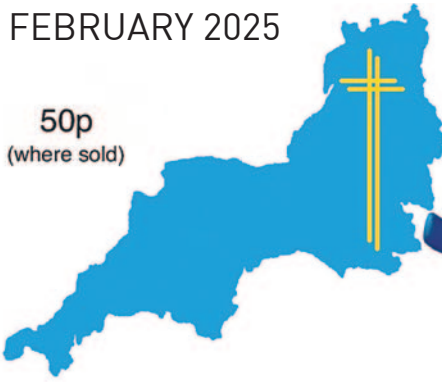


FEBRUARY 2025

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Catholic South West

Serving the Church in the South West



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CONTACTS & DETAILS

Catholic South West is a monthly newspaper for Catholics in the Plymouth, Clifton and Portsmouth Dioceses. It is published by Bellcourt Ltd

AIMS

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

GET INVOLVED

We need your help!

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

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

Wanted Parish Correspondents

The Catholic South West is looking for a Parish Correspondent in your parish to send in local news for publication in this newspaper. All items to be emailed to csw@cathcom.org before 10th of the month

Jubilee 2025

A focus on Modern Slavery

Event on 13 February

On Thursday 13th February, Caritas Diocese of Plymouth will be holding an event at Holy Family Catholic Church Hall, 274 Beacon Park Road, Plymouth, PL2 3JR to celebrate the Feast of St Bakhita and to reflect on how we can prevent modern slavery in our communities. The event will run from 10.30-13.30 with a light lunch included. At the event, we will learn about the issue of migrant labour in the care sector in our Diocese, what the risks are to some workers and what we can do to help anyone in difficulty.

We are pleased to be joined by Louise Gleich of the campaigning anti-slavery charity Justice and Care, and the Centre for Social Justice's Modern Slavery Policy Unit. Justice and Care has produced an excellent guidance document for international workers in the care sector. Please join us and register here or contact Alexandra Miranda alexandra.miranda@prcdtr.org.uk for more information.

Modern Slavery is one of the themes that Pope Francis has invited us to focus on during the Jubilee Year. People in the United Kingdom are experiencing forms of slavery - this includes people in our own parishes, schools, towns and cities. Our churches and parishes are often seen as places of safety, therefore we all - clergy and parishioners - need to be aware of the signs of modern slavery, and what we can do about it.

Saint Josephine Bakhita was born in Sudan in 1869 and sold into slavery as a child by kidnappers. After she found freedom, she joined an order of nuns in Northern Italy, where she died in 1947. Inspired by her life, she is venerated as a modern African saint, and as a statement against the brutal history of slavery.



Saint Josephine Bakhita

This event will focus in particular on labour abuse in the care sector and the risks that creates for people to fall into a situation of modern slavery. As the UK opens up to migrant workers to meet labour shortages, the potential for exploitation increases. Many workers who come to the UK do not know their rights or how to raise a concern. Caritas

Plymouth wants to raise awareness of worker exploitation in the care sector and ensure that people in the care sector get the help and advice they need before they find themselves in a situation of exploitation. As we welcome migrant families to our parishes and schools we have a unique opportunity to help.

EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

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

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

LEGAL INFORMATION

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Plymouth Diocese Launches New Pilgrims Passport for Jubilee Year

In this Jubilee Year – a special year of forgiveness and reconciliation, in which people are invited to come back into right relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation, Plymouth Diocese has launched a new Pilgrims of Hope passport inviting pilgrims to visit four historically and spiritually significant churches in Cornwall, Devon, and Dorset:

St Mary & St Boniface, Cathedral Church of Plymouth
St Cuthbert Mayne, Launceston
Holy Trinity, Dorchester
The National Shrine of St Boniface in CREDITON

The Cathedral Church of St Mary & St Boniface is a place central to the heart of the Diocese of Plymouth; St Cuthbert Mayne holds the relics of this local saint; Holy Trinity church, Dorchester has a strong connection to the Chideock Martyrs, and St Boniface Church, CREDITON contains two relics of the saint, revered by the people of Germany and of Holland.

Canon Paul Cummins, the Diocesan Administrator says: "Whilst Rome is rightly the focus of Jubilee Years, the Pope has also asked every Diocese to designate certain places to be local centres of pilgrimage. During this year, we are encouraged to visit these places of pilgrimage and to spend some time in prayerful reflection there. In our Diocese, these places are the Cathedral in Plymouth, St Cuthbert Mayne Church in Launceston, the National Shrine of St Boniface in CREDITON, and Holy Trinity Church in Dorchester. Pilgrim Passports will shortly be distributed to all parishes, which will give details of the pilgrim sites, and offer encouragement to you to visit them during the year if you are able. Also, each of the pilgrimage sites will have celebrations on specific significant days during the Jubilee Year which will be advertised nearer the time.

"We invite Catholics and non Catholics alike to make a pilgrimage to these four churches. The Jubilee Year is a time to re-establish our relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation. The Jubilee Year, will be a year of hope for our

world suffering the impacts of war, the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and our climate in crisis.

"May this Jubilee Year be for you a time of reflection, of new insight, and of a deepening of your relationship with the Lord. May our love be a witness to those who may feel lost or hopeless, and may it encourage them on their pilgrimage to find the way, the truth and the life."

Pilgrims will be able to pick up the passport and the stamps at each of the four churches. All are encouraged to visit these sacred sites, whether as part of an organised pilgrimage, or to create their own pilgrimage routes and walks. Buckfast Abbey on the edge of Dartmoor National Park is also recommended as a place of pilgrimage.

The Diocese will also be creating ways for those who due to illness and disability are unable to walk or travel, to visit these sacred spaces virtually. More guidance will follow.

For more information about the Jubilee events, visit www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/jubilee-2025/

For more information of the Pilgrims Passport visit www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Jubilee-Passport-A5-with-stamps.pdf

For more information about the four churches featured in the new pilgrims passport, please visit:

St Mary & St Boniface, Cathedral Church of Plymouth
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www.stcuthbertmayne.org.uk/
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JUBILEE 2025



What is the Jubilee?

"Jubilee" is the name given to a particular year; the name comes from the instrument used to mark its launch. In this case, the instrument in question is the yobel, the ram's horn, used to proclaim the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). This (Jewish) holiday occurs every year, but it takes on special significance when it marks the beginning of a Jubilee year.

We can find an early indication of it in the Bible: a Jubilee year was to be marked every 50 years, since this would be an "extra" year, one which would happen every seven weeks of seven years, i.e., every 49 years (cf. Leviticus 25:8-13). Even though it wasn't easy to organise, it was intended to be marked as a time to re-establish a proper relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation, and involved the forgiveness of debts, the return of misappropriated land, and a fallow period for the fields.

Quoting the prophet Isaiah, the Gospel of Luke describes Jesus' mission in this way: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord," (Luke 4:18-19; cf. Isaiah 61:1-2). Jesus lives out these words in his daily life, in his encounters with others and in his relationships, all of which bring about liberation and conversion.

In 1300, Pope Boniface VIII called the first Jubilee, also known as a "Holy Year," since it is a time in which God's holiness transforms us. The frequency of Holy Years has changed over time: at first, they were celebrated every 100 years; later, in 1343 Pope Clement VI reduced the gap

between Jubilees to every 50 years, and in 1470 Pope Paul II made it every 25 years. There have also been "extraordinary" Holy Years: for example, in 1933 Pope Pius XI chose to commemorate the 1900th anniversary of the Redemption, and in 2015 Pope Francis proclaimed the Year of Mercy as an extraordinary jubilee. The way in which Jubilee Years are marked has also changed through the centuries: originally the Holy Year consisted of a pilgrimage to the Roman Basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul, later other signs were added, such as the Holy Door. By participating in the Holy Year, one is granted a plenary indulgence.

There are various elements of the Jubilee. These are:

Pilgrimage



The jubilee calls for us to set out on a journey and to cross boundaries. When we travel, we do not only change place physically, but we also change ourselves. Hence, it is important to prepare ourselves well, to plan the route, and learn about the destination. In this sense, the Jubilee pilgrimage begins before the start of the journey itself: the starting point is the decision to set out. The etymology of the word "pilgrimage" is quite telling and has undergone little change in meaning over the years. The word comes from the Latin "per ager,"

meaning "across the fields," or perhaps from "per eger" meaning "border crossing": both possible origins point to the distinctive aspect of undertaking a journey.

The journey takes place gradually: there are various routes to choose from and places to discover; it is made up of particular sets of circumstances, moments of catechesis, sacred rites and liturgies. Along the way our traveling companions enrich us with new ways of understanding things and fresh perspectives. Contemplation of creation is also part of the journey and helps us to realize that care for creation "is an essential expression of our faith in God and our obedience to his will" (Pope Francis, Letter for the Jubilee 2025). Pilgrimage is an experience of conversion, of transforming one's very being to conform it to the holiness of God. During the pilgrimage, one also shares in the experience of those who, for various reasons, are forced to leave their homelands to seek a better life for themselves and their family.

Holy Door



From a symbolic viewpoint, the Holy Door takes on a special significance: it is the most powerful sign of the Jubilee, since

the ultimate aim of the pilgrim is to pass through it. The opening of the door by the Pope constitutes the official beginning of the Holy Year. Originally, there was only one door, at the Basilica of St. John Lateran, which is the cathedral of the Bishop of Rome. Later, to allow as many pilgrims as possible to take part in the Jubilee experience, the other Roman Basilicas also opened their own holy doors.

In crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, the pilgrim is reminded of the passage from chapter 10 of St John's gospel: "I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture." Passing through the Holy Door expresses the decision to follow and be guided by Jesus, who is the Good Shepherd. The door is a passageway that ushers the pilgrim into the interior of a church. For the Christian community, a church is not only a sacred space, to be approached with respect, with appropriate behavior and dress code, but it is a symbol of the communion that binds every believer to Christ: it is a place of encounter and dialogue, of reconciliation and peace which awaits every pilgrim, the Church is essentially the place of the community of the faithful.

In Rome, this experience takes on a special significance because of the special links between the Eternal City and Saints Peter and Paul, the apostles who founded the Christian community in Rome and whose teachings and example are models for the universal Church. The tombs of Saints Peter and Paul are located in Rome, they were martyred here; and together with the catacombs, these sacred sites are places of continuous spiritual inspiration.



JUBILEE 2025

Reconciliation



A Jubilee year is a sign of reconciliation because it establishes a “favorable time” (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:2) for conversion. We are called to put God at the center of our lives, growing toward Him and acknowledging His primacy. Even the Biblical call for the restoration of social justice and respect for the earth stems from a theological reality: if God is the creator of the universe, He must be given priority over every reality and partisan interest. It is God who makes this year holy by bestowing on us His own holiness.

As Pope Francis recalled in the 2015 Bull proclaiming the Extraordinary Holy Year, “Mercy is not opposed to justice but rather expresses God’s way of reaching out to the sinner, offering him a new chance to look at himself, convert, and believe. [...] God’s justice is his mercy given to everyone as a grace that flows from the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus, the Cross of Christ is God’s judgement on all of us and on the whole world, because through it he offers us the certainty of love and new life” (Misericordiae Vultus, 21).

In practical terms, reconciliation involves receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation, taking advantage of this time to rediscover the value of confession, and experiencing God’s personal words of forgiveness. There are some Jubilee churches that stay open continuously to make available the sacrament of Reconciliation. You can prepare yourself to receive the sacrament by following a guide.

Prayer



There are many reasons and ways to pray, but at the root of prayer is always the desire to be open to God’s presence and His offer of love. It is the Spirit of the Son that calls the Christian community to prayer and allows for each person to return to the Father. It was Jesus who entrusted His disciples with the Lord’s Prayer, which is commented on by the Catechism of the Catholic Church (cf. CCC 2759-2865).

The Christian tradition also offers other texts, such as the Hail Mary, that can help to find words to address God: “By a living transmission—Tradition—the Holy Spirit in the Church teaches the children of God to pray” (CCC 2661).

The of prayer opportunities on the journey show that the pilgrim holds the path to God “in his heart” (Psalm 83:6). Refreshment is also provided by the various stops and opportunities for rest along the way, which are often organized around shrines, sanctuaries, and other places filled with spiritual significance, where one realizes that — before us and alongside us — other pilgrims have also passed along and traveled those same roads. Indeed, the paths leading to Rome have often been trod by many saints.

Liturgy



The liturgy is the public prayer of the Church: in the words of the Second Vatican Council, it is the “summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; [and,] at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows.” (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 10). At the center is the Christian liturgy is the Mass - the Eucharistic celebration, where the Body and Blood of Christ are truly received. As a pilgrim, Christ himself

walks alongside the disciples and reveals to them the mysteries of the Father, so that they too can say, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” (Luke 24:29).

One liturgical rite that is specific to the Jubilee year is the opening of the Holy Door. Until the last century, the Pope would symbolically initiate the demolition of the wall that kept the Holy Door bricked up on non-Jubilee years. Masons would then fully remove the brick wall to be able to open the Holy Door. Since 1950, the ceremony has changed and now the wall is dismantled beforehand and, within a solemn choral liturgy, the Pope pushes open the door from the outside, passing through it as the first pilgrim. This and the other liturgical expressions that accompany the Holy Year emphasize that the Jubilee pilgrimage is not merely an intimate, personal gesture, but is a sign of the journey of the whole people of God toward the Kingdom.

Profession of Faith



The profession of faith – also known as the ‘Symbol’ - is a sign of the identity of the baptized person. The profession of faith expresses the central content of the faith: it succinctly captures the main truths that a believer accepts and witnesses to on the day of his or her baptism and shares with the entire Christian community for the rest of his or her life.

There are various professions of faith which show the richness of the experience of encountering Jesus Christ. Traditionally, however, there are two that have gained special recognition in the Church: the baptismal creed of the church of Rome and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed, originally formulated in 325 at the Council of Nicaea, in present-day Turkey, and then refined at the Council of Constantinople in 381.

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved,” (Romans 10:9-10). This passage from St. Paul emphasizes how proclaiming the mystery of faith requires a deep conversion not only in one’s words, but above all in one’s understanding of God, of oneself and of the world. “To say the Creed with faith is to enter into communion with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and also with the whole Church which transmits the faith to us and in whose midst, we believe” (CCC 197).

Indulgences



The Jubilee Indulgence is a concrete manifestation of God’s mercy, which goes beyond and transforms the boundaries of human justice. This treasury of grace entered human history in the witness of Jesus and the saints, and by living in communion with them our hope for our own forgiveness is strengthened and becomes a certainty. The Jubilee indulgence allows us to free our hearts from the weight of sin because the reparation due for our sins is given freely and abundantly.

In practical terms, the experience of God’s mercy involves some spiritual acts indicated by the Pope. Those who cannot make the Jubilee pilgrimage due to illness or other circumstances are nonetheless invited to take part in the spiritual movement that accompanies the Jubilee year, offering up the sufferings of their daily lives, and participating in the Eucharistic celebration.



For further
information about
Jubilee 2025 go to:
www.iubilaeum2025



JUBILEE 2025

CALENDAR OF MAJOR EVENTS

JANUARY 2025

24-26 January
Jubilee of the World
of Communications

FEBRUARY 2025

8-9 February
Jubilee of Armed Forces,
Police and Security Personnel

15-18 February
Jubilee of Artists

21-23 February
Jubilee of Deacons

MARCH 2025

8-9 March
Jubilee of the World of
Volunteering

28 March
24 Hours for the Lord

28-30 March
Jubilee of the Missionaries of
Mercy



APRIL 2025

5-6 April
Jubilee of the Sick and Health
Care Workers

25-27 April
Jubilee of Teenagers

28-29 April
Jubilee of People with
Disabilities

May 2025

1-4 May
Jubilee of Workers

4-5 May
Jubilee of Entrepreneurs

10-11 May
Jubilee of Marching Bands

12-14 May
Jubilee of the Eastern Churches

16-18 May
Jubilee of Confraternities

30 May - 1 June
Jubilee of Families, Children,
Grandparents and
the Elderly



JUBILEE 2025

CALENDAR OF MAJOR EVENTS

June 2025

7-8 June

Jubilee of Ecclesial Movements, Associations and New Communities

9 June

Jubilee of the Holy See

14-15 June

Jubilee of Sport

20-22 June

Jubilee of Governments

23-24 June

Jubilee of Seminarians

25 June

Jubilee of Bishops

25-27 June

Jubilee of Priests

JULY 2025

28 July - 3 August

Jubilee of Youth



SEPTEMBER 2025

15 September

Jubilee of Consolation

20 September

Jubilee of Justice

26-28 September

Jubilee of Catechists

OCTOBER 2025

4-5 October

Jubilee of the Mission

4-5 October

Jubilee of Migrants

8-9 October

Jubilee of Consecrated Life

11-12 October

Jubilee of Marian Spirituality

31 October - 2 November

Jubilee of the World of Education

NOVEMBER 2025

16 November

Jubilee of the Poor

22-23 November

Jubilee of Choirs

DECEMBER 2025

14 December

Jubilee of Prisoners

Scripture Focus

By Fr Jeremy Corley



A Call from God

Throughout history people have had experiences of God's presence. Often it happened while they were praying at a holy place or shrine, or sometimes on a mountaintop. Such experiences can strengthen faith and offer hope.

The first reading on 9th February (5th Sunday of the Year) describes Isaiah's encounter with God, experienced when he was praying in the Jerusalem temple. In his vision he saw the Lord sitting upon a high throne, surrounded by the heavenly court of angels (seraphim).

He heard the angels calling to each other: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory!" Isaiah was awestruck by the holiness of the scene, with the temple foundations shaking and the house being filled with smoke (perhaps incense).

Faced with God's terrifying majesty, Isaiah realised how weak and insignificant he was: "Woe is me! I am lost, for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" He became

conscious of his own sinfulness as well as the sinfulness of his people.

But God had appeared to Isaiah to call him into service as a prophet. By his words, he would be an influencer for his people, even if they would not always listen. Yet, to proclaim God's word, he needed his lips to be made clean. Hence one of the seraphim touched his mouth with a burning coal from the altar.

After being purified for his mission, he heard God's voice, asking, "Whom shall I send?" Isaiah responded generously, "Here I am! Send me." Henceforth he would be God's spokesman, bringing God's message even when the people did not want to listen.

In his later years, when facing opposition from the unresponsive people, Isaiah doubtless recalled his awesome experience of the holy God, which gave him the strength to continue on his mission.

The gospel for the same Sunday describes Simon Peter's experience of a miracle worked by Jesus, when he personally became deeply aware of the

Lord's power. Beside the Sea of Galilee, Simon Peter was washing the nets, after a disappointing and fruitless night of fishing, when Jesus asked to use his boat. Because of the crowds, Jesus wished to teach the people from the boat, a little way out in the shallow water.

After Jesus had finished speaking to the crowds, he said to Simon Peter, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." This seemed strange to Simon Peter: "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing!" Even so, he knew that Jesus had cured his mother-in-law, so he was hopeful: "At your word I will let down the nets."

What happened next? His awesome experience of Jesus' power was beyond all his expectations. Once they had let down their nets into the water, they enclosed such a huge number of fish, that their nets were breaking. Even using the boat of their partners (James and John) as well, the catch of fish filled both the boats, almost to sinking point. Jesus had provided super-abundantly for the needs of Simon Peter and those around him.

Just as Isaiah was overcome by his experience of the awesome holiness of God, so Simon Peter was overcome by the power and the generosity of Jesus. Seeing what had happened, he fell down at Jesus' knees with a deep sense of unworthiness: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

But Jesus had worked the miracle for Simon Peter to call him into service as an apostle. Hence Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." And in response, Simon Peter left everything and to follow Jesus.

In his later years, when facing opposition to his preaching, Simon Peter doubtless recalled his amazing experience of Jesus' miracle when he was called as an apostle. This memory would have given him the strength to continue on his mission.

In the dark days, when we face difficulties, it can be helpful for us to recall the times when we have felt close to God, so that we can gain renewed strength to live as the Lord's disciples.

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View from the Pew

By Dr Jay Kettle-Williams



One, two, three ...

I walked self-consciously across the floor and coyly invited her to dance. No way would I have considered myself a dancer and certainly nothing like the dancer she then turned out to be.

We took to the floor. From then on I more or less followed her – 'One, two, three, one to three ...' – me randomly rising and falling as she waltzed effortlessly, leading me across the floor. I shuffled along under her stewardship feigning my mastery of the situation. I could hold my own all the time we kept to a straight line: 'One, two, three, one, two, three...'

I remember her to this day: tallish, slim, long dark hair, a smile ever on her lips as she fluttered her eyes incessantly. We were both in our teens. This was long before Strictly.

The band finally stopped, the dancing ground to a halt. She must have been relieved. As for me, I could escape further embarrassment and shame after what had seemed like an eternity.

As I turned to thank her for the dance, she raised her head and, asking to look at me, brought her hands up to my face and gently felt its features. She was then escorted back to her seat by one of the mistresses from her school, back to where her schoolfriends were gathered.

The girls school for the blind which she attended owed its foundation to Christian philanthropy in the 19th century, or maybe even long before that. It had been customary over the years for the older girls to be invited to the annual VI form dance at our boys school, also of Christian foundation.

The adjective 'blind' and the associated abstract noun 'blindness' are used in English in both a physical sense and metaphorically, in a virtual way. Occasionally English does have distinct descriptors for such different phenomena ('Height' and 'Highness' being an example) but, strangely enough, not in the case of blindness.

The Bible carries many references to the blind and blindness, both spiritual and physical. The story of the blind beggar Bartimaeus is a memorable case in point, among the most noteworthy. It's featured in the Gospel of Mark where Bartimaeus calls to 'Jesus, Son of David' thereby affirming his belief that Jesus was indeed the Messiah – see 2 Samuel 7: 14-16 (JB). Bartimaeus persists in trying to attract Jesus' attention from among the crowd



until finally he gets to say to Jesus: 'Rabbi, I want to see.' And Jesus replies, 'Go, your faith has healed you.' Bartimaeus could then immediately see.

I don't think I'm alone in having thought that the proverb 'There are none so blind as those who will not see' must surely have come from the Bible. But that's not so. First recorded in the 16th century and to have entered common parlance soon thereafter, the sentiment does admittedly run along the lines of Jeremiah 5:21 (JB), further steered by Matthew 13:13 (JB) and Matthew 9:26-27 (JB), all reminiscent of Isaiah 6:9 (JB). However, the term 'none so blind as those who will not see' is often attributed specifically to John 9:39-41 (JB), where Jesus speaks about spiritual blindness and refers to those who refuse to acknowledge the truth.

The proverb as such has been traced back in English to 1546 (John Heywood) with the exact wording reputedly first

appearing in print in 1548. Since then it has been paraphrased and adapted in various forms in literature and discourse asserting that some people are wilfully ignorant of or choose to ignore the truth, making them 'blind' to reality despite having the ability to see. Be that as it may, Bartimaeus comes shining through, notably for his conviction, dedication, hope and faith.

The pervading message is one of faith, the charisma or spiritual gift which we are all asked to preserve and nurture. Faith is an issue with which we may all have to wrestle from time to time, following in a straight line, albeit taking one step at a time.



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

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Advent and Christmastide Celebrations at Our Lady Help of Christians and St Denis, St Marychurch

The last month of the year was an extra special time for the Parish; Advent began with the blessing of our new Lectionaries and Book of the Gospels and the usual blessing of the Advent Wreath and lighting of the first candle, followed by celebrating the BIG birthday of one of our parishioners, a frenetic Fourth week of Advent culminating with the Nativity of the Lord and, on the Feast of Stephen, the Enrolment into the Archconfraternity of Guild of St Stephen of five of our Altar Servers.

Elaine Hall-Roberts, a longstanding member of our parish family, celebrated her 90th Birthday in mid-December – celebrations that included being presented with a Papal Blessing by Canon Michael, something we had managed to arrange without Elaine finding out beforehand, not an easy feat!!

Elaine's involvement in parish life is inspirational, not only does she organise our team of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, assist with Communion at Mass and take Communion to the Sick and Housebound herself, but she's also a reader, a vital member of the Counting Team, and the live-streaming of Masses team. And, despite entering her 90th year (in some style) Elaine also embraces technology, enjoys WhatsApp and email, although she's not yet a Tik-Tok or Instagram user

Elaine's 90th celebrations began in May 2024 with her family visiting from far and wide and they'll culminate in February 2025 with another 'birthday lunch' We're all looking forward to 2034



Canon Michael presenting Elaine with her Papal Blessing

Canon Michael 'with a little help from his friends' built the Crib on the afternoon of the Fourth Sunday of Advent and our flower team decorated the church ready for the wonderful celebration the Nativity of the Lord. Then, St Stephen's Day and the Feast of the Epiphany witnessed the Enrolment into the Guild of St Stephen of five of our Altar Servers by Canon

Michael, Diocesan Director of the Guild and also a member of the Guild for 67-years.

Our newly enrolled Altar Servers, together with our existing Servers renewed their Guild Promise and all present on the Sanctuary said the Guild Prayer: O God, you accept our ministry

and allow us to serve at your altar; grant that while serving you we follow the example of our Patron, St Stephen, the first martyr, and that we may, like him, come to see Jesus standing at your right hand in the Kingdom of Heaven. We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son. Amen.

Felicity Stead



Canon Michael with Richard Stead and Sunshine Ramos, Altar Server trainers, and the newly enrolled



The Crib – helping to raise funds for the Catholic Children's Society, Plymouth

The End of an Era???

The Plymouth Catholic Choir celebrated 75 years of singing in the Plymouth Diocese with a concert at Our Lady of Loudres Plympton on 26th of November. The inaugural meeting was held in January 1948 in Notre Dame School Hall, with representatives from the parishes of Keyham, HolyCross, Devonport and Peveral.

The Choir has participated in many events over the years, wedding, funerals, ordinations, BBC broadcasts and concerts at a variety of venues from Parish Churches to Cathedrals and home for the elderly,

Unfortunately, unless a new Musical Director can be found, this may be the end of the choir. We fervently hope someone out there will read this article and come forward to save our choir!

Rita Joesbury Publicity Officer



Pope Francis: The Jubilee invites us to begin again

In his first Jubilee Audience on Saturday, Pope Francis described the Jubilee Year as a time for a new beginning, rooted in the transformative power of God's Kingdom, drawing on the example of John the Baptist, a "great prophet of hope."

These words resonated throughout his Catechesis, serving as both a call to action and a reminder of the Jubilee's essence: the opportunity for everyone to start anew from God, our ultimate source of hope.

Hope, the theme of the 2025 Holy Year, will be the main subject of this new cycle of bi-weekly audiences, integrating the traditional Wednesday catechetical sessions.

Addressing nearly 8,000 people in the Paul VI Hall, Pope Francis centred his reflection on John the Baptist, whom he described as a "great prophet of hope."

Highlighting John's pivotal role in biblical history, the Pope referred to Jesus' praise of him as the "greatest among those born of women" (Lk 7:24,26-28).

John's mission, marked by his call for repentance and renewal symbolized by crossing the River Jordan, mirrors the pilgrimage of Christians crossing the Holy Door during the Jubilee. This act, Pope Francis explained, represents a new beginning, a deep spiritual reset.

Hope, as the Pope elaborated, is not merely "a habit or a character trait", but a

"strength ("virtus" in Latin) to be asked for", a gift of God that spurs Christians "to start again on the journey of life."

As the Gospel of Luke tells us, it requires a recognition of our human smallness in the face of God's greatness. "It does not depend on us, but on the Kingdom of God," where even the "least" become great, the Pope said.

"Welcoming the Kingdom of God leads us to a new order of greatness. Our world, all of us need this!"

Pope Francis also addressed the struggles of faith, drawing on John the Baptist's own moments of doubt during

his imprisonment. These doubts, the Pope noted, resonate with the challenges faced by Christians today navigating a world where "many Herods" still "oppose the Kingdom of God."

Yet, he stressed, the Gospel provides an antidote to this despair through its transformative teachings, particularly the Beatitudes, which chart a new path of hope.

Pope Francis concluded with a call to embrace hope and renewal through service and fraternity, particularly towards the least, and through responsibility for our "common home" the Earth "so abused and wounded."

This, he said, is the essence of the Jubilee: a new beginning grounded in God and a commitment to love and service.

"Let us start again from this originality of God, which shone in Jesus and which now binds us to serve, to love fraternally, to acknowledge ourselves as small. And to see the least, to listen to them and to be their voice. Here is the new beginning, our Jubilee!"

Scan the QR Code to watch the Audience on VaticanYoutube channel.



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Ending Child Poverty – A Call to Action

“We need to see each child as a gift to be welcomed, cherished and protected.”
Pope Francis

Child poverty levels have remained alarmingly high over the last decade. Caritas Plymouth supports the call from the Catholic Bishops’ Conference (CBCEW) to lift the two-child benefit cap as one of the ways in which we can help thousands of children out of poverty. We invite people to join the CBCEW campaign by writing to your local MP. It will take just two minutes to follow the link below and make your voice heard to end the two-child benefit cap. Take action.



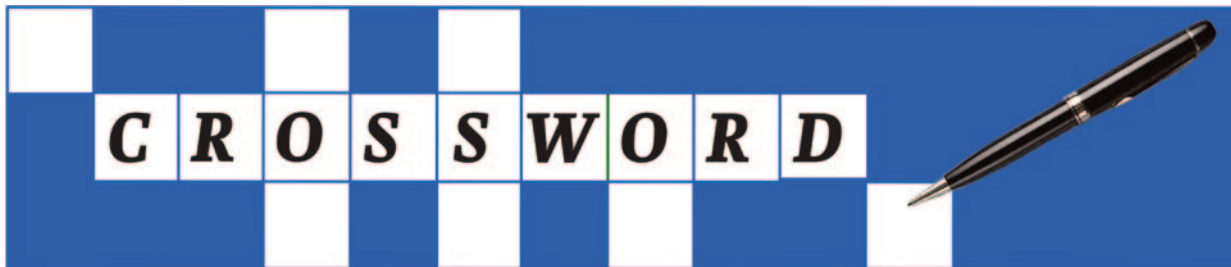
The benefit cap was introduced in 2017. The bishops have consistently argued that the policy has been “undermining the financial security of families with three or more children. Such families often have no choice but to make claims for Universal Credit as a result of common, but unpredictable, life events, such as job loss or the onset of disability. The majority

of families affected by the two-child policy are working families”.

We as a Church have a duty to our extended family. Catholic Social Teaching is clear that we have a responsibility to

protect the rights of others, to love one another as Jesus loved us. The cap implies that larger families are a burden on society whereas the Church recognises them as a blessing. We can all take action to support families and end child poverty.

If you would like more information about child poverty in your local area or find out other ways to take action, the charity No Child Left Behind has useful information or you can contact caritas@prcdtr.org.uk for more information.



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

CRYPTIC Across

- 5 German heretic Diaspora hit badly (11)
- 7 Arkwright: name of American hospital at first (4)
- 8 Its English, eccentric, retro style introduces these biblical people (8)
- 9 Barker's part of this universal UK institution (6)
- 11 Persian god, legend says, is meeting with one in Egypt (6)
- 12 Turkeys lord it in the oven? (3)
- 13 Aramaean maybe investing a Welsh girl with a little time (6)
- 14 Horse or pig meat that's served up in a Canaan town (6)
- 15 Distress bearings found in the sea off Dover (8)
- 17 Women's headgear, providing it's firm at the front (4)
- 18 Into pit come the sporting opposition (11)

CRYPTIC Down

- 1 One from India to look out for, they say (4)
- 2 This recipient of a letter is a kind of record: he's a Scot (8)
- 3 Part of Malta's no-go 'zombie' sector (4)
- 4 Religious type – one to find in York, for example (8)
- 5 One Coptic play that turns out to be prophetic... (11)
- 6 ...notice Earth in turmoil? (3,8)
- 10 Fuming after Ulster's reversal over weapons (2,2,4)
- 11 Place in Gilead's a goal for leading actor's comeback (8)
- 16 What you used to be is there – just get rid of the

radical element (4)

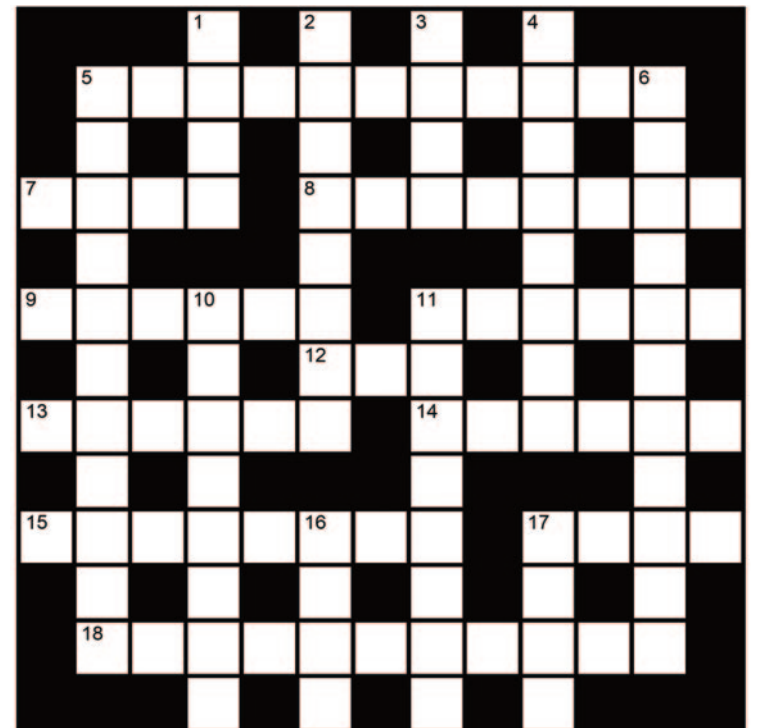
- 17 There's a tiny number in jail, brother, for murder (4)

QUICK Across

- 5 Member of a 16th Century German protestant sect condemned as heretics by Luther (11)
- 7 Along with Daniel and Job, one of Israel's three righteous men (4)
- 8 Bible people from southern Dead Sea area (8)
- 9 Domestic dog, aka Persian greyhound (6)
- 11 Ancient Persian god of light and truth (6)
- 12 --- Khan, spiritual head of Ismaili Muslims (3)
- 13 Native of a middle eastern Arabic republic (6)
- 14 Town in Canaan which after the Conquest was given to the tribe of Judah (6)
- 15 Restrict; impoverish (8)
- 17 Cap worn by fundamentalist Mormon women (4)
- 18 Formal sporting event, tournament (11)

QUICK Down

- 1 Adherent of a monotheistic religion established in the 15th century by former Hindus (4)
- 2 Recipient of one of Paul's epistles (8)
- 3 Mediterranean home of the Giant's Tower, the world's oldest man-made religious structure (4)



- 4 Clergyman, as usually called in Protestant churches (8)
- 5 Significantly prophetic (11)
- 6 Part of Genesis featured in Haydn's landmark oratorio of 1798 (3,8)
- 10 Strongly protesting; actively rebelling (2,2,4)
- 11 Where Jacob saw angels before reuniting with Esau (8)
- 16 Biblical pronoun (4)
- 17 First child of Adam and Eve (4)

SOLUTION

6 The Creation, 10 Up in arms, 11 Mahanaim, 16 Thee, 17 Cain.
 Down: 1 Sikh, 2 Ephesian, 3 Gozo, 4 Minister, 5 Apocalyptic, 12 Aga, 13 Syrian, 14 Hormah, 15 Straten, 17 Coff, 18 Competition.
 Across: 5 Adiphorist, 7 Noah, 8 Edomites, 9 Saluki, 11 Mithra,