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## Special collection for our retired priests

As you know, we are a Church in Synod and moving towards the Second Session of XVI General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2024.

Just before the Christmas break, the bishops were sent a set of papers encouraging every diocese to continue the synodal process, in the words of one of the documents: "To keep the synodal dynamic alive".

Every diocese has been asked to continue the synodal dialogue in the way that best fits within their context, both in practical and cultural terms. With this in mind, may I suggest to you that we continue this dialogue in at least this way:

We are planning a diocesan day entitled: **All Disciples, All Missionaries – Towards A Listening and Accompanying Church, on Saturday March 9 from 9.30am to 3pm at English Martyrs Parish Hall, Dalton Terrace, York.**

The day will be led for us by Father Chris Hughes from the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. I am inviting all priests, deacons and religious, together with three or four people from each parish, to attend. The day will follow the "Spiritual Conversation" format, which has been used to great effect.

From the conversations of the day, we will produce a short document with the key points discussed, which will inform the discernment process for the next session in Rome in October.

**Please note:** There is no general parking at English Martyrs. However, there are very good park-and-ride facilities at various places on the outskirts of York. Also, English Martyrs is about a ten-minute walk from York Station. Tea and coffee will be provided, but people are asked to bring a packed lunch with them on the day.

The last days of this month will take us into Holy Week and through the Triduum to the glories of Easter. I pray that this year's celebration will drive away the darkness that seems to be swirling round our world at this time and will bring us many blessings throughout this blessed season. May we all experience the Risen Lord walking at our side. Alleluia!

In blessed hope,

+ Long

**United as a spiritual family, we are all eager to express our deep appreciation for the retired clergy who have dedicated their lives to nurturing our faith.**

As we extend our heartfelt thanks, we also acknowledge the increasing challenges faced by these wise shepherds in their well-earned retirement.

The Retired Priests Welfare Fund is not just a financial initiative, but a tangible display of our collective commitment to care for those who have shaped our spiritual journey.

The growing number of retired clergy brings with it escalating costs – expenses for healthcare, housing and daily necessities that demand our attention and support.

In the spirit of our gratitude, we announce a special collection in every church on the weekend of March 9 and 10 – this is an opportunity for each parishioner to contribute to the Retired Priests Welfare Fund.

This second collection, a longstanding tradition of our diocese, represents more than a monetary offering. It symbolises our unwavering dedication to ensuring our retired clergy enjoy their golden years in comfort and dignity.

On the same weekend, parishes will distribute bookmarks, carrying not only our gratitude for the countless hours, prayers and wisdom shared, but a reminder of our ongoing commitment to addressing the evolving needs of our retired clergy.

Together, let us transform our appreciation into action, navigating the challenges of rising costs with grace, and ensuring our retired clergy are surrounded by the warmth of our support.

For those wishing to contribute directly, you can make donations to the Retired Priests

Welfare Fund account (Diocese of Middlesbrough, Sort Code 20-56-90, Account No 50421049), or through the QR code on this page. For further details, contact me at fundraising@rcdmidd.org.uk.

**Dan Woodgate**  
Fundraising Officer



Parishes will take a special collection for the Retired Priests Welfare Fund on the weekend on March 9 and 10

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**NEWS**

# Church of England and Catholic bishops hold biannual joint meeting

**Forty-two bishops representing the Catholic Church in England and Wales and the Church of England met in Norwich for their biannual joint meeting.**

Hosted by the Anglican Bishop of Norwich, the Right Reverend Graham Usher, the bishops gathered in this city of two historic cathedrals.

The meeting began in prayer at the Catholic Cathedral of St John the Baptist, before the group visited the shrine of 14th-century mystic Julian of Norwich, a much-revered saint for both Catholics and Anglicans.

From the shrine, the bishops walked fraternally through the city centre to the Anglican Cathedral Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, where they took part in the first of three sessions, which focused on the coronation of King Charles III.

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, who led the coronation service, and Cardinal Vincent Nichols, the first Catholic archbishop to have a formal role in a coronation service for 400 years, both gave personal reflections.

The first day concluded with choral evensong in the cathedral, where the Office, the set times of prayer, has been offered every day since it was built more than 900 years ago.

The second day started with morning prayer followed by a celebration of the Eucharist led by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The second session looked at the Synodal journey in the Catholic Church, with short

reflections from three attendees who travelled to Rome last October, Archbishop John Wilson of Southwark, national ecumenical officer, Father Jan Nowotnik, and Bishop Martin Warner of Chichester, the Church of England representative.

The last session focused on the Catholic Church's newest English saint, John Henry Newman, with a lecture from Monsignor Roderick Strange, rector of Mater Ecclesiae College.

This was the seventh joint meeting since 2006. They aim to foster spiritual communion and to identify and develop programmes of joint witness and mission in this country, both regionally and nationally.



**Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell, Cardinal Vincent Nichols and Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby at choral evensong in the Cathedral of Holy and Undivided Trinity, Norwich – Photo © Mazur/cbcew.org.uk**

# Death of Ampleforth monk Father Jonathan

**Father Jonathan Cotton OSB, Benedictine monk of Ampleforth Abbey, died peacefully in the Monastery Infirmary at Ampleforth Abbey on January 17.**

Born in Shimla, India, in May 1943, he was educated at St Martin's, Nawton, and Ampleforth College. He joined the monastic community in 1961 and was ordained priest ten years later. Father Jonathan read history at St Benet's Hall at the University of Oxford and taught the subject at Ampleforth College for ten years.

His first parochial appointment came in January 1973, in Warrington, followed by assisting at Our Lady & St Benedict's in Ampleforth village and becoming a parish priest outside the area for 30 years from 1992 to 2022.

In the early 1970s Father Jonathan first encountered the Focolare Movement, a religious group founded in Italy during the Second World War that is now present in more than 180 nations, and it played a major

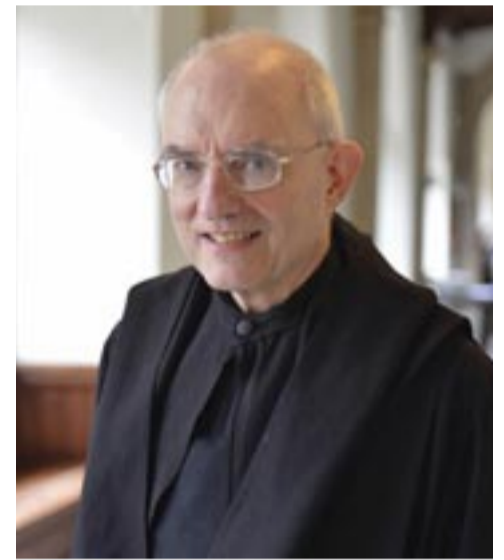
part in his life.

He attended summer gathering, Mariapolis, in Manchester in 1972 and wrote that the Movement "was the greatest influence on my life and helped me to realise the beauty of my monastic vocation".

From 1975 to 2019 he was part of the co-ordinating council of the Focolare Movement in Britain and attended international conferences reflecting on the life of communion for religious in the Church.

Father Jonathan retired as parish priest in September 2022 and began a sabbatical in Italy. Ill health forced him to cut short his time abroad and he returned to the monastery infirmary at Ampleforth Abbey in July 2023. He was diagnosed with cancer shortly after his return and his health gradually deteriorated. He died peacefully at the age of 80.

His funeral Mass was celebrated in the Abbey on February 1, before his burial in Monks' Wood.



**Father Jonathan Cotton OSB, who has died at the age of 80**

**BISHOP TERRY'S MARCH ENGAGEMENTS**

- 2 Lourdes Training Day 10am to 4pm
- 5 Meeting regarding St Peter's Church, South Bank 7pm
- 6 Visit to St Augustine's Primary School, Coulby Newham 9am to 12.30pm
- 7 Visit to Our Lady Queen of Martyrs School, York 9am to 12.30pm
- 9 Meeting about the Synod, English Martyrs, York 10am to 4pm
- 9/10 Parish visitation to English Martyrs, York
- 15 Meeting of Ushaw Trustees 11am to 3pm
- 19 Mass and Blessing of Alban Roe House, Ampleforth 11am to 2pm
- 21-22 Call to the North Ecumenical Retreat, Hinsley Hall
- 24 Palm Sunday Mass, St Mary's Cathedral 10am
- 26 Chrism Mass, St Mary's Cathedral 12pm
- Northern Church Leaders meeting 4pm
- 28 Mass of the Lord's Supper, St Mary's Cathedral 7pm
- 29 Solemn Liturgy of the Lord's Passion, St Mary's Cathedral 3pm
- 30 Easter Vigil, St Mary's Cathedral 8pm
- 31 Mass of Easter Day, St Mary's Cathedral 10am

# Upper Room returns to town centre

**From the days of the St John Paul Centre in Borough Road, Middlesbrough, some of you will remember the Upper Room, Saturday lunches feeding many needy people in the town centre.**

We have hoped for some time that this could grow out of the legacy of the centre through the St John Paul II fund, the SVP and donations from other charities.

Many of the original team, as well as other volunteers, have been getting together with the SVP to provide this service again in different premises near the centre of town on Saturday mornings.

We hope to make it a welcoming place for those on the margins of society in our town.

We will share more details in next month's *Voice*, when we hope to have been up and running for a few weeks.

**Upper Room team and Middlesbrough SVP**



**Volunteers at the Upper Room in the St John Paul Centre before it closed**

# Come and join us for our annual Chrism Mass

**You are all warmly invited to join us for the Chrism Mass. Come and celebrate the Mass of Priesthood during Holy Week.**

At noon on Tuesday March 26, priests from throughout the diocese will gather with Bishop Terry to reaffirm their ministry and renew the promises made at their ordination.

As well as the renewal of priestly promises, the Mass will include the blessing of the Oil of Chrism, Oil of the Sick and Oil of Catechumens. These oils are used in every parish throughout the year.

Ordained ministry and the sacraments go hand in hand. We can't have one without the other. Of course, both are born in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

So, the Chrism Mass is central to the sacramental life of the whole diocese and is an ancient ceremony that takes place in cathedrals around the world at the beginning of Holy Week.

Please do come along to pray for your priests and for your parish communities. Just as gathering as a parish is important, so is gathering as a diocesan family. There are so few opportunities to do this, and the Chrism Mass is one of those. Gathering around the altar of God together is a perfect way to prepare for the Easter Triduum.

If you are travelling by bus in a parish group, please liaise with us about your arrival and pick up time by emailing [parish@middlesbroughrccathedral.org](mailto:parish@middlesbroughrccathedral.org)

We look forward to seeing you!

**Canon Paul Farrer**  
Dean of St Mary's Cathedral



The Chrism Mass is an ancient ceremony that takes place in cathedrals around the world at the beginning of Holy Week

# World Day of Prayer is 'needed more than ever'

**World Day of Prayer (WDP) is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice, inspired by the motto "Informed prayer and prayerful action".**

It is a privilege for me to represent Catholic women on the WDP national committee.

An ecumenical group of Palestinian Christian women have prayed and reflected together over several years to respond to an invitation to write the 2024 service, which is on Friday March 1.

As Pope Francis says, Palestinian people and the people of Israel "have the right to peace".

Their theme of the service is "I beg you... bear with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:1-7) and the programme calls us to bear with each other in love, despite all difficulties and oppression.

The Palestinian women invite the world to pray for peace, justice, freedom of religion and freedom of movement. Their prayers call us to pray with women refugees and those who



are homeless, sick, dying and grieving.

They acknowledge the environmental crisis and pray to be united in treating all with justice and love.

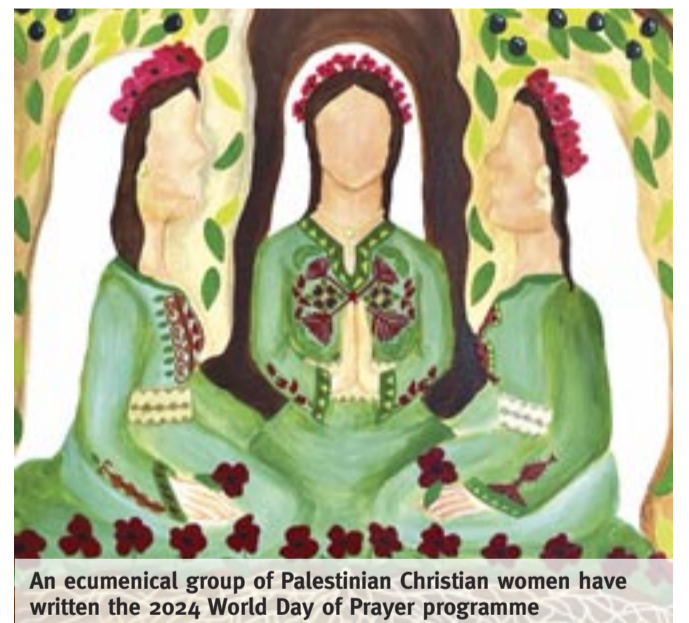
Since joining the national committee, I have attended several meetings. The first was a link day to be introduced to other Christian women and listen and observe.

This clearly showed there is more that unites us than divides us, which reinforced my experience of working with Churches Together, and now on the Synodal Journey.

Resources for the preparation days have been forwarded to branch secretaries, including a WDP magazine and Order of Service. You can access these and an updated statement at [wwdp.org.uk](http://wwdp.org.uk).

You are all encouraged to join a WDP service in your area and to encourage others to do so. Our prayers have never been more needed.

**Margaret Clark**  
Catholic Representative, WDP National Committee



An ecumenical group of Palestinian Christian women have written the 2024 World Day of Prayer programme

# Climate change tops reflection day agenda

*"Then the Lord God placed man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it." (Genesis 2:15)*

**This year's Year 7 Reflection Day at St Mary's College in Hull focused on Care for God's Creation, particularly through the lens of Pope Francis' letter *Laudato Si'*, which encourages Care for our Common Home.**

With a whole day dedicated to reflection, students took the initiative, guided by the St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust Chaplaincy Team, to delve into the pressing issues of climate change.

They tried to create practical pledges for environmental stewardship, demonstrating a commendable level of awareness and responsibility for such young people.

They looked at what is beautiful in our world and then

considered "How is the world being harmed?" and "What are the biggest problems?"

Then in tutor groups they planned what they could do at grassroots level in their homes, their classrooms and in school, contributing to a better future and devising a Care for Our Common Home pledge.

The decision to link our Reflection Day to the COP28 conference and send a message to world leaders was a powerful way to amplify the voices of our students.

They tagged COP28 politicians and environmental activists in social media posts, sharing a short film featuring their thoughts and opinions on climate change.

This not only helped spread awareness but also encouraged a broader audience, including policymakers, to listen to young

people and reflect on the urgent need for collective action.

The film was also used to inform the rest of the school during assembly of the responsibility we all have, to look after God's creation. From this, each tutor group throughout the school decided upon their own pledge to Care for Our Common Home.

The day was a fantastic example of integrating faith-based values, social teachings and contemporary global issues to empower students to become responsible stewards of the environment.

It was heartening to see young minds engaged in shaping a more sustainable and compassionate world.

**Nicky Coyle**  
Lead Lay Chaplain

**SCHOOLS**

# Competition helps launch Year of Prayer

**Pupils from across St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust were invited to take part in a competition to help launch the Year of Prayer.**

Andrew Krlic, trust lead for Catholic life, opened the contest to all pupils, with prizes for winners in each of St Cuthbert's 15 schools.

Pupils produced some innovative and creative work to celebrate the Year of Prayer, ranging from posters to podcasts.

Danny Vincent, Leo Mourne and Max Lesiak were the winners from St Peter's VC Academy in Scarborough. Danny's design was based on the Our Father.

"I like praying with my family at home and at church," he said. "I hope we can all say many more prayers like Pope Francis wants us to."

"He asked us to say the Our Father just like Jesus asked his disciples to. My design has Jesus praying and giving us an example to follow."



Two Year of Prayer competition winners from St Richard's VC Academy in Hull

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# How pupils put their faith into action

**The Faith in Action team at St Augustine's Secondary School in Scarborough have really been living up to their name.**

During Advent, the pupil group decided they would like to give something back in service to their community and set up "Reverse Advent Calendars" for each tutor group.

Every day a pupil took something from the calendar – but instead of something they could keep for themselves, it was a suggested item to be brought into school to help others.

Each house group filled a box with donations for the Rainbow Centre, to be distributed to local families in need.

Pupils filled more than nine boxes and the centre, which helps those who are homeless, vulnerable or in crisis, was thrilled with the generosity of the St Augustine's community. Pupils' faith has also been put into action through regular visits to residents of a nearby care home.

They have struck up firm friendships with people from a different generation and both pupils and residents look forward to seeing each other.

**Juliet Kay  
Lay Chaplain**



Members of the Faith in Action team at St Augustine's in Scarborough with the gifts collected for the Rainbow Centre

# New prayer group reflects school mission

**Pupils at St Thomas More VC Academy in Hull showed an excellent understanding of their Catholic identity, charism and mission of the school by establishing and leading a prayer and liturgy group.**

They have actively worked to ensure that the entire school environment aligns with the

school's mission, which comes from the Gospel of St Mark.

"Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength and love your neighbour as you love yourself."



# St Peter's is praised as 'beacon of hope'

**Inspectors have described a school as a "beacon of hope for so many in the community" in a glowing report written on behalf of Bishop Terry.**

The Catholic Schools Inspectorate (CSI) rated St Peter's Catholic College in South Bank as outstanding for Catholic life and mission and good for both Religious Education and collective worship.

The report said: "There is a true family feel within the school community. Leaders are inspirational role models for staff, students and families, having created a genuine, authentic vision for Catholic education."

"Catholic life and mission is the beating heart of the school, which has led to substantive, transformative change across all aspects of school life."

"There is strong evidence of a highly effective collaboration and supportive relationship with the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust (NPCAT), which has led to a positive impact upon the culture of St Peter's."

"Students are proud to attend St Peter's; they feel valued, loved and unique; they know they matter."

The report follows an Ofsted inspection in November 2022 in which St Peter's was judged to be good in every category.

Headteacher Stephanie Garthwaite was delighted with this latest validation.

"I am incredibly proud of all of our wonderful pupils and staff and the journey they have been on over the last four years," she said.

"It was inspiring to see our tenacity, drive

and commitment to Catholic education was finally recognised as our pupils and staff shone throughout the two days.

"The three inspectors were able to live and breathe the mission statement of St Peter's, as we all do every day, and they were blown away by their interactions with pupils."

NPCAT CEO Hugh Hegarty added his praise for the school's strong commitment to Catholic Social Teaching.

"The rich Catholic life experienced in St Peter's by pupils and staff has developed through the determination of a committed staff to ensure our vision is realised," he said. "The St Peter's headteacher's impact on the school is acknowledged and her authentic leadership is clearly reflected in this report."

In a joint letter to parents and carers, Mrs Garthwaite and executive head Michael Burns spoke of being "filled with pride".

They said: "We feel proud of the work from all our staff, leaders and governors. Equally, the work of the trust is vital to our school community, working as one family."

"The school can only be recognised for these achievements through the support and dedication of parents, carers, pupils and the wider community."

"We would like to thank you all for ensuring your children live out our school mission and contribute fully to the Catholic life of our school."

St Peter's, which celebrated its 80th birthday in 2022, has benefitted from a major investment programme, including new sport



**St Peter's Catholic College in South Bank has been rated as outstanding for Catholic life and mission**

and arts facilities, an external facelift and a Virtual Reality suite, which inspectors mentioned in their report.

They also praise the school's contribution to the CAUSE Christmas hamper campaign and participation in the Flame Catholic youth event, the visit of St Bernadette's relics and a

growing involvement in the annual Lourdes pilgrimage.

"Students are exceptionally proud to attend St Peter's," the inspectors said. "They feel a part of the school's long, rich history and have the desire to be a part of the school's future."



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**NEWS**

# Bishop meets people of all ages on parish visit

Bishop Terry enjoyed some time in St George's Catholic Primary School in York as part of his parish visitation.

Headteacher Deirdre Patton-Statham welcomed and introduced him to children as they celebrated the Feast of the Presentation by reprising their nativity roles.

Bishop Terry spoke to every single child and even joined in with an early years' music lesson.

Mrs Patton-Statham said everyone enjoyed the day and thanked Bishop Terry for coming to see them.

Bishop Terry also attended services at St George's Church throughout the weekend, celebrating Masses alongside Canon Jerry Twomey.

He met many parishioners, including Sister Joan Agnes, the oldest member of the Corpus Christi Carmelite community in York at 94.



Bishop Terry with Sister Joan Agnes of the Corpus Christi Carmelite community in York – Photo by Lars Karlsson



Bishop Terry with children reprising their nativity roles on the Feast of the Presentation at St George's in York

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You might say life would be a lot simpler! But imagine being homeless and not being able to apply for benefits because everything is online.

Through an initiative jointly supported by the SVP and *Laudato Si'* groups, parishioners at St George's, York, were asked to donate their unwanted mobile phones and laptops at church before Sunday Mass.

On the first Sunday alone, they handed over 29 mobile phones and five laptops.

They were donated to the city's IT ReUse project, which is supported by organisations that shared the goals of advancing digital inclusion, environmentalism and reuse.

The charity accepts donations of IT equipment from people and businesses and uses a network of community workers to distribute to people who can't access essential services and risk being left behind by the digital revolution.

They do not charge for their services and volunteers help safely clean, repurpose and redistribute devices.

Seamus O'Neill, of St George's SVP, said: "This is a really great initiative and shows how the SVP can partner with other organisations locally to help address poverty in all its forms."

The parish is planning a further appeal in early summer. If anyone wants more information on how to set up a scheme for their parish, email me at [admin@stgeorgeschurch-york.org.uk](mailto:admin@stgeorgeschurch-york.org.uk) or look online at [itreuse.org.uk](http://itreuse.org.uk).

**David Harper**



David Harper delivers the donations of mobile phones and laptops to Tyler Potter at the IT Reuse workshop



St Charles Parish in Hull was delighted to welcome Bishop Terry on the Feast of the Epiphany to celebrate Mass and confer the Sacrament of Confirmation on 14 young people. Thank you, Bishop Terry and congratulations to all our candidates

# Catholic evangelist to speak at charismatic day

**Catholic evangelist Derek Williams will be guest speaker at a Day of Healing and Evangelisation organised by Middlesbrough Charismatic Diocesan Service of Communion.**

Derek, a layman and father of four, will talk about his call as a full-time evangelist in the Catholic Church.

“In February 1990, I first experienced the Baptism in the Holy Spirit at Holy Souls prayer meeting, Birmingham,” said Derek. “This was truly a life-changing experience. I started receiving many prophetic words from various people, indicating the charism God has given me and the work he had called me

to. The words ‘rebuild my Church’ were repeated to me over the subsequent years.

“After this experience I immersed myself in scripture studies – my hunger for God’s word was a grace in itself – and frequented the sacraments.”

Derek went on vocations retreats, both with religious orders and with his diocese, but did not go down that route and instead married.

He worked in banking until 2003, when he began exercising a full-time lay apostolate. Five years ago he began a distance learning degree in Divinity.

“This has had a huge impact on my own efforts to lead people to Christ and my approach to what the Church calls ‘the individual lay apostolate,’” he said.

“My role as an evangelist flows from the grace God gave me, initially at Baptism, then strengthened at Confirmation. It is nurtured through receiving regular Communion and frequenting Confession, plus my daily prayer time, which keep me in and deepens my union with Christ.”

Derek now speaks at Life in the Spirit Seminars, days of renewal, retreats and conferences and runs scripture courses for

parishes and groups.

The day, which has the theme “He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and Fire” (Matthew 3:11), will include praise and worship, Eucharistic Adoration, a healing service and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

It takes place at St Paulinus Church, Guisborough, on Saturday March 23 from 11am to 4.30pm. There is no charge, but a collection will be taken for expenses.

Lunch will be provided but special dietary requirements cannot be catered for. For more information contact Sharon on 07932 420809 or email [cdscmiddlesbrough@gmail.com](mailto:cdscmiddlesbrough@gmail.com).

# Marske Fishermen’s Choir come to St Andrew’s

**Marske Fishermen’s Choir will bring their unique blend of voices and songs to St Andrew’s Parish Hall in Teesville on Friday March 22.**

The concert comes 12 months after a previous event had to be cancelled.

Tickets are £5 each, with all money raised going towards the parish funds. They are available from the back of St Andrew’s and St Anne’s churches or from any fundraising group member. You can also pay on the night at the door.

Doors open at 7pm, with the concert starting at 7.30pm. Please bring your own food and drink.



Marske Fishermen’s Choir will sing at St Andrew’s, Teesville, on Friday March 22

# Catenians host annual dinner and clergy night

**Almost 108 years since its inauguration, Middlesbrough Catenians hosted its 93rd Annual Charter Dinner and Clergy Night at the town’s Leonardo Hotel.**

The dinner aims to recognise the inauguration in 1916 of Middlesbrough Circle’s Catenian Charter and bring together fellow Catenians and non-Catenians and their guests, both from around Province 5 and from our local area.

We also seek to honour the work of our clergy and to celebrate and nourish our presence and relationships with them and to raise charitable funds.

More than 80 brothers and their guests and clergy from around the diocese attended the

dinner.

After the meal, President Paul Healy addressed the guests before principal speaker Fran Garrity reflected on the funnier sides of life as a fraud investigator and part-time comedian.

A charity raffle raised £700, which Paul will hand over to his chosen charity, Zoe’s Place Baby Hospice in Middlesbrough.

This will be our second donation to the charity, having presented them with a cheque for £1,000 after last year’s dinner.

On behalf of the circle, Paul sends his grateful thanks to all who attended and contributed to the success of the evening.

Martin Lodge



Principal guests, front row Brother Province 5 President John Thompson (Durham Circle), Brother Middlesbrough President Paul Healy and Brother Province 5 Director Ian Calvert (Sunderland and South Shields Circle). Back row Mark Taylor (Diocese of Middlesbrough Lourdes Pilgrimage director), Fran Garrity (main speaker), KSC Council 29 Grand Knight Keith Tillotson and Reverend Canon Paul Farrer (Dean of St Mary’s Cathedral)



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**NEWS**

# The climate clock is ticking – we need to act now!

**It is now eight years since the Holy Father published *Laudato Si'*, writes adult formation coordinator DEACON DAVID CROSS.**

Pope Francis recently wrote a follow-up letter to the world, *Laudate Deum*, again calling for a worldwide response to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

“I wanted to share with all of you, my brothers and sisters of our suffering planet, my heartfelt concerns about the care of our common home” (Pope Francis, *Laudate Deum* (LD), para 2).

“With the passage of time, I have realised that our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point. In addition to this possibility ... the impact of climate change will increasingly prejudice the lives and families of many persons. We will feel its effects in areas of healthcare, sources of employment, access to resources, housing,

forced migrations, etc ... This is a global issue and one intimately related to the dignity of human life.” (LD para 2-3)

These are stark, serious words as the Holy Father expresses the urgency we face as local, national and global communities.

He draws on the words of bishops in the United States: “Our care for one another and our care for the earth are intimately bound together. Climate change is one of the principal challenges facing society and the global community. The most vulnerable people bear the effects of climate change, whether at home or around the world.” (LD para 3)

I recently joined a group of lay people to explore how we might present *Laudate Deum* and the challenge of climate change to the people of our diocese in a spirit of hope.

Here are summaries of presentations given.



**Time is running out to respond to the Holy Father’s message on Care for our Common Home – Photo courtesy of Px Here**

## Why Pope Francis felt the need to write again



**Time is running out and our response to the climate crisis has been inadequate.**

The world is collapsing and may be at breaking point. Pope Francis describes the situation as a “structural sin” – the systems that are meant to be caring for creation are in fact destroying it, with the most severe impacts falling, unjustly, on the poorest and weakest.

He calls out the years of delay and denial by the powerful groups who have an interest in maintaining fossil fuels and other industries that cause environmental harm. He challenges the world to stop presenting the issue as something purely ecological, green, romantic and to be ridiculed.

He criticises the world’s “technocratic paradigm”, which places increasing faith in systems and institutions that see creation simply as a resource to be used and abused, rather than a gift from God to be cared for loved, for the benefit of all people.

He directs leaders to find solutions that are drastic, intense, count on the commitment of all and that will be efficient, obligatory and readily monitored.

**Paddy O'Neill**

### The major goals of *Laudato Si'*

- A response to the earth and the cry of the poor
- Developing ecological economics
- Adoption of simple lifestyles
- Ecological education
- Ecological Spirituality
- Community engagement and participatory action
- These goals are for the spirit of an integral ecology, hope for the earth and the poor.

**Don Lillistone**

## COP28



***Laudate Deum* was produced to coincide with COP28, the 28th annual United Nations Climate Conference, where governments discussed how to limit and plan for future climate change.**

Bishop Terry was a cosignatory to a letter calling on the government to reconsider its position on allowing more fossil fuel extraction from the North Sea.

It is a recognition that while change at an individual level is important, unless we act to bring about policy change at national and international levels, the climate crisis can only deepen. Pope Francis is calling us to hope for a better world, and to urgent action.

Why was COP28 important? The climate emergency affects the poorest communities most but is a global problem, involving many dimensions – science, economics, society, politics and moral and ethical questions.

All countries are affected and need to come together to act to keep the 1.5C limit in reach. The window for this crucial target, thus avoiding the most damaging impact of climate change, is rapidly narrowing.

Pope Francis’ message calling for the “elimination of fossil fuels” was a significant moment at COP28.

Important agreements were made:

- A landmark agreement calling on countries to transition away from fossil fuels and speed up their climate action by tripling the amount of energy the world can generate from renewable energy sources by 2030. By the end of the COP28, more than 100 countries had agreed to phase out fossil fuels.
- A loss-and-damage fund to help poorer developing nations prepare for the worst effects of climate change and move away from fossil fuels and other polluting activities.
- Concrete commitment to link the climate and food agendas. This should be reflected in future national plans, to address food and water vulnerabilities and reduce emissions. Small-scale farmers need more support.

**Teresa Lyth**

## What can we do?



**The Holy Father tells us we need to be “honest and recognise that the most effective solutions will not come from individual efforts alone, but above all from major political decisions on the international and global level.**

Nonetheless, every little bit helps, and avoiding an increase of a tenth of a degree in the global temperature would already suffice to alleviate some suffering for many people” (LD para 69).

“Efforts by households to reduce pollution and waste and to consume with prudence are creating a new culture. The mere fact that personal, family and community habits are changing is contributing to greater concern about the unfulfilled responsibilities of the political sectors and indignation at the lack of interest shown by the powerful” (LD para 71).

**Barbara Hungin**

### The old mantra still holds: Think globally, act locally

There’s something we can all do, from changing our patterns of consumption to recycling more and turning down our thermostats a degree or two.

We can also write to our MPs to let them know how concerned we are about ongoing plans for the drilling and burning of more fossil fuels, as opposed to renewable forms of energy, along with the need for international cooperation at policy level.

The clock is ticking, but we continue to act in hope!



# Why World Bank is failing in its mission after 80 years

**Last year you helped Salina, a small farmer from Bangladesh, call on the World Bank to protect farmers' rights to freely access their own seeds. Right now, the World Bank is not doing enough to support small farmers like her.**

Instead it has pushed for laws that are beneficial to big business, selling commercial seeds at the price of reducing or even criminalising small farmers' rights to access them.

Now, as the World Bank approaches its 80th birthday, our policy experts say it has failed in its mission to end poverty.

Over the past eight decades, the World Bank has issued many billions of dollars in loans to countries in need, making it the largest source of financial help to countries across the Global South.

Despite this spending, the World Bank's policies have often proved problematic. From imposing harsh conditions on loans to low-income countries, to making it harder for small-scale farmers to access seeds, the World Bank's actions have often been detrimental to some of the world's poorest communities.

That's why CAFOD supporters will send birthday messages to the World Bank to call on them to change direction to ensure a more just world, in line with Church teachings on solidarity.

## Why was the World Bank founded?

After the destruction of World War Two, the World Bank was founded to support Europe to rebuild, end extreme poverty and prevent future world wars.

At the Bretton Woods Conference in July 1944, 730 representatives from 44 allied nations made key agreements aimed at fostering economic cooperation. It was at this same meeting that the World Bank's sister agency, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was formed.

After initially providing loans to a post-war Europe, throughout the 1970s the World Bank and IMF shifted focus to low- and middle-income countries. In the decades following this pivot, dozens of the world's poorest countries were forced to adhere to "structural adjustment" policies in exchange for loans.

These policies often required countries to reduce government spending, remove trade barriers and expose their emerging industries to competition from highly developed industries and corporations based in the advanced capitalist countries with which they could not compete.

Such policies have been widely criticised for causing

sometimes catastrophic social and economic harm to developing countries. Despite the World Bank's acknowledgement of some failings of structural adjustment, similar policies remain in place to this day.

## How the World Bank's policies are harming farmers

CAFOD's recent research into the World Bank's agricultural policies found they were perpetuating poverty and the climate crisis through its support for large agribusinesses.

Through conditions on funding, the World Bank often forces countries to impose new rules and laws on seeds, which pushes farmers into buying commercial seeds and fertilisers, instead of using their own saved seeds.

The World Bank then measures the success of their programmes by measuring farmers' greater participation in the private sector and increased access to hybrid seeds and fertilisers. As a result, large-scale agribusiness companies have been the principal beneficiaries of the World Bank's

approach to seeds.

While big agribusinesses profit from increased sales, the small-scale farmers, who are vital to producing the world's food, are often sidelined.

The World Bank is failing to measure its policies' impact on poverty reduction and overlooks the role of farmers' seed systems as a crucial part of building a sustainable global food system.

Send a message to the World Bank for its 80th birthday

This year marks the 80th birthday of the World Bank, a publicly funded bank that was created to eradicate poverty. But with 2.4bn people having no regular access to food, the World Bank is clearly not doing its job.

Let's come together to share one birthday wish: to bring seeds back into the hands of farmers. You can take this action on our website at [cafod.org.uk/campaign/campaign-with-us/send-a-message-to-the-world-bank](https://cafod.org.uk/campaign/campaign-with-us/send-a-message-to-the-world-bank).



CAFOD campaigners took Salina's message right to the World Bank in London – Photo by Louise Norton/CAFOD

# How your money is helping in Ukraine, two years on

**It's been two years since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a conflict that has forced more than five million people from their homes and left many seeking refuge outside the country.**

Your generous contributions to the Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis Appeal have helped more than 140,000 vulnerable women, men and children access vital aid including food, water, shelter and counselling support.

Thanks to you, our local partners are helping people to rebuild their lives after experiencing trauma, losing loved ones, homes and livelihoods.

The need in Ukraine remains high. More than 17m people require humanitarian help. With your support and prayers, we continue to reach those who are caught up in this conflict, often left with nothing.

## How your donations have helped

We have been working with local partners in Ukraine and neighbouring countries since the invasion.

Because of the conflict and harsh winters, many vulnerable people – including women, children, older people and those with special

needs – don't have access to enough food or hot meals.

Our local partners Caritas Ukraine and Depaul Ukraine have been distributing food baskets and drinking water, and offering hot meals, emergency medical support, hygiene kits and counselling to those in need.

## Surviving the harsh winter

Shelling, air strikes and other destruction from the war have left thousands of people in Ukraine living in damaged buildings or left homeless, often with disrupted access to electricity and heating.

CAFOD has been working with local partners Depaul Ukraine and Caritas Ukraine in places such as Kharkiv, Kyiv and Odesa, offering temporary shelter and long-term housing to internally displaced people, repairing damaged homes and providing winter supplies including warm clothing, firewood and fuel generators to keep people warm during the harsh winter when temperatures can drop to -20°C.

"Depaul is constantly adjusting projects to meet people's greatest needs – it's our biggest challenge and our priority," said Dmytro Dmytrenko, Depaul Ukraine, director of programmes.

"We are prioritising in-kind needs [material aid] around the frontline, and as you move away from it, we are supporting people who are more in need of mental health counselling, employment and housing."

## Dealing with trauma

By offering individual counselling, group

therapy and child friendly spaces at our local centres and through outreach teams within Ukraine we can provide services which make people more resilient to trafficking and exploitation.

Refugees, internally displaced people and those in areas of active conflict are also at a higher risk of physical and sexual violence, trauma and human trafficking.

Before the conflict, Ukraine was already a significant origin of human trafficking. Since February 2022, around 90 per cent of those who have fled the country are women and children who are especially vulnerable to trafficking.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime predicts trafficking cases of Ukrainians in Europe increased by tens of thousands over the last year.

CAFOD is working with Caritas Ukraine's team of experts to raise awareness to prevent future instances of human trafficking, including sex and labour trafficking among the vulnerable population. We are working with trained psychologists and specialist support services to identify and help survivors and their family members deal with their trauma and rebuild their lives.

We continue to support those affected by the conflict in Ukraine. Please donate to our appeal to help support our efforts if you can and please pray for a lasting ceasefire, an end to the conflict and peace for all those affected by this crisis.

**Carol Cross**  
Community Participation Coordinator in  
Middlesbrough and Leeds



Ivanna, 59, receives a food parcel from CAFOD's local partner Depaul Ukraine at its Humanitarian Centre for people who have lost their homes in Odesa, Ukraine – Photo by Maciek Musialek/DEC

## NEWS

# Stella Maris port chaplains fight modern slavery

**“Isaac hasn’t seen his family for three years,” says Steve Willows, Stella Maris’ regional port chaplain in Immingham, Lincolnshire.**

“He’s not allowed to work. He’s doing his best, but it’s hard to stay positive. Every couple of weeks, I take him out for a trip. He confided in me one time, ‘I don’t know where I’d be now without Stella Maris.’”

Stella Maris (formerly known as Apostleship of the Sea) is the Catholic charity supporting seafarers and fishers in the UK and worldwide.

Isaac is one of a growing number of fishers who has become a victim of modern slavery. According to the International Labour Organisation, migrants are especially vulnerable to being deceived and coerced by brokers and recruitment agencies and forced to work on board vessels under the threat of force or through debt bondage.

Isaac (not his real name) left Ghana in 2020 and, because of a shortage of job opportunities, he paid £1,000 to an agent for a UK fishing contract.

The moment he stepped on board the trawler, he sensed trouble. He and four other men were put to work immediately, with no training or safety equipment. They worked until midnight – and were woken at 4am to start again. With each gruelling day that passed, things got worse.

“There was no drinking water on board and never enough food,” explained Isaac. “Some of the crew shouted racist abuse at us, and we worked so many hours there was no time to cook or even wash.”

Steve first met Isaac in 2021 after Deacon

Nick O’Neill, Stella Maris’ senior area port chaplain for the south of England and Wales, became aware of his plight, and that of four other seafarers, and alerted the police and other agencies.

Stella Maris found the men a place to stay, fed them, provided clean clothes and helped them navigate endless meetings and paperwork.

“Isaac felt shamed and broken by the cruel treatment he had received,” said Steve. “Worse, he was not paid anything until he and the other fishers were rescued off the ship and we and the police got involved. It’s hard to believe this could happen off the coast of England.”

Stella Maris has launched a groundbreaking initiative aimed at tackling modern slavery in UK ports and the UK maritime sector. A series of workshops in six ports, including one in Hull, highlighted the issue and brought together stakeholders from ports, shipping, law enforcement agencies, anti-trafficking bodies and other welfare agencies.

“The workshops are insightful and essential for those wishing to better understand the risks and issues caused by modern slavery,” said participant James Riddick, group head of supply chain at Peel Ports.

Stella Maris CEO Tim Hill MBE said the charity is in a prime position to tackle modern slavery.

“Stella Maris’ port chaplains and volunteer ship visitors are often first responders in cases of modern slavery within the port setting, and this puts us in a perfect position to be a galvanising force in tackling this



Stella Maris port chaplain Steve Willows

issue.

“We have set up a Cross Port Anti-Slavery Steering Group, which will seek to increase joined-up working across ports in the country and boost collaboration among the various maritime bodies and organisations to address and root out modern slavery.

“Stella Maris’ excellent ongoing partnership with port operators, shipping companies, protection and indemnity clubs, enforcement authorities and anti-trafficking organisations

helps us to provide appropriate, timely and effective intervention and support to fishers and seafarers affected by modern slavery. Ultimately, this is all about working together and drawing upon our respective strengths and expertise to support those in need.”

To find out more about Stella Maris’ work, or to make a donation to its Lent Appeal about tackling modern slavery, visit [stellamaris.org.uk/lent](http://stellamaris.org.uk/lent).

## Madonna House is subject of Newman Circle talk

**Jeanne Guillemette, from the Madonna House community in Robin Hood’s Bay, is the guest speaker at the next meeting of Cleveland Newman Circle.**

She will talk about “Madonna House Spirituality: More than meets the eye”.

The spirituality of Madonna House grew from the trials and hardships of their founder Catherine de Hueck Doherty in Russia at the turn of the century, and the experiences that led to her strong faith and love of God.

A community grew around her that aspired to a way of life expressed as her “Little Mandate from God”.

The talk is in St Mary’s Cathedral Hall on Wednesday March 13 from 7.45pm, with refreshments from 7.30pm. All are welcome.



## A Letter From Madonna House - Putting everything ‘on the altar’



**The entire community of Madonna House around the world recently experienced a unique gathering called a sobor (from a Russian word meaning “gathering”).**

Our various mission houses clustered together into groups and joined our main house in Combermere, Ontario, through Zoom, for numerous meetings over two weeks. We in Robin Hood’s Bay travelled to Belgium to join our team there.

It was a great joy to see everyone! In listening intently to one another during the meetings, we strove to hear the voice of God coming through what was expressed by our brothers and sisters in the community.

One phrase that came up several times was that of putting all that we hold dear “on the altar”, ready to be sacrificed, if that is what God asks. This expression comes from the Old Testament story of Abraham, our father in faith, who was ready to sacrifice his son Isaac, “the son of the promise”, through whom God was to give him “descendants as

numerous as the stars in the heavens”.

Abraham’s faith and trust in God went so far as to believe God could even raise his son from the dead. In the end, God prevented Abraham from offering Isaac as a holocaust. But “in the fullness of time”, God gave up his only son, Jesus, who was crucified, died and rose from the dead, for us.

What does this have to do with us in Madonna House? We do not have sons and daughters to place “on the altar”, as Abraham did. We don’t have a promise of descendants without number.

Yet we believe God has called us. In speaking about the essentials of our life, we spoke of many things that are dear to our way of life: ways of doing things, ways in which our community expresses itself, things that seem to be essential to our spirit (like our farm in Combermere or having Byzantine liturgies). Little by little, we began to talk about placing each of these things “on the altar”, knowing that

even if God asked us to give them up, it would not take away from what was most essential to our way of life.

God may not ask us to give them up, but freedom comes from offering them to him. This also keeps us from taking things for granted and renews our gratitude for what we do have.

How many of us struggle with the prospect of losing something or someone dear? No, it is not always easy. Yet, interior freedom and joy come from putting all that we hold dear into God’s hands, trusting in his abundant goodness. Jesus Christ came to show us just how trustworthy our Heavenly Father is.

He freely offered his life to restore to us our relationship of confident trust with our Father. Lent is a time to renew our desire to follow Christ. This year, let us follow him with renewed confidence and trust in his immense love.

Jeanne Guillemette

# Catholics urged to have their say on election

The Catholic Union is urging Catholics across the country to have their say on what matters most to them ahead of the next general election, which is expected later this year.

The organisation has launched a new survey to test the temperature of Catholic views and attitudes towards politics.

The survey is seeking people's views on the policy areas where Catholic voices are most needed. It also explores the extent to which Catholics are engaged in politics and how they plan to take part in the election.

The results will inform the Catholic Union's interventions in the election campaign, including the publication of a "Catholic Manifesto", which they will send to candidates ahead of polling day.

Rishi Sunak has hinted the election will take place in "the second half of this year".

The Catholic Union draws its president and vice presidents from across the political spectrum. Last year, crossbench peer Baroness Hollins took over as president from Conservative MP Sir Edward Leigh.

Current vice president, Labour MP Mike Kane, is encouraging people to take part in the election and make their voices heard.

He said: "Whatever your views, please make sure that you vote. Taking part in free and fair elections is a great gift and we should not take it for granted."

Catholic Union director Nigel Parker said: "There are so many areas in society where a Catholic voice is needed, both now and in the next parliament. We want to make sure our work is focused on those areas lay Catholics care most about and where we can have the greatest impact. Taking part in this survey is an important first step in this election year."

You can find the survey on the Catholic Union's website, catholicunion.org.uk.



Please remember in your prayers the following clergy from our diocese whose anniversaries are this month. We list here them along with their final resting place.

1	1908	Very Rev Canon James Wells	York
6	1944	Very Rev Canon Thomas Noone	Pocklington
7	2015	Rev Joseph Brennan	Enfield
8	1927	Rev Patrick Clancy	Hull
8	1927	Rev Charles Donovan	Wycliffe
8	1999	Rev James Gannon	Middlesbrough
9	2007	Very Rev Mgr Patrick Lannen	Dungarvan
10	2015	Rev Michael Murray	Carlisle
12	1934	Very Rev Canon Patrick Cronin	York
12	1951	Rev Michael McEldowney	Grangetown
14	1886	Very Rev Provost Henry Walker	South Bank
15	1932	Very Rev Canon A D'Hooghe	Thornaby
16	1908	Rev Edmund Hickey	Egton Bridge
16	1969	Very Rev Matthew O'Connell	York
17	1968	Rev Richard O'Riordan	Hull
21	1949	Very Rev Canon John Owens	Hull
21	1969	Rt Rev George Brunner Third Bishop of Middlesbrough	
21	1991	Very Rev Canon Patrick Bluett MC TD	Florida
24	1935	Rev Stephen Hines	York
26	1997	Rev Matthias Smyth	Ballyjamesduff
27	1963	Rev Eugene O'Reilly	Hedon
27	2012	Rev Hugh Curristan	Letterkenny
29	1960	Rt Rev Mgr Provost Patrick Lynn	Scarborough
30	1972	Rev Oswin Corboy BA	Scarborough

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**NEWS**

**Out & About**

**1 Friday**

Events, articles, and photographs for the April edition of the *Voice* are due by this day.

**Noon** "We Dare to Say" Lenten Talks at St Mary's Cathedral. Stations of the Cross and a simple soup lunch before session begins.

**4 Monday**

**9.45am-10.25am** Beverley Christian Meditation Group meets online. Further information from christianmeditation.beverley@gmail.com. This takes place very Monday.

**5 Tuesday**

**10am** Christian Meditation Group meet online. Further information from Terry Doyle at terrydoyle@live.co.uk. This takes place every Tuesday.

**7pm** Mass for Knights of St Columba Council 29, followed by a meeting, at St Mary's Cathedral, Middlesbrough.

**6 Wednesday**

**5.30pm** Exposition and Sung Evening Prayer each Wednesday (term-time only) at St Mary's Cathedral, Middlesbrough.

**7 Thursday**

**7.45pm** Middlesbrough Catenians meet at Middlesbrough Cricket Club, Green Lane TS5 7SL. Call Peter Carey on 01642 317772 or Chris Rhodes 01642 319161.

**8 Friday**

**Noon** "We Dare to Say" Lenten Talks at St Mary's Cathedral. Stations of the Cross and a simple soup lunch before session begins.

**10 Sunday**

**3pm** Mass for LGBT+ community, family and friends at the Chapel of the Bar Convent. Doors open from 2.30pm.

**11 Monday**

**2pm** Music for the Mind at St Mary's Cathedral for people who enjoy singing and connecting memories. No charge, everyone welcome. Tea, cake, and biscuits followed by fun. For details call 01642 710179. You can also join in on the Diocese of Middlesbrough YouTube page.

**12 Tuesday**

**12.45 pm** The Catholic Women's Luncheon Club meets every second Tuesday of the month at the Kingston Theatre Hotel, Kingston Square, Hull. Gather at 12.45 for lunch at 1pm. All ladies in the Hull and East Riding area welcome. Call 01482 446565 or email jayne.wilson24@gmail.com.

**13 Wednesday**

**7pm** Hull Circle of the Catenian Association meets at the Lazaat Hotel, Cottingham, followed by Mass and a buffet-style meal. If interested, email Charles Cseh at hullcirclesecretary@gmail.com.

**7.30pm** Cleveland Newman Circle talk, "Madonna House spirituality: More than meets the eye", by Jeanne Guillemette, St Mary's Cathedral Hall.

**15 Friday**

**Noon** "We Dare to Say" Lenten Talks at St Mary's Cathedral. Stations of the Cross and a simple soup lunch before session begins.

**16 Saturday**

**6pm** Mass in Italian in the Father Kelly Room at Our Lady's, Acomb, York, followed by refreshments. All welcome.

**7.30pm** The Eddie White Sacred Heart Parish St Patrick's Eve Dance with Michael Coyne, Erimus Club, Cumberland Road, Middlesbrough TS5 6JB. Admission by ticket only £8. Call John Brown on 07871958412

**17 Sunday**

**3pm** Fellowship Mass at St Alphonsus Church, North Ormesby, celebrated by Father John Idio.

**30 Saturday**

**Noon** LGBT+ social gathering in the café at the Bar Convent, York. All welcome.

**If you have any events that you would like including in the Out and About section, please email Heidi.cummins@rcdmidd.org.uk.**

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**Peer demands justice for Christians killed by extremists**

**Catholic peer Lord Alton of Liverpool has made an impassioned plea for government action to address jihadist extremism that is driving terrorist attacks across Nigeria.**

Speaking in the House of Lords, Lord Alton asked Lord Benyon, Minister of State for Climate, Environment and Energy: "Who is being brought to justice for the further 200 killings in Plateau State in Nigeria just two weeks ago, over Christmas?"

He demanded urgent action to identify and bring to trial the perpetrators of this and other extremist atrocities – including the 2022 Pentecost Sunday church massacre in Owo, Ondo State.

Lord Alton met Dominic and Margaret Attah – survivors of the Owo attack who visited the UK for ACN #RedWednesday events last year.

Lord Alton said: "The couple wanted to know – and so do I – why no one has been brought to justice in this culture of impunity.

"Persecution and conflict are major drivers in the displacement of 110 million people worldwide."

#RedWednesday 2023 focused on the growing problems in Africa where there has been a dramatic rise in violent conflict and persecution.



Margaret and Dominic Attah with Lord Alton (second from left) and other parliamentarians on #RedWednesday 2023 – Photo © ACN

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**Copy Deadline**

Copy and photographs for inclusion in the *Catholic Voice* should be sent to: **The Editor, Middlesbrough Diocesan Catholic Voice, Curial Offices, 50a The Avenue, Linthorpe, Middlesbrough, TS5 6QT.**

Tel (01642) 850505, email catholicvoice@rcdmidd.org.uk

Deadline Friday March 1 for our April edition.

Where possible please send articles in Word and photographs as jpegs. Please confirm when you send in your photographs that those who appear in them have given their permission for publication.

# Invitation to Oasis of Silence at St Hilda's Priory

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11, 28)*

**The Oasis of Silence programme at St Hilda's Priory offers space and stillness to seek God with loving awareness in the present moment.**

The programme offers a variety of opportunities to make retreats of different lengths in a peaceful and welcoming environment, away from our busy everyday lives.

It will appeal to everyone seeking stillness and silence and who is interested in getting to know or to deepening the practice of contemplative prayer.

"There are many techniques leading to contemplative prayer," the Jesuit, Father Franz Jalics SJ (1927-2021) said. "I teach only one of them."

In this programme we keep to the form and the dynamics of his method (also known as

the Gries Path).

Through a deepening awareness of the reality of the present moment by focusing on our breathing, our hands and his name, we are led to an ever-deeper encounter with Jesus Christ.

**Ten-day retreat (Monday July 1 to Thursday July 11)**

This retreat course, conceived and developed by Father Franz, invites you to a long and intensive time of silence during the whole retreat, a school of awareness leading to the Jesus prayer. The only prerequisite for this form of retreat is a true longing to be one with God in prayer and a normal state of mental resilience.

After an introductory period, the daily schedule invites you to several hours of silent meditation as a group, as well as time spent outside in nature individually, participation in the Eucharist (whenever

possible) and up to an hour of light manual work (either in the house or in the garden) daily.

An integral aid is our request for participants to switch off their mobiles and refrain from other activities during the retreat. Individual accompaniment, as well as times of sharing in the group, is also an important part of the retreat.

**Four-day Tasting the Silence retreat (Thursday April 11 to Sunday April 14 and Monday October 21 to Thursday October 24)**

This short-form retreat, simple and clearly led, offers the possibility of moving towards contemplative prayer for those not used to extended time spent in silence. We stay in silence before God in silent meditation as a group, as well as individually outside in nature.

These days of prayer are a school of awareness: listening, looking, alert and open

with all our senses to the here and now. What is important is to be willing to remain lovingly alert to the silence and to be open to God's presence in each moment wherever you are.

For more information or registration, contact Sister Helen Stout at St Hilda's Priory, Castle Road, Whitby, YO21 3SL, email [hospitality@ohpwhitby.org.uk](mailto:hospitality@ohpwhitby.org.uk) or call 01947 899600 or 07595 215083.

We want anyone who feels called to make a contemplative retreat able to do so and we keep costs low. Accommodation is in ensuite rooms (two disabled-friendly), with all meals provided.

Suggested donations for the 10-day retreat is £550 and the four-day retreat £165.

St Hilda's Priory, which is at Sneaton Castle, Whitby, is the Mother House of an Anglican religious community for women, the Order of the Holy Paraclete.

**Sister Helen OHP and Angela Simek Hall**

## Congratulations to Thibault, York's newest MYP!

**Everyone at All Saints Catholic School, York, is proud of Year 12 pupil Thibault, who has been elected as the Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) for the city.**

Thibault gave a presentation to fellow pupils, who then voted on what they perceive to be the most significant issues facing young people today, with categories including the cost-of-living crisis, the environment, foreign policy and youth services.

The views he received will shape Thibault's speech in the Youth Parliament's Make Your Mark referendum in London in November.

Thibault will also campaign in York and attend meetings with councillors and the MPs for Central and Outer York.

He will focus on social interaction between young people, looking at youth club provision in the city and whether this allows mixing between young people of different

socio-economic groups.



**Year 12 pupil at All Saints School in York Thibault has been elected to the Youth Parliament**

## Welcome to the diocese, Father Reji!

**Father Rejimion Devasia, who has come from India to work in our diocese, visited St Paulinus in Guisborough to concelebrate Mass with Father Jose Michael.**

Father Reji, as he is known, is 48 and comes from Kerala state in India. He was ordained in 2006 and has worked in India for 18 years. Father Reji has joined the clergy at St Mary's Cathedral in Middlesbrough, where he will serve alongside Canon Paul Farrer and Father Peter Taylor.

By coincidence, the church was full, as it was also a Mass for the pupils of St Paulinus School.

Afterwards, he met parishioners at a coffee morning.

"I am looking forward to expressing the faith in England and proclaim the Good News," he said.

**Brian Gleeson**



**Father Reji Devasia has joined the clergy at St Mary's Cathedral, Middlesbrough – Photo by Brian Gleeson**

## Art of Dying Well podcast looks at second chances

**The first Art of Dying Well podcast of 2024 looks at coma recovery, second chances and spiritual awakening.**

James Macintyre, a freelance journalist and biographer, describes his extraordinary near-death experience, giving a first-hand account of the life-threatening pancreatitis he endured in May 2023 that led to a five-week coma and four-month hospitalisation.

James was admitted to the intensive care unit at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital in a critical condition. Doctors informed him he was suffering from severe pancreatitis that could be fatal.

After an arduous week involving blunt conversations with medical staff about the possibility of dying, they put him in a medically induced coma to aid his breathing and survival.

While in a coma, James came close to death when doctors performed emergency tracheostomy surgery. Thankfully, he pulled through but awoke to the devastating news that his mother had died while he was unconscious.

James credits his survival and new outlook to the excellent hospital care he received, as well as his Christian faith. He now hopes to impart lessons about valuing each day, having an attitude of gratitude, and centring one's life on eternity, rather than worldly pursuits.

The Art of Dying Well offers practical and spiritual support to those faced with the prospect of death and dying.

Find out more and listen to the podcasts at [artofdyingwell.org](http://artofdyingwell.org).

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**The Diocese of Middlesbrough would like to point out that while every care is taken with advertisements placed in the Catholic Voice, publication does not suggest an endorsement of any views expressed.**

## NEWS

# Inspiring event for trust school business leaders

**Business managers supporting schools throughout Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust (NPCAT) joined corporate services colleagues for an inspiring all-day event delivered by head of business and financial support services Jonny Coates and school business leadership specialist Laura Williams.**

The NPCAT Trust Business Manager Forum gathering at Postgate House included training, corporate services updates and an insight into design, marketing and communications.

There was also a session with guest speakers who talked about menopause in the workplace and how to signpost colleagues to access the external support that's available.

This new format of the forum aims to deliver high-quality interactive training sessions, coaching, networking and key service updates.

Mr Coates said: "At NPCAT we are proud to support colleagues on their professional development journey and recognise the value and importance of high quality CPD and networking opportunities for all.

"By working together, we are able to deliver effective services to our family of schools and embed good practice that supports our children and young people in our schools."

One of the country's largest Catholic multi-academy trusts, NPCAT comprises 38 schools throughout Teesside and North Yorkshire, including the city of York.



# Record number of priests arrested, kidnapped or murdered

**A total of 132 priests and religious were arrested, abducted or killed globally in 2023, with Belarus, China, Nicaragua and Nigeria being the countries where clergy were most under threat.**

Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) said the number – up eight on 2022 – only covers confirmed cases. Problems accessing data in some countries means the real figure is likely to be higher.

Regina Lynch, ACN international executive president, said: "We are deeply concerned about the rise in threats faced by priests in countries such as Nigeria and Nicaragua, who are at risk often for simply carrying out their pastoral ministry.

"Authoritarian regimes have resorted to detaining priests and religious in order to punish the Church for speaking out against injustices and human rights violations, or merely for trying to operate freely."

Forty-six clergy were arrested in Nicaragua, including two bishops and four seminarians, while priests and religious were also expelled from the country or refused re-entry after foreign visits.

In China, 20 members of the clergy were arrested in 2023, according to ACN's sources,

although accurate data is hard to come by.

Authorities in Belarus detained at least 10 priests, with three still behind bars at the end of the year.

Two priests arrested by Russian forces in Ukraine over a year ago have not been released either.

In India, where anti-conversion laws continue to be used to try to impede the work of Catholic organisations, a religious sister and at least five other priests and religious were detained in 2023. Despite all being released, some still face charges that could lead to imprisonment.

When it comes to abductions, Nigeria was the worst offender with 28 cases, including three religious sisters.

Other countries where kidnappings occurred included Haiti, Mali, Burkina Faso and Ethiopia.

Most of those abducted have been released, but three priests are still missing in Nigeria and one in Burkina Faso.

ACN's statistics include all kidnappings and murders of Catholic priests and religious around the world, but arrests were only tracked when they were related to persecution.



A burnt down parish centre in Nigeria – Photo © ACN

# New law guidance must uphold 'right to prayer': Catholic Union

**The Catholic Union has told a Home Office consultation on introducing buffer zones around abortion clinics that private prayer should never be seen as unlawful.**

The Public Order Act 2023 includes the new offence of "interference with access to or provision of abortion services".

Backbench MPs introduced the measure, which mandates the creation of "safe access zones" around abortion facilities.

The Home Office is now consulting on guidance for the police and other authorities on the practical implication of this new law and its limits.

The Catholic Union said any new guidance must make it clear that "individual, private prayer should never be considered an offence in and of itself".

There have already been cases of people questioned and arrested near abortion clinics in which the main offence has been silent prayer, with Public Space Protection Orders being used by local authorities under existing legislation.

The Catholic Union has warned that the situation could get worse with the introduction of mandatory "safe access zones" around abortion clinics in England and Wales and has called for the guidance to be tightened before its publication later this year.

# Box office success for The Chosen

**The first episodes in season four of The Chosen reached number six in the box office on its opening day in UK and Irish cinemas, grossing more than other new releases such as The Colour Purple.**

The Chosen, a historical drama based on the life of Jesus as seen through the eyes of those who knew him, has become a worldwide global phenomenon, and momentum is continuing to build.

Season four's opening day saw an 86.3% increase in ticket sales against its first cinema release with the first two episodes of season three back in October 2022.

This latest season was the first to premiere outside the USA, with a red-carpet event at Leicester Square, London.

You can watch all episodes of The Chosen for free at [watch.thechosen.tv](http://watch.thechosen.tv).



## Check your passport if you're joining us for this year's pilgrimage!

**If you plan to join us on the 71st Diocese of Middlesbrough Pilgrimage to Lourdes, please remember that your passport must have at least six months remaining on the day we return.**

If your passport expires before December, you should apply for a new passport as soon as possible.

Because of a clash of dates with the Worldwide Military Pilgrimage, we have altered our normal week and will be in Lourdes from Sunday May 26 to Saturday June 1.

Joe Walsh Tours is our official travel agent and pilgrims will travel in two direct chartered flights from Teesside Airport to Tarbes Airport, Lourdes.

Prices for the flight, transfers and six nights' accommodation with full board range from £845 to £895, depending on your choice of hotel. Single rooms are available for an additional charge.

A flight-only option is available for £575, while there is a charge of £50 for infants under two years on the date of return.

The price for supported pilgrims staying in the hospital, the Accueil de Notre Dame, is £825.

Travel insurance for pilgrims up to 79 years on the date of return is £49, with an additional £49 charge for those aged 80 or over on the date of return.

As usual, there will be a full programme of services and a guided walking tour of Lourdes, visiting places associated with St Bernadette, guided visits to the sanctuaries, Grotto, baths and basilicas.

You can book now at [joewalshstours.co.uk](http://joewalshstours.co.uk).

Application forms for supported pilgrims are available from Lourdes secretary Pat Ling by calling 01642 760105 or emailing [lourdessecretary@rcdmidd.org.uk](mailto:lourdessecretary@rcdmidd.org.uk).

We remind all helpers that they must have DBS safeguarding clearance and attend one of our two mandatory Formation Training Days.

These sessions take place at Trinity Catholic College in Middlesbrough on Saturday March 2 from 9am to 4pm, with an evening session on Tuesday May 7 from 6pm to 10.30pm.

## Dates confirmed for our pre-pilgrimage Masses

**We invite everyone connected with the pilgrimage to attend two Masses as we prepare to travel to Lourdes.**

The first is at Sacred Heart Church, Southcoates Lane, Hull, at 2pm on Sunday May 5.

The second Mass is at St Gabriel's, Ormesby, Middlesbrough on Sunday May 19 at 3pm.

Tea and coffee will be served in the hall after both Masses, where there will also be updates for those coming on this year's pilgrimage.

## Environment Corner – Solar power project brings light of hope



The increased use of solar power offers hope for a sustainable future – Photo courtesy of PxHere

**It's easy to become overwhelmed by the size of the task we face to care for our Common Home, protect future generations and prevent climate catastrophe.**

This month I have tried to capture Pope Francis' messages of hope with which he closes both *Laudato Si'* and *Laudate Deum*.

It's good to look at creative projects that are signs of hope. One of these is the increasing proliferation of solar panel heating storage. A new site in County Durham has been approved that will see a new 49.9MW solar farm be built on a former coal-mining site north of Cockfield.

It seems fitting that an area of land once used to extract fossil fuels will now be used to produce significant and sustainable clean energy for the future. The electricity generated will be enough to power 13,000 homes.

High installation costs are the prime factor preventing more households from installing solar panels, and it is therefore welcome to learn of a solar subscription service being launched.

Sunsave has received initial government funding and is offering solar panels and batteries through a subscription model, eliminating the need to make such a substantial upfront payment.

These creative projects celebrate our capacity for positive change. As Pope Francis says, "It cannot be emphasised enough how everything is interconnected" (*Laudato Si'* 138)

**Barbara Hungin**

**NEWS**

# Archbishop of York speaks at Mary Ward service

Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell preached an inspiring sermon at the annual Mary Ward ecumenical service at St Thomas's Church in Osbaldwick, York.

He highlighted the importance of Mary Ward as a pioneer of women's education and publicly endorsed the #MaryWardForSaint campaign.

The archbishop spoke with passion, hailing her as a saintly woman who believed in the ability of women to be apostolically active within the Church.

He said he hoped to see Mary proclaimed a saint by giving witness to her fidelity to the Church that had persecuted her so strongly.

**Johan Bergström-Allen**



Sister Ann Stafford CJ, superior of the Bar Convent, with Archbishop Stephen and representatives of St Thomas's Church – Photo by Johan Bergström-Allen



Followers and supporters of woman Mary Ward (1585-1645) have launched a campaign to raise awareness and provide evidence for the ongoing case to have Mary Ward recognised as a saint. Our photo, taken by Charlotte Graham, shows Sister Ann with Mary's Ward's 17th-century crucifix.



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