



Bishop's Column

Beginning with the feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple and ending with the feast of the Chair of St Peter, the month of February is filled with many beautiful celebrations and saints' days.

And among these many other feast days this month, we remember especially Our Lady of Lourdes on Tuesday February 11. This is also the Day of Prayer for the Sick. And we pray for our own Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage, which is well on in preparation.



In Rome, the Jubilee Year begins to unfold...

- February 8/9: Jubilee of the Armed Forces, Police and Security Personnel. All members of the armed forces and police, municipal police, security operators, veterans, military associations, military academies, chaplaincies and military ordinariates are especially invited to this jubilee event, together with their families.

- February 15/18: Jubilee of Artists and the World of Culture.

- February 21/23: Jubilee of Deacons.

In the garden and in the fields, February is always a month of preparation. Although it can seem a "dead" month, if you are not careful, without preparation, you can miss the opportunity for abundance later on.

That is also true spiritually. Think of all the preparation that went into the celebration of Christmas. Just around the corner we will begin the season of Lent and the preparation for the celebration of Holy Week and Easter.

Ash Wednesday is on March 5. Don't let it take you by surprise; think about it now. How will you spend Lent this year, this Jubilee Year? On Friday March 28 we have "24 Hours for the Lord", when we are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Again, don't let these opportunities slip by you.

Carpe diem – seize the moment!

In this way we will be ready to celebrate Holy Week and Easter in a new and committed way. We will be ready to receive all the blessings this Jubilee Year can bring us.

In blessed hope,

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Join our walk of hope

This year CAFOD's Lent Appeal demonstrates the power of hope in action through the story of Lokho, a farmer and mother in northern Kenya.

For nearly four years, Lokho's community experienced an unrelenting drought and was supported by CAFOD during the East Africa food crisis.

Livestock perished, crops failed, and Lokho was left with no means to provide for her children. Yet amid this trial hope persevered, nurtured by the faith and charity of her neighbour, who shared what they had with each other to survive.

Supported by CAFOD and local Caritas expert Wakera, Lokho and her community found strength in unity. With training, tools and seeds funded by donations from parishioners here, they planted kitchen gardens.

Innovative shade nets protected the plants from the harsh sun while allowing rain to nurture the young crops.

Now Lokho not only feeds her family but also sells the extra produce, saving money and ensuring a safety net for future climate challenges.

In this Jubilee Year, Pope Francis has invited us to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind.

The Big Lent Walk could be an opportunity to join in a symbolic pilgrimage of solidarity and hope. Your walking and fundraising would support people like Lokho.

By taking on the challenge of walking 200km in 40 days, you will be part of a massive team helping people overcome poverty.



Lokho, a farmer and mother in northern Kenya with her crops grown beneath innovative shade nets – Photo Louise Norton, CAFOD

We would love you to join us as we walk, run, roll or stroll 200km during Lent. You can walk when and where you choose, alone, with friends or with fellow parishioners – or get your school involved and join with thousands of other children and young people!

The money you raise by taking part helps CAFOD support families in extreme poverty around the world. Sign up or find out more at

walk.cafod.org.uk or email rblaylock@cafod.org.uk.

"We are about to make a pilgrimage marked by great events, in which the grace of God precedes and accompanies his people," Pope Francis writes in his decree for the Jubilee Year. Let us make this Lent a true journey of faith, "active in charity and steadfast in hope".

Rachel Blaylock

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NEWS

Could you help continue Barnardo's 150 years of care?

For 150 years, Barnardo's has been transforming childhoods and changing lives.

The charity's community of foster carers play a vital role in supporting children in care by opening their homes and hearts to children who need a safe and supportive place to grow and flourish.

Northern couple Louise and Ryan say their faith has supported them on their journey to changing childhoods through fostering.

For three years the couple have been fostering, but it was their faith that was the biggest part of their journey, giving them the courage to take that first crucial step

"We agreed we would simply start the fostering process and then pray our way through it," says Louise.

Since taking that leap of faith, Louise and Ryan have welcomed Noah into their lives.

Louise explains: "One of the joys we're finding with our role is the comments we're receiving from people around us about the changes they can see in Noah and how happy he is and how confident he's becoming. All these little affirmations of positivity are really reassuring that we're making a difference."

Louise recalls the moment she started to notice a change in Noah.

"He was quite quiet when he first moved in. I had come through to the lounge, but I could hear him in the bath singing and it was that kind when a child sings freely because they feel safe in their space.

"I remember it's the first time I'd heard him sing. I started to cry because I thought, 'Oh

gosh, you must feel really comfortable' because he's singing at the top of his voice and I remember thinking, 'Maybe feels like he's found a home, somewhere safe'.

"It's not the big things. It's the singing or going into a supermarket and saying what would you like for yourself and him not saying anything because he didn't dare ask, whereas now, if I'm going to the shop it's, 'Can you please get me this, this and this...' in full teenager mode – how it should be with a parent or carer.

"It's the small things like that make you think he has a voice, he feels seen, he's comfortable."

Faith continues to play a large role in Louise and Ryan's fostering journey and has helped them understand that where you start out in life doesn't have to determine where you end up.

"Faith is about connection. It's about sharing energy and love. So many young people need somewhere safe and someone that's got their back. In fact we all need that, don't we?"

"I know Noah will have a thriving life of his own and I hope we've helped play a small part in his life."

Reflecting on why they took that first step, Louise said: "It was a moment of reflection about who we are, our values and purpose, and what do we actually want to do.

"We always said we wanted to make a difference to young people's lives. It was very much that really having an impact on a young person's life, hopefully for the better, and



Barnardo's has been transforming childhoods and changing lives for 150 years

then we just went for it."

Fostering can positively change yours and a child's life, from the small everyday things that make fostering rewarding, to the changes that can change a life.

Louise says: "Noah talks about his future now and what he's going to do when he gets older. For a young person who's had to survive from day to day, to be able to start to think about the long term is quite a big achievement.

"I would say there isn't a right time, but if you are the slightest bit curious about fostering

and whether you could do it, just make the initial call."

Right now, Barnardo's needs more incredible people like Louise and Ryan. The UK is facing an ongoing fostering crisis – every 15 minutes a child comes into care.

Could you help provide a child or young person with a safe, stable and loving home through fostering? Find out more with a no-strings-attached call – enquire today at barnardos.org.uk/emmastory.

***Names have been changed**

Dates announced for two annual snowdrop weekends

You can be sure spring is on its way when the invitation goes out to visit the beautiful Tudor Croft Gardens for its annual snowdrop weekends.

Developed by Mike Heagney and his family, the five-acre gardens holds what is thought to be the largest collection of rare snowdrops in the region.

The open weekends have raised tens of thousands of pounds for charity over the

years and are always an enjoyable experience.

In February the snowdrop collection, which features over 350 varieties, many rare, transforms the garden and they are planted in labelled individual clumps.

Some are strongly scented, some are yellow where one would expect them to be green, some are huge and some are tiny.

It is thought that snowdrops were first brought to Britain by the Romans and later monks and priests started picking them to decorate their altars on Candlemas Day, February 2, the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Appropriately, snowdrops were pure, white and available, so their bulbs gradually spread by hand from church to church and eventually became commonplace.

Even today churchyards are some of the best places to see them.

Soldiers returning from the Crimean War also brought home bulbs of the many unusual varieties that grow there.

Snowdrops are now extraordinarily popular and just one bulb of a rare variety can change hands for hundreds of pounds and in 2022 one bulb of Galanthus plicatus Golden Tears sold for £1,850.

Fortunately many of Mike's snowdrops are much better value and more than 50 varieties plus other spring-flowering bulbs will be on sale.

The gardens, on Stokesley Road, Guisborough TS14 8DL, are open on the weekend of February 8 and 9 and again on February 15 and 16, from 11am to 3pm each day.

Admission is £10 for adults and free for children, with free parking, weather permitting, well signposted. Home-made soup and other refreshments will be available.



Mike Heagney and his family have raised thousands of pounds for charity by opening Tudor Croft Gardens to the public

'Jubilee invites us to begin again'

Pope Francis says the Jubilee Year is a moment of grace, an invitation to "begin again".

He was speaking at the first in a new cycle of weekly audiences focusing on hope, the year's underpinning theme.

They will integrate the traditional Wednesday catechetical sessions throughout the year.

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 the history of salvation, the Pope referred to Jesus' praise of him as the "greatest among those born of women".

John's mission, marked by his call for repentance and renewal symbolised 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.

BISHOP TERRY'S FEBRUARY ENGAGEMENTS

- 4 Attends the Trustee Board Meeting at the Curial Office, Middlesbrough 10.30am
- 5 Attends Friends of the Lady Chapel Meeting at the Curial Office, Middlesbrough 11am
- 11 Attends St Cuthbert's AGM in Hull 10.30am
- 13 Attends NPCAT AGM in Middlesbrough 10.30am
- 15-16 Parish Visitation to Our Lady of Lourdes, Hessele
- 18 Attends Bishop's Council via Zoom 10.30am
- 20 Attends Council of Priests Meeting at the Curial Office, Middlesbrough 1.30pm
- 22-23 Parish Visitation to St Andrew's, Teesville
- 26 School Visitation to St Charles Primary School, Hull gam

Mass of thanksgiving celebrates double milestones

A special Mass of Thanksgiving will be celebrated this summer to mark two significant milestones in our faith community.

The Mass, at St Mary's Cathedral at noon on Saturday July 26, will mark the golden jubilee of Bishop Terry's priestly ordination and the diamond jubilee of Bishop Emeritus John Crowley's priestly ordination.

This celebration is an opportunity to give thanks to God for his abundant blessings over the years and to pray for the continued flourishing of our diocese.

Extending an invitation to all in the diocese to attend, Bishop Terry said: "Your presence would be a great blessing to us on this joyful occasion."

I look forward to celebrating with you and sharing in the joy of these remarkable anniversaries."



Bishop John at the Mass to celebrate the golden jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood in 2015 – Photo by Les Clark



Bishop Terry during Father Steven Leightell's ordination at St Mary's Cathedral – Photo by Chris Booth

Searching together for hope in Jubilee Year

"Let us not forget that the Lord does not disappoint those who take a risk ... let us journey together and take a risk." – Pope Francis

Are you ready to celebrate the Jubilee Year and journey into the deep to bring hope?

As we journey together into the Jubilee Year of Hope, let us celebrate together and look for where we can bring more hope to those around us. Do you want to see change in our broken world for the good of all?

If so, join us to explore themes of the Jubilee Year and how they touch us as individuals and parishes and as a diocese.

This Lent we offer a morning of celebration, reflection and discussion, an opportunity to share our thoughts and ideas with others in

the diocese and together plan definite steps to act on these.

The six jubilee themes in scripture that we can explore are:

- Care of Creation
- Food poverty
- Modern slavery
- Managing debt
- Forgiveness
- Rest and worship

What do these mean for us, for our communities, our diocese and for our Common Home?

Please join us to celebrate, reflect, pray and act, and make this a stepping stone to further

initiatives.

When opening the Holy Door at the inauguration of this Jubilee Year of Hope, Pope Francis said: "With haste, let us set out to behold the Lord who is born for us, our hearts joyful and attentive, ready to meet him and then to bring hope to the way we live our daily lives."

Can we find the courage to cross the threshold of the Holy Door, to embrace the theme of open doors and become pilgrims of hope?

The event takes place at Our Lady's, Acomb, York, on Saturday March 8 from 10am to 1pm.

All are welcome. Light refreshments will be offered and please bring a sandwich for your lunch.



RSVP to Teresa Lyth at teresa_lyth@hotmail.co.uk.

It would be good if each parish could send one or two representatives.

Caritas Middlesbrough

Unbound Ministry's journey from faith to freedom

Seventy-seven priests from across Europe gathered in Grantham for a retreat and training course in Unbound Ministry, which aims at evangelisation, healing and deliverance.

The retreat was led by husband, wife and son Neal, Janet and Matt Lozano and supported spiritually by Canadian Bishop Scott McCaig and Father Antonio Ritaccio of the Diocese of Westminster.

Unbound Ministry is deeply Gospel-based, starting from the love of God the Father expressed through the ministry and saving sacrifice of Jesus.

Showing the Father's love, Jesus calls us to repentance from a place of trust and faith so that he might free us from being slaves to sin and free us for our true condition of being beloved sons and daughters.

Convinced of this, we are then able to forgive others who have hurt or damaged us in the past and/or forgive ourselves for mistakes made and patterns of sin we have entered into.

Sometimes those patterns of sin will have arisen as we ourselves have created "defences" or "strongholds" against experiencing further hurt. For example, we are

unreasonably quick to anger because we often feel threatened as a consequence of our past. Our reaction to different types of trauma may have opened an entryway for the Devil to plant lies within us and create oppression in our lives: "Your parents didn't love you, so you are not loveable."

These things can be exposed and ministered to as we go through a prayerful conversation with someone trained in Unbound Ministry so that we might find freedom in Christ.

Part of the process is, in Jesus' name, to renounce the lies and deceptions we have been convinced of and the damaged patterns of behaviour we have felt trapped in.

Likewise, in Jesus' name, we will be helped to renounce "a spirit of fear ... a spirit of anger ... a spirit of self-righteousness ... a spirit of rejection" or whatever oppressive presence we may have unwittingly offered entry to.

As we are healed of the past and the entryways are closed, command can be given to those spirits to depart because there is no legal right for them to remain. As the minister pronounces the Father's blessing over us, we are encouraged to go forward and lead our lives as beloved sons and daughters.

Those on the retreat were given the



Unbound Ministry team Neal, Janet and Matt Lozano

opportunity to experience Unbound for themselves and many testified to a new sense of release and freedom. In our society we encounter many sources of hurt and spiritual danger, such as broken families, addictions and occult practices.

Unbound brings to bear Christ's loving healing and deliverance. To know more, read the book Unbound by Neal Lozano or look up "Unbound Training and Events UK".

Father Dominique Minskip

SCHOOLS

Report commends warm, inclusive and caring St Charles'

St Charles' VC Academy in Hull is celebrating after being rated good in all areas by Ofsted.

The report highlights the school's warm, inclusive ethos, high academic achievements and the happiness of its pupils.

Ofsted inspectors commented positively about the school's culture, noting that the motto, "We smile – lots", is "truly lived out by staff and pupils".

One pupil told inspectors that one of the best things about the school is the teachers, "who care about us".

The report says pupils who come from diverse backgrounds are welcomed and celebrated as part of a "collective family".

Pupils were praised for their excellent behaviour, politeness and positive attitudes towards learning. Inspectors said pupils feel safe at school and have access to trusted adults when they need them.

High expectations are embedded throughout St Charles', which provides "precise support" to pupils that is tailored to their individual needs, enabling them to thrive.

The curriculum is described as "carefully designed to meet a wide range of pupil needs", with teachers receiving high-quality training to ensure strong subject knowledge.

Inspectors highlighted the school's commitment to ensuring all pupils have a solid foundation in reading and language development.

Teachers were praised for their ability to adapt lessons and reinforce key concepts. Inspectors also noted that pupils have "excellent relationships with teachers" and "value their lessons and enjoy learning".

Headteacher Sarah Woodmansey said: "St Charles' is a wonderfully caring and nurturing school. We pride ourselves on developing children both academically and ensuring we give everyone a wealth of opportunities to flourish and strive to be the best they can be, ready for their next steps in life.

"It was an honour to be able to share this with inspectors when they visited the school and give them a sense of what it feels like to be part of our school family."

CEO Rachel McEvoy added: "We are all absolutely delighted to read this report. It is a true reflection of all the hard work and love that staff have given to this community following years of improvement.

"St Charles' school remains committed to its journey of continuous improvement and is proud to offer families in central Hull a safe,



Pupils celebrate at St Charles' VC Academy in Hull

welcoming and inclusive environment where every one of their children can succeed."

To read the full report visit stchull.org/primary-school/ofsted.

Nativity scene sees Mary's long-term ambition realised

Pupils and staff at All Saints Catholic School in York had a busy few weeks to end the term.

A successful non-uniform day food bank collection was held for Kitchens for Everyone York (KEY) to mark World Day of the Poor.

Pupils, staff, families and the public joined together in York Minster for the annual Advent Service on this year's theme, "Trust in prayer". The service included a wide range of musical input and readings from pupils.

We were excited by the installation of our new outdoor nativity scene, which has been the dream of our chaplaincy coordinator Elaine Wright for several years, and we are grateful to our technician, Mary Barley, for her planning and construction and to everyone involved in the project.

The scene is lit by solar lighting and is a welcome addition to the Lower School grounds.

We had a wonderful afternoon when we invited guests from our local SVP groups for our annual Christmas party. They were entertained by our Lower School Choir and Orchestra and were hosted by our Year 9 GIFT Team.

We are grateful to our kitchen team, particularly Alison and Emma, for their wonderful catering at the event.



Technician Mary Barley and chaplaincy coordinator Elaine Wright at the new outdoor nativity at All Saints School in York

Much excitement surrounded the raffle and the afternoon was very much appreciated by all.

Rebecca Kramm



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Raffle raises funds for orphans in Malawi

St Aelred's in York enjoyed a wonderful afternoon of music and carols arranged by the choir, music group and singers on Gaudete Sunday.

The parish hall was filled with parishioners and friends as mulled wine, festive foods and hot drinks were served, along with the singing of carols and other Christmas music, giving everyone the opportunity to join in.

The afternoon concluded with an excellent raffle raising £230 for Open Arms Malawi, which runs homes for abandoned and orphaned children, working with local communities to find good foster homes and supporting their newly formed families.

It is also dedicated to improving community life by providing nursery education, helping children in remote village schools and tailoring support to older children.

Kath Stubbs



Musicians providing the entertainment on Gaudete Sunday

Delight as head welcomes college's best-ever report

Headteacher Andy Rodgers has welcomed the best Ofsted report Trinity Catholic College and Sixth Form has received in its 15-year history.

The Middlesbrough school has been rated "good" in four out of five areas – behaviour and attitudes, personal development, leadership and management and sixth form provision.

And Mr Rodgers is confident the one remaining category, quality of education, is well on the way to reaching the required standard.

In its report, Ofsted says: "Pupils enjoy an improving educational experience at Trinity. Pupils relish coming to school and are happy. They appreciate the important changes made since the last inspection.

"The school sets high standards for pupils' behaviour. A calm and orderly atmosphere is now the norm. Pupils know that their school is a better place in which to learn and thrive than before.

"Students speak highly of the teaching staff. High-quality and determined leadership is making a pivotal difference at the school. Leaders across the trust unite to make improvements to the quality of education.

"This includes putting in place an ambitious, well-planned curriculum. Pupils engage well with school. They treat one another and staff with respect. This helps everyone commit to learning."

Inspectors concluded: "The impact of new leaders and the wider trust is striking. It is also making a notable difference for the school community. Parents and carers are positive about the school. Many commented on how much it has changed in recent years."

Mr Rodgers said: "To be graded 'good' in four of the five areas is the best outcome the school's ever had. It's an enormous step forward.

"In 18 months, we've taken a school that was almost rated inadequate and was 'requires improvement' in all five areas, to where we are now.

"Results take time to improve after you get everything else right and I'm confident you



Trinity Catholic College headteacher Andy Rodgers celebrating the school's best-ever Ofsted report with pupils – Photo by Chris Booth

will soon see those improvements feed through. First you have to get the culture right, bring the community together, sort out behaviour and work on teaching and learning, all areas where Ofsted have acknowledged major improvements."

Hugh Hegarty, CEO of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust (NPCAT), which runs the school, said the report marks a significant milestone on a journey of improvement that will continue until Trinity is outstanding in all areas.

He said: "Under NPCAT's leadership, Trinity has embraced change with a clear vision for our students' future. Difficult decisions were made with the unwavering belief that they were in the students' best interest and reflected our Gospel values of courage, faith

and commitment.

"This is the first time Ofsted has acknowledged Trinity's leadership and management, behaviour and personal development as 'good'.

"That speaks volumes about the effectiveness of our school leadership team and the strength of the NPCAT school improvement framework.

"To have our Catholic sixth form also designated as 'good' for the first time in years is also hugely satisfying."

The report, one of the first to be released since Ofsted stopped giving a one-word overall grading, praises the increasing range of extracurricular opportunities at Trinity and says sixth-form students "revel" in their

experience of working with the T6 Football Academy, which trains elite players in an exclusive partnership with Middlesbrough FC.

Middlesbrough Council's deputy mayor and executive member for education Philippa Storey added her own tribute to the turnaround at Trinity.

She said: "I would like to congratulate everyone at Trinity Catholic College – the leadership team, staff and the pupils and families who make it special.

"I know just how much effort has gone in to deliver positive change and I'm delighted that hard work has been recognised by Ofsted."

Last month we reported on Trinity's highly encouraging Catholic Schools Inspection report.

Rise in vocations despite terror threat

Vocations at one of Burkina Faso's main seminaries increased by more than 10% in the past five years – despite frequent attacks by jihadists who have seized control of more than half of the country's territory.

There are 281 students at Ss Peter and Paul Kossoghen Major Seminary in Ouagadougou Archdiocese in the 2024-2025 academic year, up from 254 in 2019-2020.

Seminary rector Father Guy Moukassa Sanon said that about 40% of the seminarians are from the so-called "red zone" – parts of the country worst affected by terrorism.

He added that some areas where seminarians come from are so dangerous that many of them did not risk returning to their families for the Christmas break.

This unprecedented number of seminarians meant some community rooms had to be converted into accommodation.

Father Sanon told Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN): "The conditions are far from ideal for their studies. We've had to accommodate 22 seminarians outside and send another 11 to a seminary in Mali."

Father Sanon said extremists abducted a seminarian in 2022 while he attempted to visit relatives. The man's body was never

found, making his family believe he was killed.

The priest said that there have been other cases of terrorists targeting seminarians over the years.

ACN has supported the formation of seminarians in six dioceses in Burkina Faso, as well as providing Mass stipends for priests and emergency aid, food, medicine and psychological help for displaced people.

Father Sanon said: "I want to express my deep gratitude to ACN and all its generous benefactors who give sacrificially so that we can form Burkina Faso's future priests. "Some of our seminarians are in a precarious situation. They don't receive any help from their families, because these are in a sorry condition – displaced or prevented by the terrorists from bringing in the harvest.

"Thanks to ACN's support we can finance their formation and that of their teachers."

Father Sanon underlined: "Often, you can only appreciate things you have lost. Here, if you ask someone what he wants, he replies, 'Peace'.

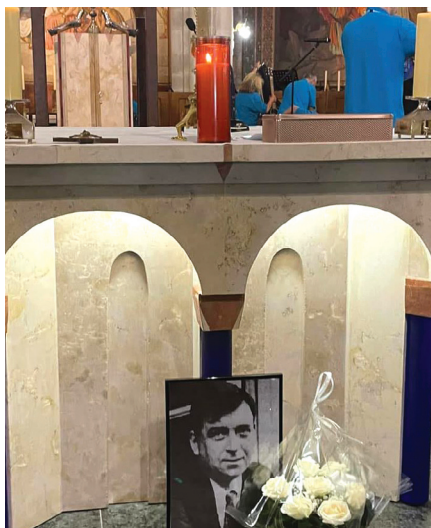
"I also pray for peace for all our benefactors: a peace only the Infant Jesus can bring."



Priests being ordained in Burkina Faso – © ACN

SCHOOLS

NEWS IN BRIEF



Jack Traynor, whose case has been decaled a miracle

Archbishop declares Jack Traynor case a miracle

The Archbishop of Liverpool, Archbishop Malcolm McMahon OP, has officially declared the case of Jack Traynor as a miracle. Jack was a pilgrim on the archdiocese's first official pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1923 and was cured dramatically of epilepsy, paralysis of the right arm and paraplegia. The case has been believed to be miraculous by people across the archdiocese and beyond but, despite an attempt in 1993, there has never been an official ecclesiastical declaration until now.

Artificial intelligence 'must serve humans'

Sister Helen Alford, an English Dominican nun who is the president of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, says the development of artificial intelligence must always keep human beings at its centre. Speaking on the Catholic News podcast, she said Catholic Social Teaching warns we must be wary of "adversarial technology". "The situation we have with AI is just a continuation of the situation we've had with technology, at least since the Industrial Revolution, because what came to the fore there was a type of technological development which is what we could call technocentric," she adds.

Join Jubilee pilgrims on national walk

The Hearts in Search of God project has announced a new walking pilgrimage for England and Wales during Jubilee 2025 called the Pilgrimage of Hope. The pilgrimage's four main ways start at the Catholic cathedrals in Cardiff, Leeds, Norwich and London and will bless our nations with a Sign of the Cross. They will converge at the Cathedral of St Barnabas, Nottingham. Established hiking routes will be used, off-road as much as possible. A small group of pilgrims will walk the full distance of each way, with day pilgrims joining for stages. There are potential feeder routes to the four main ways from all the other Catholic cathedrals. The Jubilee Year has the motto "pilgrims of hope" and the logo shows people coming from the four corners of the earth in solidarity. For more information on the pilgrimage, which is on Saturday September 13, visit pilgrimways.org.uk/national-pilgrims-of-hope-walking-pilgrimage.

St Augustine's unveils stunning mural

Students and staff at St Augustine's Secondary School in Scarborough gathered with excitement to celebrate the unveiling of a fantastic mural at the heart of their community.

The artwork, painted by the talented Scarborough artist Rew Nurse, beautifully captures the spirit and mission of St Augustine, whose teachings of care and compassion are at the core of everything the school does. It now stands as a visual reminder of their commitment to living out those values.

This mural is a celebration of our identity. It represents who we are and what we strive to be as a community.

We are incredibly proud to have this beautiful piece of art as a daily reminder of St Augustine's teachings.

With the mural now complete, it serves as both an inspiration and a call to action: a vivid reminder to live each day with care, compassion, and purpose.

Aisling Robinson, Headteacher



Pupils with the stunning new mural at St Augustine's

Triathlon legend Jonny inspires pupils

Pupils at St Aelred's Catholic Primary School in York got to meet an inspirational Olympian, try on his gold medal and even take him on in a race!

Six-time World and three-time Olympic champion triathlete Jonny Brownlee came to talk to the pupils in assembly and brought his medals along for them to try for size, as well as leading them in a run round the school grounds.

The school supports the Brownlee Foundation – a charity led by Jonny and his brother and fellow Olympian Alistair, which works to inspire children through sport.

And the visit certainly caused a stir throughout the St Aelred's community.

"Jonny came to speak to the children about his incredible sporting success," said deputy head Ryan Deakin.

The visit was arranged by one of the school governors, who knows Jonny.

"It's about raising the children's aspirations and showing them what they can achieve, as well as helping to raise the profile of the school," said Mr Deakin.

St Aelred's, which was rated good by Ofsted earlier this year, was recently awarded an Inclusive Sport Mark.



Olympic champion Jonny Brownlee with St Aelred's pupils

New roof underlines trust's commitment

Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust (NPCAT) has announced a major investment in St George's Catholic Primary School in York, with the installation of a new roof.

Chief executive officer Hugh Hegarty said the investment is part of a broader initiative to ensure Catholic schools across the city continue to thrive and have the infrastructure improvements needed to support their future success.

The new roof is seen as a crucial element in NPCAT's ongoing commitment to improving school facilities and ensuring that high-quality education remains at the heart of Catholic schooling.

Mr Hegarty said the funding, which is part of

a wider plan within the trust, underscores the resources available to schools to support both academic and physical growth.

"This investment highlights the vital role infrastructure plays in the overall development of our schools," he said.

"At NPCAT we are committed to ensuring that our schools have the best possible environment for teaching and learning.

"This new roof at St George's Primary is a significant step forward in that vision, and we are excited about the positive impact it will have on the school community.

"We are proud to continue our support for Catholic schools across York and beyond, knowing that each improvement strengthens

the rich learning environment which supports educational outcomes for our pupils."

The roof replacement forms part of NPCAT's wider strategy of investing in building projects across its network of Catholic schools in the city, with ongoing projects in All Saints Catholic School and St Aelred's and St Wilfrid's primary schools.

With improved facilities, the trust believes the schools will be better equipped to foster academic excellence and provide a nurturing, supportive environment for all pupils. NPCAT's schools continue to provide exceptional educational opportunities for children, underpinned by its values of faith, excellence and inclusivity.

Talented Joey is latest football star to roll off Sacred Heart production line

Another rising soccer star has rolled off the flourishing production line at Sacred Heart Catholic Secondary School in Redcar.

Talented midfielder Joey follows in the footsteps of former Sacred Heart pupils and current Middlesbrough FC first teamers Hayden Hackney and George McCormick after being handed a full-time scholarship a year ahead of his peers.

Hayden, 22, has become a fixture in the Boro midfield and has also represented England U21s, while left-back George, 19, impressed during a series of friendly appearances in the summer and made his full debut in this season's Carabao Cup.

Now Year 11 pupil Joey, who is also head boy and captain of the school's successful football team, will join Boro's famous Academy after sitting his GCSEs next summer.

Joey has been on Boro's books since his days at St Benedict's Catholic Primary School and head of PE Paul Freary says he is the perfect role model.

"Joey not only leads by example on the football pitch but also around the school and is someone many of the younger pupils look up to," Mr Freary said.

Despite being only 15, Joey was shortlisted for England Schoolboys Under-17 squad for three UEFA U17 Euro qualifiers in Malta last month, and although he didn't make the final cut, Mr



Joey, holding the trophy, pictured with the victorious Sacred Heart team

Freary is confident international honours will come soon.

Headteacher Louise Dwyer said: "I am thrilled to have such a legacy of sporting talent here at Sacred Heart. Both Hayden and George have visited school recently and shared their success with our pupils.

"We are delighted that Joey is following in the footsteps of Hayden and George. As head boy, Joey demonstrates his leadership skills on and off the pitch and is a true role model."

Joey recently led Sacred Heart's school team

to their first ever T6 Schools' Super Cup with a nail-biting final victory at Trinity Catholic College, Middlesbrough.

Dave McTieman, head of NPCAT's Football and Sporting Academy, said: "Sacred Heart worked tirelessly throughout the full day with the whole squad having a great togetherness, which showed in the final game.

"Our T6 Football Academy staff were very impressed with the talent on show and the sportsmanship of all the players and staff involved. Well done!"

Clean sweep for 'outstanding' school

A Teesside secondary school is celebrating after achieving top marks across the board in its latest Catholic Schools Inspection.

St Patrick's Catholic Primary in Thornaby was rated 1 (outstanding) in every category, including overall effectiveness, Catholic life and mission, religious education and collective worship.

"This is an outstanding Catholic school, where leaders, especially the executive headteacher and head of school, are inspirational in their drive to provide an outstanding Catholic education for all pupils," the report said.

"There is a deep sense of spiritual and emotional investment in the school community and an inclusive, welcoming culture, which has grown and been embedded over generations.

"Pupils and staff totally respect one another, meaning pupils know they are loved, cared for and valued as individuals. Their behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. The quality and consistency of teaching is a strength of the school.

"Pupils work hard in lessons; they concentrate and demonstrate exceptional behaviour. Pupils acquire and articulate high levels of knowledge about the lives of the saints, the Church's rituals and traditions and the scriptures."

The report says everyone at St Patrick's embraces the school's mission, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God", and praises support for charities including a local food bank, community garden, dementia hub, Macmillan Cancer Support, CAFOD and the British Legion.

Pupils send Christmas cards to those living alone and visit residents in a nearby care home, while eye-catching displays and inspiring texts around the school remind everyone that "Wonderful things happen at St Patrick's".

Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust CEO Hugh Hegarty said: "I am absolutely delighted



St Patrick's Primary School in Thornaby provides 'an outstanding Catholic education for all pupils'

with the outstanding judgement in our Catholic Schools Inspection. This achievement is a testament to the exceptional dedication, vision and tireless efforts of our school leaders, staff and governors.

"Their unwavering commitment to providing a faith-filled, nurturing environment where our pupils can thrive academically, spiritually and personally is truly inspiring.

"We also cherish the incredible partnership with our parishes, which continues to enrich the life of our schools and strengthens the bond between faith and education.

"This outstanding result reflects not only the hard work and devotion of our school communities but also the grace and purpose at the heart of Catholic education."

In a letter to parents, executive head Mark Ryan and head of school James Conwell wrote: "The report celebrates all that St Patrick's parish and school community do together in trying to bring about the Kingdom of God here among us.

"It acknowledges achievement and success that has been built on over many generations of pupils, parents, parishioners, priests, staff and governors.

"We would like to thank our parish priest, Father Pat O'Neill, for his constant support and visits to ensure a strong link between school and parish is maintained.

"Finally, we would like to thank you all for your continued prayers and support for our school community."



Parish priest Father Pat O'Neill is a regular visitor, helping maintain strong links with the school

NEWS IN BRIEF

Medjugorje: A place of grace, says apostolic visitor

Archbishop Aldo Cavalli, appointed by Pope Francis as apostolic visitor to Medjugorje, says the Bosnian town has evolved into a significant spiritual destination. The shrine has attracted millions seeking prayer and conversion. Recent Vatican norms have allowed the publication of messages from the visionaries. Speaking to Vatican News, Archbishop Cavalli encouraged pilgrims to visit. He said: "The Pope's authorisation means: go, go, go! Go there because it is a place of grace, where you meet the Lord and the Lord meets you. In Medjugorje, Our Lady called herself 'Queen of Peace'. A message as relevant as ever in our time."

Jubilee pilgrimage for people with disabilities

A pilgrimage to Rome for people with disabilities has been organised by the Kairos Forum. Living Fully with Value and Hope takes place from April 26 to May 1 and offers accessible events, prayer, friendship and a morning with Pope Francis. Bishop Paul Hendricks, of Southwark Archdiocese, will celebrate Mass each day. Pilgrims will visit the Holy Door and have the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As well as the meeting with the Holy Father in St Peter's Square, they will also participate in the official Jubilee events for people with disabilities. For details or to register, email kairosforumevents@gmail.com.

Conference focuses on domestic abuse

Churches in the East Riding have organised a conference focused on domestic abuse. East Riding Conference on Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) for the Church-Based Faith Sector takes place at Toll Gavel United Church, Beverley, on Saturday February 8, beginning with registration at 9.30am and ending at 2.30pm. The conference is for all staff, paid and unpaid, working and volunteering within a church-based setting and will bring together faith sector representatives and partners to network, collaborate and raise awareness of domestic abuse. Light refreshments provided, bring lunch if you wish. Book at tickettailor.com/events/communityvision/149 1040 or email gemma.jennison@communityvision.org.uk.

Catholic Union support young writer award

The Catholic Union Charitable Trust is sponsoring the 2025 Catholic Young Writer Award with the theme "Jesus Christ, Son of God". The award was launched by the Keys, the Catholic Writers Guild of England of England and Wales, in the 1990s. Winners are invited to the Catholic Union's annual meeting in London to receive their prizes. The awards are open to young Catholics (and pupils at Catholic schools) in years 8-11 inclusive. There is a prize of £50 for the best essay, plus runner-up book prizes. Entry deadline May 30. Find out more at catholicunion.org.uk/2025/01/catholic-young-writer-award-2025.

SCHOOLS

Scholarship opens up pathway to jobs for talented trio

Three ambitious Year 11 pupils from St Peter's Catholic College in South Bank have secured places on an innovative scholarship that aims to provide a pathway to the jobs of the future.

The Altrad Scholarship will see promising students Jay, Darius and Angel benefit from two years of dedicated mentorship as they progress to their post-16 studies at T6 Trinity Catholic Sixth Form in Middlesbrough.

The trio were selected after a rigorous application and interview process and recently met their Altrad mentors for the first time.

These mentors will provide guidance and support throughout their sixth form journey, helping them navigate academic and career challenges and build essential skills for future success.

Lisa Hegarty, head of careers at Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust (NPCAT), said: "I'm delighted we have secured three spots for St Peter's pupils on the Altrad scholarship.

"This achievement was a collaborative effort, with significant support from St Peter's headteacher Stephanie Garthwaite throughout the process.

"I'm proud of what we've accomplished together and excited about the opportunities this will bring to the pupils."

The pupils will benefit from hands-on work placements within Altrad, providing them with

the valuable real-world experience and insights that can shape their futures, while their mentors will offer guidance and support throughout their studies.

Altrad's vice president – onshore Karl Bramwell said: "Recognising the challenges faced by communities around our Teesside base, we are committed to making a positive impact on local youth.

"This programme reflects our long-term vision to foster talent within the Teesside community, helping to empower future generations and create opportunities that might otherwise be out of reach.

"In collaborating with NPCAT, we're not only investing in pupils but also building a talent pipeline of dedicated, well-prepared individuals who could one day become part of the Altrad team."

Head of T6 Phillip Scarr thanked Altrad for providing such a worthwhile opportunity for the St Peter's pupils and the sixth form.

He said: "Angel, Darius and Jay have made an excellent start to their T6 journey, benefitting from our small class sizes, specialist teachers and excellent facilities.

"They are excited about the Altrad scholarship and benefited greatly from their initial meeting with their mentor, who will be on hand to advise and guide them throughout their T6 journey."



Jay, Darius and Angel with their Altrad mentors

Christian Heritage Centre reveals spring programme

The Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst has announced a new programme of events for this spring.

The Search for Truth: Edith Stein, March 14 to 16: Father Matthew Blake OCD will offer a weekend exploring the life and teachings of Edith Stein (St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross) and her search for truth that led her to the Catholic faith.

Men's Spiritual Exercises, March 30 to April 4: A five-day version of the Ignatian Exercises offered specifically for men (whether lay or ordained), this retreat will be preached by the Benedictine Monks of St Joseph's Abbey, Flavigny, France.

This community has retained its charism of a specific apostolate to men with a shortened version of the Ignatian Exercises. One-to-one direction will be offered alongside the talks.

Priests are welcome to attend and concelebrate or celebrate their own Mass.

The Fatherhood of the Priest clergy retreat, April 28 to May 2: Father Jose Granados, superior general of the Disciples of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and vice-president emeritus of the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies in Marriage and Family Life, will preach our spring clergy retreat.

Father Granados will address two intertwined questions at the heart of priestly identity: masculinity and spiritual paternity.

The centre exists to offer a deeper spiritual and intellectual engagement with the Christian Faith, inspired by the wealth of Christian heritage housed at Stonyhurst College. For more information or to book, visit christianheritagecentre.com/events.



Edith Stein (St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross), whose search for truth led her to the Catholic faith

A Letter From Madonna House – A dip into Ordinary Time

Since Christmastide ends in January and Lent begins in March this year, we have more than a month to take a dip into Ordinary Time.



We don't usually think of Ordinary Time as particularly rich or interesting, but it is a gift of many layers.

The month of February is the time to return to our usual occupations. The festivities of Christmas and New Year are over. The visitors whom we may have received have left.

There is work to do at home: letters and cards to respond to, decorations to store away until next year, thank-you notes for the gifts we have received during Christmas. We go back to school or work and resume the activities we put on hold during the holiday break.

But there are gifts we can continue to "unwrap", so to speak. We know the Son of God became incarnate and came to live among us, as one of us. He came for us.

At Christmas, we reflected with wonder on his coming as a fragile baby, born in Bethlehem. During Lent we will meditate on Jesus' greatest expression of love: His sacrifice on the Cross, his Passion, death and

resurrection.

But here is a gift we can unwrap anytime: the ordinary life that the Son of God lived in Nazareth.

For about 30 years, Jesus lived in relative obscurity as a workman, a neighbour, a relative.

He was not recognised for who he really was. Why would he "waste" so much time doing seemingly mundane things when he was God and could have done anything he wanted to?

We read in the Scriptures that he became "like us in all things, except sin". In this ordinariness, he shows us how to live.

When I first went to Madonna House in Combermere, Ontario, as a visitor, I didn't fully understand what the community was about.

The days there were filled with things like cleaning, washing up, weeding in the garden, meeting people... There was a schedule to

follow, and it was sometimes intensive.

Oh yes, we prayed together, too, but there were refrains I kept hearing about "praying always" and even "becoming a prayer", which remained mysterious to me.

We were told to "Do little things exceedingly well for love of God", and that doing ordinary jobs in this way could make you holy.

I sensed this holiness in people I met, but didn't really understand how all this could apply to me. They called it the spirit of Nazareth.

Nonetheless, when I returned home, I felt that something in me had changed. I could not put words onto it until the first time I did the washing up at home.

As I washed a cup "exceedingly well for love" I had an inner flash like an electric bolt. I knew at last that wherever I was, I could dip into this Nazareth way of life.

Jeanne Guillemette

Mum's emotional message to Middlesbrough school

A mum has sent a heartfelt message to thank primary school staff who went beyond the call of duty when her ten-year-old became seriously ill.

Scarlett was struck down with a mystery illness at the start of the summer holidays. She couldn't walk, talk or feed herself properly, but a doctor at the urgent care centre said it was probably anxiety or depression and told mum Hanna and dad Anthony to take her home to rest.

"That night I was watching her and her writing was atrocious, with the letters muddled up and over three lines," said Hanna. "That was totally unlike her, so we took her to A&E."

Scarlett was given MRI and CT scans as medics tried to find a neurological cause for her unusual symptoms. She was eventually diagnosed with scarlet fever that had led to rheumatic fever, which usually occurs in cultures with little access to healthcare and medication and is only seen in about one in 100,000 people in the UK.

Hanna explained: "There's no straight test to diagnose rheumatic fever, you have to rule everything else out using a tool called the Duckett Jones test for certain criteria. Scarlett hit most of those criteria at different points, so it was textbook rheumatic fever."

Unfortunately, the condition has damaged Scarlett's heart and she also has a painful disorder called chorea, which makes the muscles contract and causes severe jerking movements.

The family have been through a painful and harrowing experience and it's only now that Scarlett is slowly regaining her health.

But Hanna, who has three other daughters as well as Scarlett, said she wouldn't have known what she would have done without the amazing support of staff at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School in Easterside.

She said: "I contacted the school when Scarlett became ill to let them know what was happening and received a reply full of love and compassion, even though it was the holidays.

"Fast forward a few weeks ahead, and after lots of meetings in school, my daughter is attending afternoons and building stamina.

"She is extremely immuno-compromised, so she is doing a slow and safe return aided by the school and takes meds every day to help



The ten-year-old is now delighted to be back at school with her friends

her cope with bugs and viruses.

"The staff have been amazing. They have guided us through each step, made adaptations where they can, offered support with food for our family and whatever else we need. They have taken my daughter into their arms with love and support.

"Scarlett is gaining strength every single day and on the right track. She has a mighty long road ahead of her and may fall ill again at any time, but she doesn't let that hold her back. She is a keen learner and loves being in school."

When she was actively in rheumatic fever she had a condition called mitral valve regurgitation, where her heart leaked fluid back into her body.

The rheumatic fever that caused the problems has gone and a visit to the cardiologist last week showed the leak has slowed significantly, but she also has a thickening of the walls of the mitral valve.

"The next issue will be getting her strength back because the chorea has affected her muscles and she's quite clumsy," said Hanna.

"She's on lifelong antibiotics and once you've had rheumatic fever, there's always quite a high risk of having it again and again, so we have to be careful where she goes and who she's around.

"As it stands right now, she's doing really well and has recovered better and quicker than

expected, and the doctors are quite impressed. But there's no saying that she's not going to fall ill next week, next year or in 10 years."

Special measures at school include sitting Scarlett at her own table and equipment so she can continue her lessons and she comes up to her SATs.

"I want to personally thank some of the staff," said Hanna. "Mrs Bennett in the front office has a smile for us every single day. She helps, advises and listens, which is so important to us. She cares about every child in that school.

"The headteacher, Miss Smith, has guided and helped us every step, led meetings and followed our journey and been available whenever we needed to speak with her with open arms and ears.

"As for Miss Bennett, who teaches Year 6, I don't even know where to start. This amazing woman has been with us every single step.

She made her classroom safe and sent homework home with notes to help us along.

"She had the class make cards and sent messages home to show she was thinking of us. She has held my daughter's hand, and mine, through this whole process, and I trust her with my daughter more than she will ever know. A true gem to the school.

"There are so many other members of staff in general that have been amazing and truly I



Scarlett manages a smile during her hospital treatment

can never thank them enough. Our family has had a really tough ride and the school being so supportive is a huge burden off our shoulders."

"I hope my words are a testament to the amazing staff they have working at St Thomas More. I am eternally grateful – the whole family is."

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Holy Father prays for Los Angeles fire victims

Pope Francis has expressed his deep sadness over the loss of life and widespread destruction caused by the recent fires in Los Angeles.

In a telegram to Archbishop José Gómez of Los Angeles, the Pope stressed his "spiritual closeness" to the communities affected by the tragedy and entrusted "the souls of the deceased to the loving mercy of Almighty God".

The message – which was signed by Holy See Secretary of State Cardinal Parolin – added that the Pope sends "heartfelt condolences" to those mourning, as well as prayers for relief efforts and emergency services personnel.

Pope calls for humanitarian law to be respected

Pope Francis has issued a powerful plea for an end to attacks on civilians and urged the international community to act "with firmness to ensure that humanitarian law is respected".

The Holy Father also appealed for continued prayers for peace throughout the world, calling particular attention to Ukraine, Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Myanmar and Sudan. He said: "Let us not forget that war is always a defeat, always!"

NEWS

Catenians unite for peace at Markenfield Hall Mass

Members and ladies from Hambleton Circle of the Catenians were joined by members from other circles for a very special Mass for Peace at Markenfield Hall, near Ripon.

In 1569 the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland led what came to be known as the Rising of the North, which aimed to replace Elizabeth with Mary Queen of Scots and to reinstate the Catholic faith.

Their first step was to enter Durham Cathedral and tear up English translations of the Bible and Reformation prayer books.

They then made their way to Markenfield Hall and were joined by Sir Thomas Markenfield and others.

After hearing Mass, they proceeded south, old Richard Norton with a gold crucifix around his neck, carrying the banner of the Pilgrimage of Grace displaying Christ's five wounds.

Their efforts were unsuccessful and the leaders fled in exile, their estates being forfeit to the Crown.

It is interesting to note that Raby Castle, the then home of the Earl of Northumberland, has recently been developed as a major tourist attraction called the rising.

Markenfield Hall is a medieval moated house with a private chapel dedicated to St Michael the Archangel. It is an ancient Catholic one, but as it is an ecclesiastical peculiar, Anglicans can worship there.

For many years, Northallerton-based Hambleton Circle made an annual pilgrimage

there with a torchlit procession across the moat behind their own banner of the five wounds. As is now usual, it was earlier in the day this year and without the torches.

Brother Robert Moore OH prepared the attractive order of service, the cover depicting the five wounds, and the banner was carried by Lionel Cartwright-Terry, followed by the president and vice president and their wives, then the celebrant and the pilgrims.

During our Mass, Lionel and Brother John Gough read the lessons. In the Gospel, from Matthew 5, we were told to "offer the wicked no resistance".

Brother Robert began his homily by asking why we were at Markenfield and what were we celebrating.

His first answer was: "Coming together as Catenians to share friendship and promote family values of community and hospitality."

But why Markenfield, commemorating an uprising that ended in death and tragedy? We were here to remember the wars and conflicts, lest we forget the loss of peace, he said.

The world is far from enjoying an enduring peace. In Psalm 121 David exhorts pilgrims to pray for the Holy City of Jerusalem. Jerusalem continues to this day to experience strife and war. As Christians we hope for a New Jerusalem, a final reconciliation.

But there is no easy path. The Gospel message from St Matthew is "love your enemies and persecutors". It is the ethic of Christian life. There are, however, many forms



Catenians at the Mass for Peace at Markenfield Hall

of love. Love of enemies is not the same as love of friends. It is the absence of hate, a willingness to hope for reconciliation, the humility to keep such people in our prayers.

We remembered the events of 1569 in a spirit of regret, not that the uprising failed, but that such events scar our history.

The intercessions were for all Church leaders, countries affected by war, all who are injured during forced migration due to war, all who have lost their lives through violence, that we may be heralds of peace and finally for our

personal needs, asking Our Lady Queen of Peace to help us.

In the Communion Rite, after praying the Our Father, we asked for deliverance from evil and "peace in our days", offering each other a sign of peace. At Circle meetings we do so in the spirit of Brotherhood which unites us. The hymn was Make Me a Channel of Your Peace and after the Blessing we were commissioned to "Go in peace".

David Jowett

Community kindness brings joy to seafarers

Do we ever think how we are able to enjoy a wonderful Christmas with all the food and gifts we receive?

The fact is that most of the goods in our shops come from overseas. This is thanks to seafarers, working seven days a week at sea, many with contracts of up to nine months, away from their families and often in very poor and dangerous conditions.

When seafarers arrive at Teesport they are supported by Deacon Peter Barrigan, regional port chaplain of Stella Maris (formerly the Apostleship of the Sea), the official maritime agency of the Catholic Church.

Each Christmas, most of the seafarers will receive a gift, thanks to support provided to Stella Maris by Middlesbrough churches such as St Clare's, St Francis and St Mary's Cathedral, whose parishioners kindly provide Santa sacks of goodies.

Further Christmas boxes are given by Jean Rigg, president of the Union of Catholic Mothers and by parishioners of the Holy Name of Mary, Middlesbrough.

Presents are also donated by Scarborough parishes and the parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Ormesby.

And a huge amount of clothes and treats are given by parishes around Haxby, near York.

On a visit to St Clare's, Deacon Peter expressed gratitude on behalf of the seafarers who he says really appreciate the gifts and ask that their thanks are passed on to all those who have been so kind to think of them, especially at Christmas time.

St Clare's supports Stella Maris throughout the year and would be happy to receive donations of toiletries, boxer shorts, gloves, hats and socks and plenty of chocolate later in the year, so they can provide even more seafarers with presents for Christmas 2025.

If readers would like to find out more about the work of Stella Maris, visit stellamaris.org.uk.

Jackie Metcalfe Smith



Deacon Peter Barrigan, front, collecting the gifts from St Clare's, Brookfield, ready for distribution, together with some of the parishioners who have been instrumental in organising and packing the presents – Photo by Celine Alexander-Brown

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St George's parishioners celebrate the Epiphany in style

Almost 50 people braved the big freeze to come to the Epiphany party organised by the Laudato Si' Group from St George's Parish in York.

We all had a great time with lovely food, singing, games, child kings and of course the crowning event, the piñata, beautifully made by parishioner Citlali, and beautifully destroyed by the children.

Maria, from the Laudato Si' Group, said: "You all made it such a warm and welcoming celebration reflecting our church family at St George's."

It was lovely to see a very large shooting star over the Hall - very fitting for the celebration! Thank you to our close neighbours at St Lawrence's for the hire of their parish hall, which is the nearest such facility to our church.

St George's Laudato Si' Group



The Epiphany party organised by the Laudato Si' Group at St George's Parish in York

Rocking in the Aisles show set for return

It's back – and this time with more aisles!

Rocking in the Aisles became an annual favourite in the diocesan entertainment calendar for several years during the 2000s.

Organised by Canon Paul Farrer, the variety show attracted packed audiences to Middlesbrough Theatre.

Now the show is making a welcome return, in the beautiful surroundings of St Mary's Cathedral, which has launched a fantastic programme of musical events in recent months.

Chris Tillotson and Joe Harrison are busy

putting together a programme brimming with talent from throughout the diocese.

Bring your family, friends, neighbours and spread the word – it's going to be a very special night!

Rocking in the Aisles 2025 is on Friday March 21 at 7.30pm. Tickets are £10, under-16s £5, and are available from Ticket Source or St Mary's Cathedral 01642 597750 or Box Office.

Visit middlesbroughrcathedral.org or see next month's *Voice* for more details.



Classical singing group The Priests sang at St Mary's Cathedral during their farewell tour – Photo by Matty O'Connor

Pope to children: True friendships share hope and pain

Hope was the central theme of Pope Francis' message to a group of children who are receiving treatment at a Polish clinic.

Greeting them in the Vatican, the Pope said the Jubilee is a "year in which God wants to grant us special graces".

"We have the opportunity to give each other hope and love," Pope Francis said.

He explained one of the reasons he felt joy ahead of the meeting was that children and young people are "signs of hope" because Jesus is present in each of them.

"Where he is, there is hope that never disappoints," he added.

The Pope reminded the children and young people that another sign of Jesus' love for them can be seen in the

people around them.

He offered them a challenge to serve the Church by offering their prayers and sufferings for the Pope.

He asked them to join him in praying for the "children – unfortunately, many of them – who do not have the possibility to receive care."

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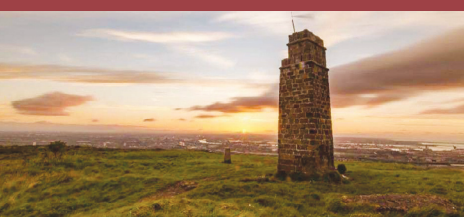
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Tel (01642) 850505, email catholicvoice@rcdmidd.org.uk

Deadline Friday February 7 for the March 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.

NEWS

Out & About

1 Saturday

11am Catholic women are invited to share an hour of feminine communion, including meditation, via Zoom. Text Barbara on 07796 117704 with your mobile number and email address so she can add you to the WhatsApp group, or email catholicwomenmdl@gmail.com for Zoom link.

6pm Mass in Italian in the Father Kelly Room, Our Lady, Acomb, York. Followed by refreshments, all welcome.

3 Monday

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

4 Tuesday

10am Coffee at the Cathedral. Tea, coffee and treats every Tuesday after 9.30am Mass. A warm welcome and friendly atmosphere. Make new friends and enjoy some fellowship. Those who are alone especially welcome.

10am Christian Meditation Group meets online. Further information from Terry Doyle terry-doyle@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.

5 Wednesday

5.30pm Sung Evening Prayer and Benediction at St Mary's Cathedral. Join us every Wednesday for a time of prayer and quiet reflection before the Blessed Sacrament.

7 Friday

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

7.30pm The Cathedral Series: Valentine's Classics. Spoil your Valentine with an early gift of romantic music in the relaxing ambience of St Mary's Cathedral. Cathedral Box Office: 01642 597750, cathedralvents@rcdmidd.org.uk.

9 Sunday

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

10 Monday

2pm Music for the Mind, dementia-friendly communal singing. An hour of fun and music for people living with dementia, their friends and carers, with Trish McLean. All welcome.

11 Tuesday

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

12 Wednesday

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

13 Thursday

7.45pm Middlesbrough Catenian Circle, sharing faith and friendship with kindred spirits throughout Teesside, meeting at Middlesbrough Cricket Club, Green Lane, Middlesbrough TS5 7SL. Call Peter Carey on 01642 317772 or Chris Rhodes on 01642 319161.

16 Sunday

3pm Catholic Fellowship Mass at St Paulinus, Guisborough, with Father Philip Cunnah.

22 Saturday

Noon LGBT+ social gathering at the Bar Convent, York. All welcome for a coffee or a meal and friendship.

7.30pm The Eddie White Sacred Heart Irish Dance with Pat Jordan. All dances take place at the Erimus Club, Cumberland Road, Middlesbrough TS5 6JB. Contact John Brown on 07871 958412.

26 Wednesday

7.30pm for 7.45pm Cleveland Newman Circle meets at St Mary's Cathedral Hall, Coulby Newham. Talk by Professor Karen Kilby, "The Blessed Trinity: mystery and the search for understanding".

If you have any events that you would like to include in the Out and About section, please email heidi.cummins@rcdmidd.org.uk.

Share your stories of gifts that live on

Catholics are being invited to share stories of gifts they've received in the past that continue to touch lives today.

Stories will be collated by Your Catholic Legacy, a consortium of more than 25 Catholic charities, and published at yourcatholiclegacy.org.uk.

Christine Reidy, Your Catholic Legacy project manager, said: "We know some gifts live on and on. I heard of someone who was proposed to with a grandparent's engagement ring, another person who prays with a cherished set of Rosary beads left to them by an uncle and someone else who reads a treasured Bible passed on by her grandfather.

"So we're asking people, have you been left a gift that lives on in your life? And more importantly, what gift will you want to be remembered by?"

When people leave a gift in their will to Catholic causes, their memory can live on through the work of the charities they care about. Your Catholic Legacy can help people choose a Catholic cause that's right for them – and provide information about gifts in wills.

To submit a story, and to read other people's stories of gifts that live on, visit yourcatholiclegacy.org.uk or search for #shareyourstory on social media.

These charities are all members of Your Catholic Legacy: Aid to the Church in Need, CAFOD, Carmelite Charitable Trust, Columban Missionaries, CSAN, Daughter of Charity Services, Depaul UK, East Anglian Diocese, HCPT, Jesuits in Britain, LIFE, Marriage Care, Missio, Prison Advice & Care Trust (PACT), Stella Maris, Stonyhurst College, St Vincent de Paul Society, St Mary's, Oscott, the Cardinal Hume Centre, the Dominican Friars, the Passage, World Villages for Children, Your Place

For more information visit: yourcatholiclegacy.org.uk

'My gran's ring is now my engagement ring.'

Mary



Will you share your story?

Catholics are being invited to share stories of gifts they've received in the past that continue to touch lives today

Lawyer Paul sees life from the other side of the bars

God calls us along different paths at different stages of our lives. Deacon Paul Hargreaves spoke to the Cleveland Newman Circle about some significant parts of his journey so far in his talk “The Permanent diaconate: Ordained to serve”.

Stockton born and bred, Paul attended St Patrick's Primary School and then Our Lady and St Bede's Comprehensive and St Mary's Sixth Form College, Middlesbrough, before studying Law at Coventry University.

This was obviously God's call, for there he met Debra, who was also studying Law, and soon they married. They both became solicitors, settled down in Stockton and raised their family.

The couple had always practiced their faith and gradually did more in the Church, becoming readers and Extraordinary Ministers.

In 2009 Paul was asked if he would be interested in the permanent diaconate and after careful consideration he began his formation in 2011.

Since ordination in June 2015, Paul has served in the parish of Our Lady of Walsingham, Stockton, where he assists at Mass, proclaims the Gospel and regularly preaches. He also officiates at baptisms, weddings and funerals.

However, Paul never wanted to be just a “weekend deacon” and he felt called to chaplaincy work. Without the skill set needed

for hospital chaplaincy, he helped the prison chaplain at HMP Frankland and immediately knew that was right for him. A placement at HMP Kirkclevington confirmed his decision.

Paul became a full-time chaplain at HMP Full Sutton, providing pastoral support, organising worship and supporting Bible study.

Chaplains' statutory duties include seeing prisoners on arrival, helping them settle and seeing them seven days before release, signposting them to a place of worship if possible. They also visit prisoners in hospital and in segregation.

Paul's work has developed to include leading multi-faith teams of chaplains and since 2019 he has worked from the London HQ with responsibility for chaplaincies in 20 prisons around the North-East.

Having accepted this calling, Paul misses day-to-day contact with prisoners. He never asks why they were convicted, because that would not help him get to know them: they are ordinary people who have made poor choices. Paul says prison life is like parish life. Prisoners are in a different place but with the same needs.

• Distinguished academic Karen Kilby will talk about the nature of God in three persons at this month's Cleveland Newman Circle meeting. Professor Kilby, who is Bede Professor of Catholic Theology at Durham University's Centre for Catholic Studies, will

give a talk entitled “The Blessed Trinity: mystery and the search for understanding” on Wednesday February 26 in St Mary's Cathedral hall at 7.45pm, with coffee and tea served from 7.30pm. All are welcome. For more details call 01642 645732 or email p.egerton123@gmail.com.

Patricia Egerton



Deacon Paul Hargreaves has responsibility for chaplaincies in 20 prisons around the North-East

Conference presidents lead London meeting

A group of bishops, led by the presidents of the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland, have met in London to discuss the issues of the day and share times of fraternal prayer and reflection.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols hosted the group, which included Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh and Bishop John Keenan.

The presidents were joined by bishops from the three episcopal conferences to convene what is called the Liaison Committee, which meets annually and is an expression of unity and solidarity between the Catholic bishops of the three territories.

Among topics discussed were the proposed assisted suicide legislation affecting all the jurisdictions, migration, conflict in the Holy Land, safeguarding, the Jubilee year and other matters of common concern.

Korean archbishop urges Catholic MPs to focus on common good

Archbishop Peter Chung Soon-taick of Seoul has urged Catholic MPs in South Korea to prioritise the common good amid the country's political turmoil.

The crisis began after former President Yoon Suk Yeol's short-lived declaration of martial law on December 3, leading to widespread protests and ultimately his impeachment. This situation has exacerbated economic instability, particularly affecting small businesses and citizens struggling to make ends meet.

Speaking at a special Mass in the chapel of the National Assembly, Archbishop Chung stressed the need to go beyond party interests and cooperate, focusing on long-term policies aimed at benefiting the whole nation.

Twenty-six Catholic MPs from the Catholic Committee of the National Assembly attended the liturgy.

Chinese Catholics raise cash for earthquake victims

Catholic communities from all around China have raised more than £50,000 to help 50,000 displaced people after a deadly earthquake struck Tibet.

More than 120 people were killed, 330 were injured and tens of thousands of homes were destroyed or damaged.

The Diocese of Beijing issued an appeal, saying: “We can seize the opportunity to recall the Lord's teaching: ‘Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

Hundreds of Tibetans living in exile in India and Nepal showed their support by holding candlelight vigils for those who have lost their lives.

Pope Francis also expressed his condolences and prayers to the victims.

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Sometimes emails go missing. If you have sent an item for the Voice and it has not been used, please email the editor at communications@rcdmidd.org.uk.

NEWS

We have assisted dying: it's called palliative care

David Cragg-James, a parishioner of Our Lady and St Benedict's, Ampleforth, reflects on the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill passing its second reading in the House of Commons...

So, it's happened. A laudably conducted House of Commons debate, marked by compassion, civility and respect for the contrary opinion, has opened the door to "assisted dying" or more accurately assisted suicide, as the patient would self-administer the lethal cocktail of drugs.

In a desire to see those approaching death spared any further pain and suffering, the nation has decided we want the right to decide ourselves when to die, authorising a medical practitioner to facilitate the death.

As the bill progresses through the parliamentary stages, and as the clauses of the bill are hopefully subjected to intense testing, we have the opportunity, I would suggest the duty, to re-examine our position.

Analysis of polls reveals that the framing of questions determines the response and that the better informed the interviewee, the less likely the support for assisted suicide.

"Thou shalt not kill" is an injunction almost universally accepted, in principle, if not always in practice.

And yet delegating to a doctor, say, the facilitation of my killing is surely to impose an alien and opposing task upon one whose primary sworn professional responsibility is the furtherance and protection of life.

In Canada, where medical assistance in dying (MAiD) has been legal for eight years, medical practitioners' objections on grounds of conscience are being eroded.

MAiD is reported as the sixth most frequent cause of death in Canada, and attitudes to killing are gradually being coarsened. Evidence from the Netherlands and Belgium is even more shocking.

My choice, then, is limited, as others are affected. The very mental capacity to make such a choice is an area fraught with problems for any legal authorisation. How is capacity to be assessed?

How do physical, psychological, societal, ethical, religious and family pressures add up to a form of coercion, which perhaps combined with an altruistic "duty to die" conspire to affect capacity?

Who decides? Has a judge the capacity to

make such a decision objectively? Will they have to consider whether the doctor in presenting the option of assisted suicide has not been subconsciously influenced by the financial state of their medical practice or of the health service?

It is cheaper for a doctor (or a country) to facilitate suicide than to finance effective palliative care. Is their capacity not affected? Will they be able to refuse on grounds of conscience or even of convenience? My choice it appears is not absolute. Do I in fact have a real choice where the option of high-quality palliative care is not available? Does poverty not deny choice?

In societies where MAiD is just another therapeutic option, doctors who conscientiously object are instructed simply to pass the case on. Hospitals have been denied funding for refusing to provide MAiD.

If this bill becomes law, the physician's role as a preserver of life will change, as will their relationship with society.

Palliative care funding almost universally drops in jurisdictions which have legalised assisted suicide and/or euthanasia.

A former health minister of the Netherlands, regretting the lack of attention to palliative care, concedes: "We first listened to the political and societal demand in favour of euthanasia... Obviously this was not in the proper order."

Proponents urge us to put our faith in excellent regulations and safeguards, although elsewhere such have been whittled away or watered down.

My MP, ignoring the Netherlands, Belgium and Canada, holds up the model of Oregon, where he thinks the law is ensuring effective control.

In the book *The Reality of Assisted Dying*, John Keown argues that these Oregon safeguards are largely illusory, lack substantiation and are not designed to detect abuse. There have been no comprehensive surveys.

The Christian perspective gets too little public airing in perhaps mistaken deference to society, which currently holds that Christians and others of a religious persuasion have no right to impose their beliefs on others (although society is happy to impose its lack of belief on all).

I believe the well-nigh universally held prohibition on the intentional infliction of

death on another human being has a religious origin upon which the claim to the sanctity, value and dignity of human life upheld by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (2015) is based.

This bill, despite the compassion driving it, gives to another – patient, clinician, judge – the right to determine when life has lost its sanctity, value and dignity. History has been down this road.

For the Christian, life is sacred. God decides when life has run its course. Our intervention

is to stand alongside the sufferer in compassion, relieving pain, physical, mental and societal, conscious until the last of the sufferer's value and dignity as a human being. He or she has no right to intend to kill another.

It is a somewhat grim irony that a concern for the passing of the current bill into law is likely to signal the demise of real assistance in dying – properly funded and universally available palliative care.

Mayor holds Carol Concert at St Paulinus Church

The Mayor of Guisborough, Councillor Andrew Hixon, held his Christmas Carol Concert at St Paulinus Church in the town.

The concerts are held in rotation in the town's churches and St Paulinus was full for this special event, which was compered by Father Phil Cunnah.

Musical accompaniment was from the Guisborough Citadel Salvation Army and carols were interspersed with Christmas readings read by the mayor and his deputy, Councillor Peter Berry, Guisborough's Citizen of the Year, Fergus Osborne, and marine and sea cadets, as well

as Father Phil.

Also present was the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, Graham Henderson CBE, and his wife.

A retiring collection was held, with the proceeds to be divided between St Paulinus Church and the mayor's chosen charities, the East Cleveland Sea Cadets and the Teesside Charity.

Refreshments were served in the church hall afterwards.

Brian Gleeson



Father Phil introduces the Mayor of Guisborough Town Council, Councillor Andrew Hixon

Environment Corner - Healthier eating for a healthier planet

Is it time to re-evaluate the food we eat? Can we discover ways to make changes that benefit us all and care for the earth and the climate?

Food plays a central role in all our lives. We need to eat to survive. But what, how and when we eat is based on more than just staying alive.

It's about meeting and sharing, our traditions and rituals, our senses, feelings and memories.

It opens doors to different experiences and cultures. And it's becoming a lot clearer how our food affects the environment.

Meat and dairy products are increasingly a focus for attention as their production causes 14.5% of planet-warming gases.

From growing crops to processing, transporting, selling, storing and throwing away food – everything we eat has an impact on the environment and the climate.

A significant percentage of agricultural land is being used to grow feed for animals rather than people.

Rainforests are being felled to make way for

soya, most of which is being used to feed factory-farmed pigs and poultry.

Much of our food system is harming our planet and our health, so it is time for change.

You don't have to wave goodbye to meat and dairy for a planet-friendly diet. But it is good to reduce the amount you eat, buy the best quality you can afford and replace meat with plant proteins – beans, nuts and pulses.

The positive development in all this is the number of recipes around from writers moving away from traditional meat heavy recipes and menus. There are wonderful tastes and dishes to be discovered.

It can seem as though all messages concerning the environment focus on what we are doing wrong, but with food consumption there are also exciting new avenues to explore and new discoveries to be made.

As Pope Francis frequently says, no action is too small to play our part in caring for our common home.

Barbara Hungin



Making careful decisions about what we eat can help us care for the environment

NEWS

LOURDES

Ride provides bumper Zoë's Place payday

Middlesbrough Catenian Mark Kirk took part in the Santa Ride annual motorcycle charity rally through the roads around Teesside.

The event, organised by members of the Boundary 500 motorcycle club, attracts thousands of Teesside onlookers as the bikers process the 22-mile circuit before finishing at Redcar's Kirkleatham Hall.

This year more than 160 motorcyclists donned festive attire to raise around £30,000 for Zoë's Place Baby Hospice, in Normanby, Middlesbrough.

Over the years, the now-renowned event, which started in 2006, has raised more than £900,000 for the Great North Air Ambulance as well as Zoë's Place.

Mark said the mild weather on the day helped with the magnificent public turnout.

Diocese of Middlesbrough property manager Sharon Westcough also took part in the ride once again.

You can still donate at santaride.boundary500.co.uk.



Sharon Westcough ready for this year's event

Bookings open for next year's pilgrimage

Bookings are being taken for our 2025 pilgrimage (Saturday May 24 to Friday May 30). Visit joewalstours.co.uk, email info@joewalstours.co.uk or call 0808 189 0468 for more details.

Application forms for supported pilgrims are available from Lourdes secretary Pat Ling by calling 01642 760105 or emailing lourdessecretary@rcdmid.org.uk.

Could you be interested in joining our pilgrimage as a helper? Volunteer doctors, nurses, handmaids (women) and brancardiers (men) are always welcome! Executive director Mark Taylor will answer questions you may have. Email pilgrimagedirector@rcdmid.org.uk.

Dates for your diaries

Formation Day Training:
Saturday March 22, approx 9am-4pm.

Formation Evening Training:
Tuesday May 6, approx 5.30pm to 10pm.

Both take place at Trinity Catholic College, Middlesbrough. More details will follow nearer to the time.

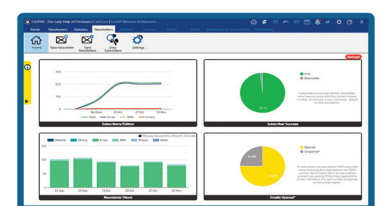
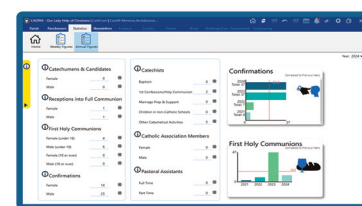
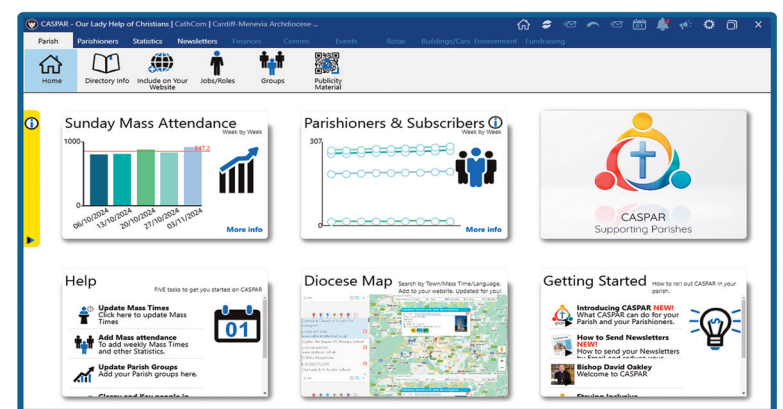
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NEWS

Flying start for parish's revitalised SVP group

Bridlington SVP conference has got off to a flying start since reforming last September after an absence of 14 years.

Following an appeal to the parish we managed to attract 12 new members from all walks of life and varying ages.

We have held three main events, a harvest music night and a cat-napping mystery night, each with a three-course meal, and a children's Jackie and the Beanstalk pantomime, with the giant being played by our very own Father Albert Schembri.

The events included raffles, buffets and Christmas stalls selling goods made by creative parishioners. We raised money for the SVP and SSAFA, the armed forces charity.

The parish youth group came up with the idea of singing in a local care home. Fifteen teenagers sang carols to the elderly and those in ill health in a visit that was well received and appreciated by the care home manager.

This year we are concentrating on completing DBS checks as we have three care homes awaiting visits.

We then plan to work alongside the Mini Vinnies at Our Lady & St Peter's Primary School and the parish youth group has plans for a sponsored walk along the Humber Bridge in spring.

We are now a thriving conference and looking towards opening more doors of hope by attending prison chaplaincies to see how we can support them.

It has been such a success so far and our little conference is growing all the time, with auxiliary members being actively involved.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the people we are supporting, including the isolated, elderly and those who do not generally socialise due to finances or lack of confidence.

- For information and advice about forming or running an SVP conference in your parish, email me at TeresaO@svp.org.uk or call me on 07554 336984.

Teresa O'Hagan
Membership Support Officer
(Middlesbrough)



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