2025 and said that the school had taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection. The school was previously judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

In September 2023, Years 3 to 6 at St Edward's had to move temporarily to their partner secondary school, Blessed Robert Sutton Catholic Voluntary in Burton, while pupils in nursery to Year Two remained at St Edward's.

The move followed a Government announcement about issues in schools where Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) had been identified.

Pupils and staff were reunited back at St Edward's in February 2024 after a mix of horizontal and vertical props were installed across the school.

The school has been placed on the Government's School Rebuilding programme, which means that it has been deemed eligible to be added to a list of schools to have one or more blocks rebuilt or refurbished.

Ofsted inspectors said that leaders had successfully navigated a difficult period for the school.

"They have ensured that pupils' education has not been disrupted and have continued to make improvements," they said.

The school's positive culture was highlighted, along with pupils' behaviour.

The report said: "This is a caring school, where pupils are happy and safe. 'The Edward's Path' defines the school's family ethos. This is understood by pupils and acted on by all. Pupils speak proudly about the school virtues, 'True Mind, True Heart and True Spirit'. They appreciate how qualities such as friendship, citizenship and service, guide their journey through school. Pupils understand that these qualities help everyone in school to 'live well' and 'be a good person'.

"The school's positive culture encourages pupils to behave well. Pupils show kindness and love to each other and are clear that everyone is welcome."

Inspectors said that the school has high expectations for all pupils and that pupils work hard and enjoy their learning.

"The school has made positive improvements to the quality of education for pupils. The curriculum is carefully sequenced, with progression from the early years and coherent links between subjects. High-quality books enhance subject content. Activities for pupils are relevant and interesting," the report said.

According to the report, the school makes sure that staff subject knowledge is secure so they can teach the curriculum effectively.

"Children make a positive start in nursery, where staff support them to listen attentively. In reception, staff help children grasp letter sounds quickly. The school provides appropriate support to those pupils who need help with reading to keep up. Pupils, including children in the early years, achieve well," inspectors said.

The school identifies and meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the report said. Arrangements for safeguarding were also said to be effective.



Classrooms were described as "studious" in the report which also said that pupils show positive attitudes and concentrate well in class.

Headteacher Kay Methven said: "We are delighted that the report recognises the sustained improvements within St Edward's, especially during the ongoing significant challenges regarding the building. The report celebrates our school and its ethos, highlighting the high quality of education provided and the pride pupils

have in being part of our school and living out the virtues they are taught."

Kevin Gritton, Chief Executive of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust, said: "This report recognises the tremendous amount of work done by staff during what has been an incredibly challenging period for the school due to RAAC. We would like to thank staff for their dedication, pupils for adapting so well and parents and carers for their understanding. Congratulations to everyone at St Edward's on this wonderful report."

Pope Francis – Thank you

Text prepared by the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters,

In this Sunday's Gospel (Lk 6:39-45), Jesus makes us reflect on two of the five senses: sight and taste.

With regard to sight, He asks us to train our eyes to observe the world well and to judge our neighbour with charity. He says: "Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother's eye" (v. 42). Only with this gaze of care, not condemnation, can fraternal correction be a virtue. Because if it is not fraternal, it is not correction!

With regard to taste, Jesus reminds us that "every tree is known by its own fruit" (v. 44). And the fruits that come from man are, for example, his words, which ripen on his lips, since "for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks" (v. 45). Rotten fruits are violent, false, vulgar words; good ones are the just and honest words that give flavour to our dialogues.

And so we can ask ourselves: how do I look at other people, who are my brothers and sisters? And how do I feel looked at by others? Do my words have a good flavour, or are they imbued with bitterness and vanity?

Sisters and brothers, I am still sending you these thoughts from the hospital, where as you know I have been for several days, accompanied by doctors and healthcare professionals, whom I thank for the attention with which they are taking care of me. I feel in my heart the "blessing" that is hidden within frailty, because it is precisely in these moments that we learn even more to trust in the Lord; at the same time, I thank God for giving me the opportunity to share in body and spirit the condition of so many sick and suffering people.

I would like to thank you for the prayers, which rise up to the Lord from the hearts of so many faithful from many parts of the world: I feel all your affection and closeness and, at this particular time, I feel as if I am "carried" and supported by all God's people. Thank you all!



I pray for you too. And I pray above all for peace. From here, war appears even more absurd. Let us pray for tormented Ukraine, Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Myanmar, Sudan and Kivu.

Let us entrust ourselves confidently to Mary, our Mother. Happy Sunday, and arrivederci.

+ Pope Francis

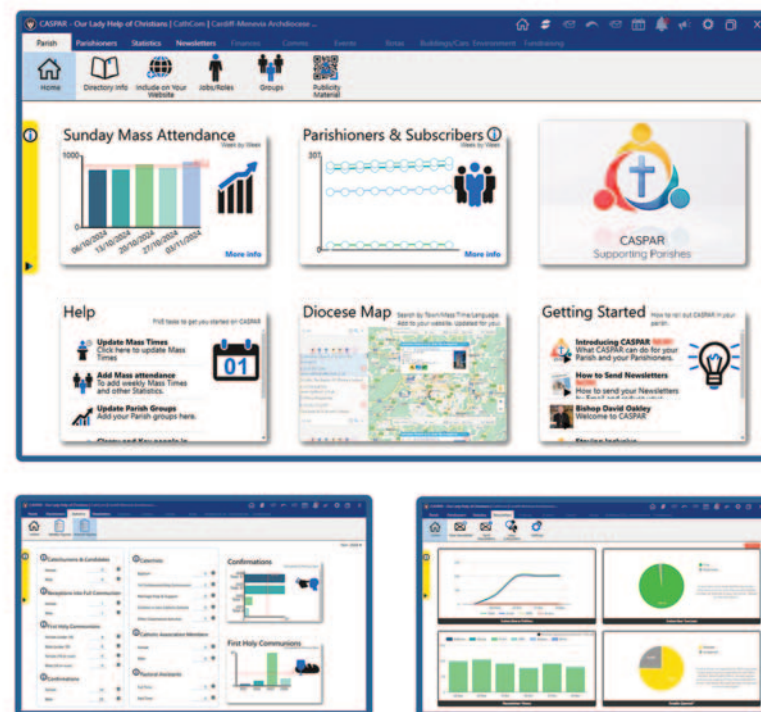
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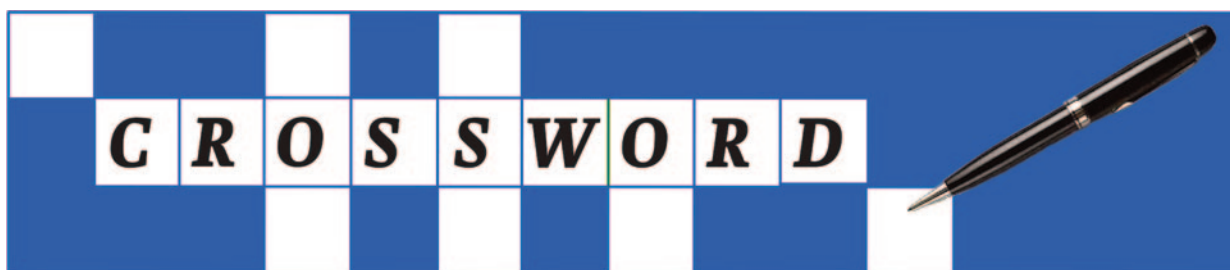
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You can use both sets of clues to solve the puzzle: the solutions are the same.

CRYPTIC Across

- 7 Henry tracks Tolkien's mine to reach Solomon's temple (6)
- 8 Awful creature! (6)
- 9 Acre in Alaska's fine, in retrospect, for Hebrew port (4)
- 10 He came back after nudge, one by a spirited lass (8)
- 11 This book's dull...also cut (7)
- 13 Irish saint's oddly evoking good old Exodus (5)
- 15 She, unfaithful to the prophet, married raver, it's going round (5)
- 16 Occupation Ulster's withdrawn from, coming to an end (7)
- 18 Psalm setting, before/after? - a tight one (8)
- 19 Spring fast with hospital department appeal ending (4)
- 21 One of Cain's descendants turned bad in Paris, taking 17's heart (6)
- 22 Unwanted buildup of swabbies, one on top of the other (6)

CRYPTIC Down

- 1 City that's ultimately shabby, on the other hand is the capital of Kosovo (4)
- 2 Some versions have this chap meeting Jesus in hero's temple in error (5,3,5)
- 3 Guy retired after return of writer's block (7)
- 4 Doctor regularly looks into muscles - they used to read a lot from them (5)
- 5 Hear old priest's moving 'Hallelujah' (6,3,4)
- 6 Someone Paul addressed after show, one decked in brown (8)

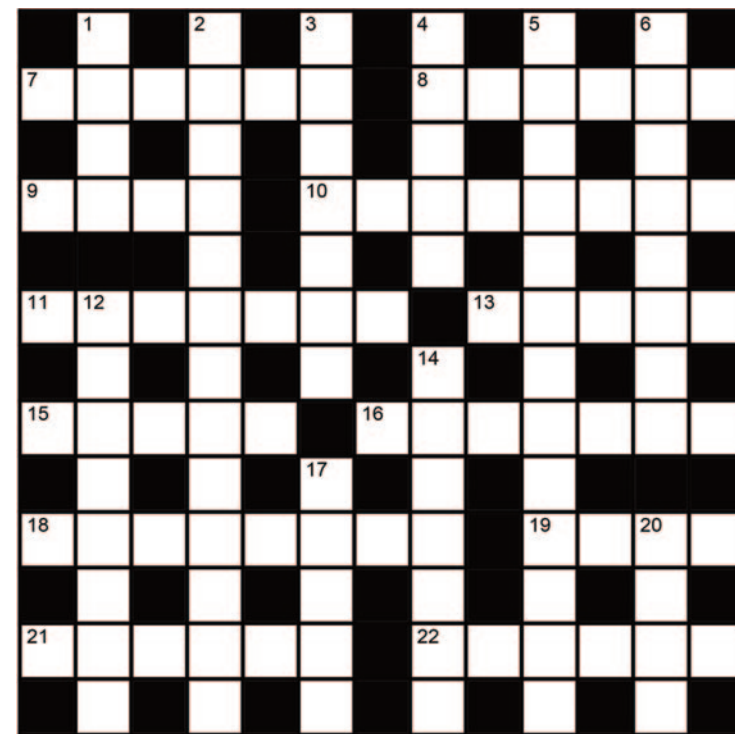
- 12 Oxford guy, a leading chap, who's been to Mecca to get David's boy (8)
- 14 Graduate is, with anger over race, wearing a clerical head covering (7)
- 17 New report supports pharaoh who killed Josiah (5)
- 20 Arkwright's circle is embraced by revolutionary dynasty (4)

QUICK Across

- 7 Mountains where Abraham was told to sacrifice Isaac (6)
- 8 Deadly; subject to death (6)
- 9 Variation in spelling of Acre in the OT (4)
- 10 Infamous son as described in Jesus' parable (8)
- 11 One of the Synoptic Gospels (7)
- 13 St ----- of Glendalough, Co Wicklow, d 618? (5)
- 15 Son of Japheth and wife of Hosea bearing the same name [Gen] (5)
- 16 Occupation of the apostle brothers Andrew and Simon Peter (7)
- 18 Common designation of Psalm 51, set to music by Allegri and others (8)
- 21 Descendant of Cain: 20's father (6)
- 22 Fearsome person: kind of sauce (6)

QUICK Down

- 1 Archbishopric second only to Canterbury in importance in the C of E (4)
- 2 Popular name of a Pharisee, possibly, who hosted Jesus in Bethany (5,3,5)
- 3 Meeting of a knightly order (7)



- 4 Pulpits or reading desks in early Christian churches (5)
- 5 English translation of 'Hallelujah!' (6,3,4)
- 6 Citizen of an NT Roman province (8)
- 12 Fourth son of David (8)
- 14 Cap worn commonly by RC clerics (7)
- 17 Pharaoh, the slayer of Josiah at Megiddo (5)
- 20 Captain for 40 days and nights (4)

SOLUTION

Across: 7 Moriah, 8 Mortal, 9 Akko, 10 Prodigal, 11 Matthew, 12 Adonijah, 14 Biretta, 17 Necho, 20 Noah, 3 Chapter, 4 Ambos, 5 Praise the Lord, 6 Galatian, 21 Lamech, 22 Tartar. Down: 1 York, 2 Simon the Leper, 13 Kevin, 15 Gomer, 16 Fishing, 18 Misereere, 19 Lent, 4 Pulpits or reading desks in early Christian churches (5)