

**MORE THAN 26 YEARS OF BRINGING THE NOTTINGHAM DIOCESE TOGETHER**

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## The Crafty Pray-ers

*St Ralph Sherwin Parish (St. Mary's, Holy Family and Christ the King, Derby)*  
Craft and Pray Group

We were contacted recently by Deacon Chris who wanted to share and celebrate the work of the Craft & Pray group at St Ralph Sherwin Parish. Here they are in their own words:

I'm Pip. I instigated the Lenten Knitting Group in 2024, thinking I could commit to the seven Wednesday mornings, with the aim of knitting prayer squares and praying for those who would receive them, as well as developing my interest in the spirituality of knitting. I met people who I wouldn't otherwise have come across, and each week learnt more about them and their interesting backgrounds, challenges and hopes. As Easter approached, I knew I didn't want our weekly gatherings to stop. We decided to continue to meet but change the name to "Craft and Pray Group". We were delighted that a number of housebound people were joining in what we came to regard as our ministry, by knitting at home, and parishioners were donating yarn.

I'm Anne-Marie and I thank God every day for the friends I've made at the craft and pray group. It's a great place for anyone feeling lonely at home - the welcome you get is wonderful. Not only do we pray and knit together but we have great fun. They say laughter is the best medicine and I can tell you if you go into the room with a heavy heart, you will come out feeling so much better.

I'm Fran. Whilst visiting St Asaph's Cathedral in North Wales, I noticed that the parishioners had knitted prayer squares, which were available to anyone who would appreciate one. My husband is a member of the chaplaincy team at the Royal Derby Hospital, so distributes our prayer squares to patients, who find great comfort in holding them as they face anxiety during a medical procedure or gain peace as this life passes away. Teddies, blankets and fiddle muffs are also distributed by the ward staff.

I'm Carmen. I'm the group hostess, making refreshments to quench the thirst of our chatty group.

I'm Grace. I attend Broadway Baptist Church, and I wasn't sure what to expect,



Knitting and praying for others

despite my friend Carmen's reassurance. However, I was overwhelmed by the acceptance I received. As an individual who suffers from mental health challenges, enjoyment and positive interaction within the group are so important to me, and a great form of distraction. The group's common objectives allow us to give something back to our community and give me a sense of purpose. The time for prayer reminds us that God is in the midst of all that we do, and that each one of us is blessed by the grace of God, in sharing our skills for such a worthwhile cause.

I'm Christina and the group statistician. So far, we have knitted over 2000 prayer squares for the hospital and our parish, crafted more than 150 teddies for the Children's hospital, made over 50 fiddle muffs and fiddle blankets and 30 comfort blankets for local care homes and the hospital. We created poppies for the church's Remembrance Sunday display, whilst our gifts, toys and decorations raised over £200 at the parish Christmas Fayre. Currently we are crafting flowers to decorate the church door for the Jubilee Year of Hope.

I'm Bridie. At 97, I'm the oldest member of the group. It's lovely to see everyone working for a worthy cause. I knit a lot at home and pop into the group on my way to mass.

I'm Ann. I was sceptical about joining the group in case I didn't know anyone, but I was made so welcome that I now look forward to it every Wednesday. After my first visit I broke my ankle, but one of the group gives me a lift, which enables me to join in every week.

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# We should be winning £50!

Thanks to Jon Cornwall, SVP Director of Membership for this Reflection

There is an experiment which has now been repeated many times in psychology and social science. The researcher takes two groups of people, one that self-identifies as having good luck and the other that considers itself to have bad luck. Then one by one you ask each person to flick through a magazine with the aim of counting how many pictures it contains. The results will be indistinguishable on accuracy, but, vastly more of the lucky people will have spotted the advert which states "tell the researcher you have seen this to win £50". Whether or not you even think luck is real, in a quantifiable and provable way those who think they are lucky, are.

# £50

Vincentians may find themselves talking in the language of luck on occasion. They would state that 'the only thing separating us from the Beneficiaries is the cards we were dealt after all'. "Here but for the grace of God go I", is a sentiment we may use to keep ourselves humble and grounded. We know that we are certainly not loved more by God than the person whose life has been more afflicted. We may credit that to luck of the drawer, where we were born, the people we have been fortunate to have in our lives, the opportunities that only came to us or the poor life choices we were in a position to avoid.

In that experiment you can prove that believers in good fortune also possess it. You could also correctly extrapolate from this research that people who consider themselves to be lucky are better at spotting opportunities and will be more likely to notice the word "win" and think it could apply to them.

Vincentians believe they have a force far more influential on their side than luck. They have come to recognise Providence, who is the Holy Spirit. In the bible there are over 70 examples of decisions being left to God to decide by the casting of lots, "We throw the dice but the Lord decides how they fall" (Proverb 13:33)



Many people comment on which side of luck they find themselves, that despite challenging times they make their own luck. To these I would suggest that this quality is deeply Vincentian. Members have trained themselves to be sensitive to opportunities to recognise God, to spot opportunities and to embrace the tides of fortune.

"Notice everything, endure much, correct only one thing at a time". This quote, which

you may recognise in your prayers and is loved by the members, comes to us from St Bernard of Clairvaux via Pope St John XXIII and David Williams, a beloved, deceased member of the society.

Notice everything, discern what the Holy Spirit is offering us today and have the courage to commit yourself to new courses of action as you are fortunate to do. Guidance not just for Vincentians but for all of us!

In this Jubilee year of Pilgrims of Hope, let's consider these words from God to Jeremiah, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jer. 29:11)



Vincentians should be winning £50 each. Let us look forward to a fruitful 2025.

## FRANKLY SPEAKING



January this year witnessed the first full month of the year of Jubilee with the highly appropriate message 'Pilgrims of Hope'. Throughout this always difficult 31 days I found more people giving attention to that word "Hope" than I can previously recall.

The first Sunday of February continued this theme with the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord and the Mass you attended may have incorporated the Blessing of Candles and much extra light 40 days after Christmas. The calendar has now moved on as we await the start of Lent, and the continued expressions of Hope may well be part of our lives on Ash Wednesday.

Like it or not we are 5 years on since Britain left the European Union. The arguments of the vote in 2016 has left a country which has deep economic problems which may or may not be linked to Brexit. Either way it is a fact that life has got so much harder for the poorest in many parts of our country. Sadly too the divide between the rich and the poor is getting wider which can all too often lead to domestic tensions or even worse.

Our health and care sector has faced massive challenges not least in vacancy statistics and employees leaving. Those who remain can be both dedicated and loyal but with an ageing population we will need many more who are both compassionate

and experienced. The latest figure I have seen reveals that 32% of care workers in England were not born in the UK. Well time will tell if the cross-party consensus on this much needed reform makes progress.

There are so many other issues which we should at least pray for this Lent. In our country we have so many good people who give not only time and money to helping others but who will also reach out in Hope. They really deserve our support at this time.

Frank Goulding,  
Holy Trinity Parish,  
Newark



# Papal Honours

## East Grinstead and Lingfield Catholic Parish

We are delighted that two long-serving members of our community were acknowledged with 'Benemerenti' medals and certificates from Pope Francis last December. These rare honours are a testament to the dedication and inspiration they give to us.

## Congratulations to Chris Pond and Sue Joy



The Benemerenti Medal, meaning "Worthy of Merit," is a rare and prestigious honor, with fewer than 20 awarded annually in the UK to both clergy and laity. These medals are bestowed by the Holy See to individuals who have demonstrated exceptional dedication and service to Catholic

principles, the Church, and society. Instituted by Pope Gregory XVI in 1832, the Benemerenti Medal recognizes those who have shown unwavering faithfulness and love for the Church through their distinguished contributions.

### Why is it important to the Community?



It recognises the person for their service to the Catholic Church and their fellow man over a long and sustained period.

It recognises those who in many roles work with that person on all that person's different activities: Finance and Council roles, Refugees, SVP, Justice and Peace, St Peter's School roles, Food bank, Missio, Fair Trade, Children's Liturgy, Lourdes Pilgrimage, the SVP's two Conferences,

Parish 100 clubs, Catenians.....the list is very long for both recipients. For both Sue and Chris, the roles have come and gone over decades but always with love and inspiration for others to follow.

It offers a sense of pleasure to the entire Community for Sue and Chris to have received a well-deserved Papal Honour. Surely something for all of us to celebrate.

### How does the honour come about?

The process starts at Parish level. The Parish Priest may initiate the process, or members of the Congregation may put forward a recommendation which is then endorsed by the Parish Priest.

Then the long process of producing the recommendation, with all the checks and balances starts. This can take a few months to produce and validate. Once satisfied the Parish Priest sends the application in written form to his Bishop for approval; not necessarily a foregone

conclusion as Bishops may and do raise questions for the Priest.

The record of the application is kept, and with the Bishop's approval the application is sent to the Papal Nuncio: the Vatican Ambassador to the UK. With his approval it goes to Rome.

When approved the award follows the same route back to the Parish Priest. Such scrutiny is designed to ensure that these awards are not devalued, and that the recipient is indeed "Worthy of Merit".

### A reflection from Chris

It is so difficult for the recipient to determine, to identify, why he or she was chosen to "Receive a Papal Award." Straightaway, my own reaction was the usual, to be expected, "Why me?"

Father pinned a medal to my chest in front of a Mass congregation, and I turned to face it to a wave of applause and congratulations. At that moment, what was the feeling that swept over me, facing so many of my peers? Well, I tell you, it was one of absolute humility. Why me? Seeing so many familiar faces, why not him? Why not her? It was all I could immediately manage, but here they all were, today, all applauding ME!

Looking back, and to be quite honest, the seeds of my devotion to duty were probably formed accidentally. Yes, by the accident of the time, the place, the circumstance of where I was and when I was there, and certainly not the seed of a grand plan to one day be honoured with a BeneMerenti medal. I have always shrunk from being "the one to be lauded," although, across the years, while I might seem to have been the one to "drive" events, I have never sought to be the one whose "star" shone the brightest as a consequence of them.

No competitive sportsman able to build up a cabinet, in 85 years, my Papal Award is the third event of any occasion when I have been honoured. The first was winning a St Christopher memento in a class religious quiz in 1952. So, I harboured no grand plan.

Anyway, to suit a company career plan, we moved to East Grinstead in 1973. Myself, Margaret, and five young children then aged from ten down to one (the "ones" being twins).

And, quite simply in a way, my commitments to duty developed just from that. We were seven practising Catholics, with a parish church to attend plus a commitment to Catholic education. These all served to produce an alchemy of involvement that grew across the years: PTAs, school fairs and fetes, parish social committees, schools governance involvement, parish rotas (reading, ministries, welcoming), Parish 100 Club, Catenians formation, Sunday refreshments rota, Parish Finance Committee, altar serving (a renaissance), and Missio (the Red Box).

The list is not exhaustive, but it serves to demonstrate how dedication to a particular ethos—well, the Church in my case (not overlooking a very supportive wife who developed her own range of commitments)—might demonstrate a strong measure of service to a parish, particularly if one does not move on in fifty years!

But I cannot move away from my earlier point of view that enveloped me when I was presented with my order of BeneMerenti and turned to face my peers: humility. Thank you to so many people who have made it possible for one who has never sought to be honoured to find himself in that position.



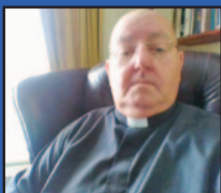
# St Mary's School Derby Launches the Jubilee with a Mission Day

Staff and pupils at St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy in Derby had a spiritual, uplifting and fun day celebrating the start of the Jubilee Year. The Chaplaincy Team led the whole School in a Celebration of the Word, reflecting on Jesus' words in his hometown of Nazareth, announcing that the time had come for the Lord to save his people. The children were asked about the reasons they have to be hopeful and how they can bring hope to others. During the day they made badges with the Jubilee logo and thought about what each part symbolises; crosses from sticks; rainbows; Jubilee doors and lanterns. Parents and carers were invited in for the afternoon to see the children's work, and listen to a Bible story with the younger pupils. During the year, Nursery and FS children will have the opportunity to take the 'Jubilee Pilgrim Bears' home for a week, and write in the Bears' passports all the journeys they go on together, and pray with Jubilee Bear at the end of the day.

Fran Hazel



## From: Elston Hermitage.....



As we move through this Jubilee Year of Hope - the month of March sees the beginning of the season of Lent. Lent is especially a holy time in the Church's year, during which we consciously accompany Jesus in his forty day fast in the wilderness. Jesus undertook this long and rigorous time of abstaining from food after his baptism in the River Jordan, when he took upon himself the mission of the Suffering Servant in order to carry out his Father's will and his plan for our salvation.

Being the Suffering Servant meant for Jesus the task of identifying himself with sinful humanity and taking upon himself all of the sin of the world and, ultimately, offering his life in sacrifice to the Father so that we might be reconciled to God. This was an enormous undertaking, one which would bring him into conflict with everything that was in opposition to or hostile to God, including a battle with Satan himself. In the course of this task, Jesus would need to remain steadfast and obedient to the Father's will and plan, especially in those moments when he might naturally shrink from the suffering it would involve.

Did Jesus set himself this forty day fast from food in order to strengthen himself for the greater ordeal of surrendering his very life on the cross? It would seem so!

Immediately after the fast, Jesus entered into a struggle against the Evil One, who tried to persuade him to follow a path of life that was different from the path to which the Father was calling him. His self denial made it easier for him to stand against the enemy's subtle temptations. He was able to remain absolutely clear about what his Father's will was, rather than being led by basic bodily needs or desires. The practice of denying these normally good and healthy needs and inclinations helps to sharpen the mind and heart to hear the Father's voice and the will to respond in obedience.

It is in this same spirit that we should enter into this time of Lent. As a time of penance and self denial, its purpose is to help us both see and obey the Father's will in our day to day lives and to train us to resist the more normal path of simply following our own will. The prophet Joel in our reading for Ash Wednesday presents a sense of urgency to do this.



"Turn to me" God calls "Turn to me now"! Why so serious approach? Are we in worse shape than we were last Lent? What is so important about turning back to him that God presses us to do it right away? Only this he is "gracious and merciful....rich in kindness" (Joel 2. 13)

The main purpose surely for this season of Lent is God's work of grace - more than anything else, Lent is a time of favour from heaven - and especially so in this Jubilee Year. Lent offers us forty days for God to reveal himself. Forty opportunities for us to draw closer to Jesus, forty days for the

Father to shower us with mercy, love and healing.

God's mercy is then an urgent matter during Lent. He wants to do wonderful things in our lives and it's more likely to happen if we "return" to him - so let's make ourselves available to God. We need to respond to God's urgent call this Lent and allow Jesus to reveal himself to us and change our hearts and lives.

Have a good Lent !

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



# St Alban's Celebrate Epiphany with Annual Pub Quiz



Every year at the Epiphany, the parish of St Alban's gathers together for some food, a few drinks - and a pub quiz!

The annual St Alban's Epiphany Quiz is a much-looked-forward-to event, and this year there were no less than 50 contestants, organized into 11 teams.

At the beginning of the Quiz, each team announces their team name, which can range from extremely simple ( a team of 7 made entirely of young people named The Youth), to names so crazy even the team itself can't explain why they've chosen it! The non-alcoholic smartinis: I'm thinking of you as I write this!

The Quiz had 9 rounds: General Knowledge, Arts and Literature, Music, The Year That Was, Sports, TV and Film, Adverts, Around the World and a special Jubilee round, in which contestants were given a list of world events that had taken place since the last Jubilee and told to write what year they happened in.

Everyone's favourite round was Around the World, as they gained back many points they had lost in previous rounds and many even impressed themselves with how much they knew!

It wasn't all plain sailing though! There was a moment in the sports round of the quiz where the keen sportspeople in the room,

who had correctly answered that Joe Cook was the highest test run scorer for England, were outraged to find that Alastair Cook had been marked as the correct answer! The quizmasters had to hastily rectify their mistakes under the withering glare of the aforementioned sports fanatics, and clarify that Joe Cook was indeed the correct answer.

Jo and Geoff Rowlands, who organised the Quiz, told us it is a lot harder than people think it is to write the quiz, as "you've got to have the right balance: you can't make it too hard and you can't make it too easy".

The non-alcoholic smartinis ended up winning the Quiz, which was a surprise for all of them as 2 years ago, they had actually come last! Isabella Olivier told us, "[Winning the Quiz] was great; we're better than everyone else!"

This is now the 14th year the Epiphany Quiz has been running, but despite this, new participants are always turning up, as well as the same people who came the very first time.

I think that the quiz is best summed up in the words of Amelia-May Olivier: "It's such an exciting achievement if you win and you get to spend time with people." Who wouldn't want that, right?

Maria Rowlands  
St. Alban's Parish, Chaddesden

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### Pope Francis: The Jubilee invites us to begin again

**Vatican Media**

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."

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

Hope, the theme of the 2025 Holy Year, will be the main subject of this new cycle of 16 weekly audiences, integrating the traditional Wednesday catechetical sessions.

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

Highlighting John's pivotal role in biblical history, the Pope referred to Jesus' praise of him as the "greatest among those born of women" (Lk 7:28, 29-30).

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

**Audience in Paul VI Hall**

Pope Francis also addressed the struggles of faith, drawing on John the Baptist's own moments of doubt during his imprisonment. These doubts, the Pope noted, resonate with the challenges faced by Christians today navigating a world where "many Herods" still "oppress the Kingdom of God."

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

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

If you have been given the Catholic Post for free in your parish, PLEASE would you be able to donate £1 to your parish for it, or even £10 per year!



**Continued from page 1**

I'm Miriam. I only joined the group to give someone a lift. I'm a complete novice, so in a year I've only produced one blanket square and one snowman, but I've contributed much laughter to the group!

I'm Elaine. We get used to seeing faces at church, sometimes over many years,

but we rarely get to know the people behind the faces. Since joining this group, many of those faces have become dear friends. I also feel that my knitting has a real purpose now, as I accomplish something worth giving away to please others.

I'm Kitty. I love knitting prayer squares at home as it gives me a sense of purpose, but in the group, I enjoy everybody's

company and have made many new friends.

I'm Breda. As one of the older members, I love belonging to this group. I feel so welcome as it's a place to go to enjoy company, rather than knitting at home. I joined the group with my friend, who gives me a lift every week.

I'm Joyce. Before the covid lockdowns, I met with Pip and some friends at her house, to knit cannula covers for the Children's Hospital. I looked forward to these weekly get togethers, so was

delighted when the chance arose to meet up again.

I'm Ange, and although not a regular member due to other commitments, I really enjoy coming, a great group of talented people, who always make everyone welcome.

I'm Teresa. New to knitting, this group has been so good to me. Every stitch knitted with love, laughter and prayers. United in a common cause for others, the result is self-forgetting, whilst nurturing us all. I love it.



Two parishioners Eileen and Christine joining in at home

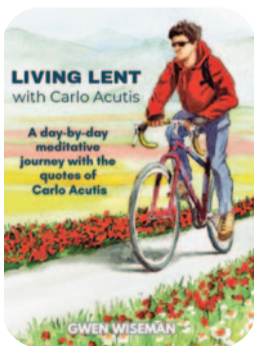
# Book Review



## **Living Lent with Carlo Acutis: A meditative journey with the quotes of Carlo Acutis by Gwen Wiseman**

The date is set for the canonisation of the first millennial saint, Carlo Acutis on 27th April, Divine Mercy Sunday. In *Living Lent with Carlo Acutis: A Meditative*

*Journey with the Quotes of Carlo Acutis*, Gwen Wiseman offers a spiritual guide for those seeking to fully embrace Lent towards Easter and beyond to the Canonisation. This devotional weaves together daily Gospel reflections, Carlo's profound yet simple quotes, prayers, action steps, and journaling prompts to help readers grow in faith.



Carlo Acutis, known for his deep love for the Eucharist and simple path to holiness, once said, "The Eucharist is my highway to heaven." Gwen Wiseman says "This book invites you to walk that highway with Him, drawing closer to Jesus in the Eucharist and embracing the call to sainthood." Covering the six weeks of Lent and leading up to Carlo's canonisation, this book is not just a meditation, it is an invitation to live Lent as a transformative experience.

In his preface of the book, Monsignor Anthony Figueiredo from the Sanctuary of the Renunciation where the tomb of Blessed Carlo resides in Assisi writes: Soon after his election, Pope Francis visited the very place where Saint Francis stripped himself of his clothes before his father, the bishop and the people of Assisi. The Holy Father pointed to that prophetic gesture as a magna carta for our spiritual journey as Christians: "The renunciation of Saint Francis tells us simply what the Gospel teaches: following Jesus means putting him in first place, stripping ourselves of the many things that we possess that suffocate our hearts, renouncing ourselves, taking up the cross and carrying it with Jesus" (4 October 2013).

800 years after that gesture of Saint Francis, Carlo Acutis, the first millennial saint, tells us the same: "Holiness is not the process of adding, but subtracting: less of me to leave space for God." Like Francis, Carlo embraced this stripping in his life by renouncing himself, taking up the cross and carrying it with Jesus unto death at the tender age of 15. From Heaven, as our contemporary friend and interceding for us before Jesus, he does even greater things now as "God's influencer."

I heartily recommend you enter the journey of Lent with Carlo as your companion, following the daily itinerary that Gwen Wiseman sets out so beautifully in this book. Through it, you will encounter the deepest meaning of Lent, which, as Saint Paul teaches, is to relive our baptism: "We were buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Rom 6,4).

None of us like being stripped. It can scare us, shock us, and certainly humbles us. Like the altar that is stripped on Holy Thursday. The tabernacle empty and left open on Good Friday. Jesus not physically in our churches on Holy Saturday. Yet, that stripping will allow us to claim the

Resurrection on Easter Sunday. Carlo assures us of that: "To love what awaits us tomorrow is to give today the best of our fruit."

Highly recommended for anyone seeking a meaningful and enriching Lent.

Available to purchase as a paperback and Kindle edition on Amazon.co.uk. Check out Gwen's other devotional book available, *Pray the Rosary with Blessed Carlo Acutis*.

### **About the Author**

For the past seven years, Gwen has lived in Assisi, Italy where she serves as the lead cantor for the English Mass at the Basilica of Saint Francis. Gwen also assists pilgrims by arranging itineraries, and helping visitors experience the deep spiritual richness of Assisi.

Her connection to Carlo Acutis began in 2019, when she first learned about his inspiring young life. Since then, she has dedicated herself to sharing his story and legacy. Today, Gwen accompanies the primary relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis on tours across the UK and Ireland, helping others encounter the young saint's powerful witness to holiness and the Eucharist. Her devotional books reflect her deep commitment to faith and guiding others in their spiritual journeys.



# St Mary's Church Derby celebrated Candlemas



On Sunday 2nd February, Candlemas, St Mary's Derby held the traditional blessing of the candles liturgy before all the Masses. The congregation gathered in the Lady Chapel for the ceremony, then processed into Church with lighted candles. It was a beautiful way to mark this special day, also known as the Feast of the Presentation of

the Lord. On this day, we reflect on the moment when Simeon and Anna recognise Jesus as the Saviour, when his parents brought him to the Temple to officially dedicate him to the Lord. St Mary's has a lovely painting depicting this moment."

Fran Hazel



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## View from the Pew

By Dr Jay Kettle-Williams



### Mysticism, Symbolism ... and Chocolate

Avila, a city northwest of Madrid and capital of the Spanish province bearing its name in the autonomous community of Castilla y León<sup>(1)</sup>, is well known for its medieval city walls, intact to this day, running between more than eighty crenelated, semicircular towers and nine gates. Avila holds worldwide renown for being the birthplace of St Teresa (March 28, 1515 - October 4, 1582), a Spanish Carmelite nun who was beatified in 1614 and canonized in 1622, celebrated as an author of spiritual classics and widely regarded as one of the greatest mystics, often identified with the symbols of a book, a heart and an arrow.

The mystics, the Spanish mystics being perhaps those paramount amongst their kind, endeavoured to put into plain, simple words their experience of a mystical communion with Christ. My own religiosity doesn't take me to the heights of mysticism nor anywhere near. I'm only conversant with what some might see as the mundane level of language.

The language of the mystics in their evangelist approach to the laity in their midst was to associate religious concepts with those everyday matters and objects well known to and easily recognised by their audiences. Everyday objects and images with which the hoi polloi of the day would be well aware and would readily recognise were taken as emblematic. Your soul, for instance, would be referred to as the personal and private 'castle' within yourself. St Teresa herself employs that very symbolism of the 'castle' within yourself in *Castillo Interior* (Interior Castle) which she wrote in 1577 as a guide for spiritual development through service and prayer, inspired by her vision of the soul, the castle within yourself, as a crystal globe in the shape of a castle containing seven mansions.

In 1614 Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) completed an oil on panel painting of Saint Teresa of Ávila's Vision of the Holy Spirit (visit <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/teresa-of-avilas-vision-of-the-dove-5630>) in which the Holy Spirit is represented as a dove. Admittedly, symbolism of this ilk existed long before the sixteenth century and even prior to the Christian era. However, in Christian iconography, a dove symbolizes and is otherwise compared with the Holy Spirit, as at the Baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3:16 (JB) and Luke 3:22 (JB).

Rubens' painting is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, to which it was



allocated by the UK Government in 1999 after being accepted in lieu of inheritance tax (visit <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/teresa-of-avilas-vision-of-the-dove-5630>). It is one of three versions Rubens produced of the subject, the others are in Rotterdam and in a private collection.

The symbolism of the dove in the Christian context is prefaced in the Old Testament (OT) with the story of Noah's ark: "In the evening, the dove came back to him and there it was with a new olive-branch in its beak" (Genesis 8:11 JB).

The symbolism of a dove and olive branch, derived from Greek thought, as symbolic of peace originated with the early Christians who portrayed the act of baptism accompanied by a dove with an olive branch in its beak.

Christianity, not unlike other faiths, often employs symbols. At this time of the year, as we approach Easter, Christian symbolism looms particularly and increasingly large giving opportunity for traders to boost their turnover and prompting those with a sweet tooth to drool at the thought of all that chocolate. But the symbol of an egg sits firmly at the centre of our faith, not for whatever significance it might have for our taste buds or the bottom line in business, but simply for the meaningful promise of resurrection that it holds.

(1) Castile's name is generally thought to derive from "land of castles" in reference to the castles built in the area to consolidate the Christian Reconquest from the Moors. Castella ('castles' in Latin) became Castiella under the umbrella of Classical Western Romance, the



Latin legacy after the fall of Rome in AD476 when the Western Roman Empire ended.

Castilla is the modern-day form. León takes its name from the Roman military camp *Castra Legionis*, once base for Legio VII (The Seventh Legion of Rome's imperial army).

Acknowledgements and Attribution: Accompanying image (Statue with Blowing Horn) after the sculpture *Exultate Jubilate* by Philip Jackson. Texts/References adapted and/or adopted from <http://en.wikipedia.org> under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License 4.0: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>; Photographs (Unsplash): The Walls of Avila by Darci Ribeiro; Statue of St Teresa before the walls of Avila by Matteo del Piano.



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



# A teenager has won an award after putting her first aid skills into practice

A teenager has won an award after putting her first aid skills into practice to help a teammate who collapsed while on a Duke of Edinburgh scheme expedition.

Bethan Jenkins, 16, a student at Blessed Robert Sutton Catholic Voluntary Academy in Burton, was with five fellow police cadets in Bakewell when one of them collapsed.

The group was aiming to achieve the DofE Bronze award, part of which requires participants to complete an unaccompanied expedition in the countryside following a series of training sessions. Leaders are on hand via mobile phones in case of emergencies.

During the expedition, one of the six girls started to feel unwell before dropping to the floor and falling unconscious. Her teammates then used first aid skills they had learnt during their police cadet training, including first aid and rehearsing protocols for emergencies.

Bethan, of Swadlincote, said: "Our friend who collapsed had a bag on her back so we took that off her, we made sure her head was raised and we checked her pulse which felt like it was racing. We tried to help her gain consciousness by splashing water on her. She was burning up but she was also freezing and her lips were turning blue. We lay a jacket on her. I kept thinking of the worst that could happen and running through what we needed to do, so thinking about whether we might end up having to do CPR. Some members of our group were also very upset.

"We tried to bring her around but then when we realised she wasn't getting any better we got our phones, which are usually locked away in our bags as we are on a DofE expedition. One of the girls called our leader to tell them what had happened. We had to go an app that tells you where you are because we were a bit lost. The mountain rescue team came out and we were taken to our camp and the girl who collapsed was taken to hospital by air ambulance. She was ok, it was something to do with her heart and she was undergoing more tests. I think we did quite well coping with what happened."

The girls made the decision to continue with the expedition the next day and gained their Bronze Award. As well as the



expedition, participants also have to complete fitness, volunteering and skills tasks.

The group's fast actions have now been recognised as they received a DofE All Stars of the Year Award at Buckingham Palace.

Bethan said: "I was completely shocked when I found out we would be getting an award. We were excited when we found out we would be going to Buckingham Palace and that was nice, we got a certificate."

Amanda Mcdowall, Head of Year 11 at Blessed Robert Sutton, said: "I am so proud to have Beth in our year group. She is an

amazing young lady and a real asset to our school community. It is no surprise that she acted as quickly and as bravely as she did as Beth has always shown great initiative. I know that she is going to go on and be extremely successful and continue to have such a positive impact on the community and those around her."

Samuel Gray, Headteacher at Blessed Robert Sutton, said: "Taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh award is a challenge that is worth celebrating. What Bethan and her friends did is even more impressive, using their skills and initiative to help a friend in need. Everyone at Blessed Robert Sutton is incredibly proud of Bethan and everyone else involved."

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# Have compassion on young people

Harvey Willgoose died following an incident at All Saints Catholic High School in Sheffield on Monday this week. Within two days it was already a short note on page five of many newspapers and web sites. Just a footnote. Yet All Saints School is forever a changed school and the impact on each member of the school community will be unique, it will be disturbing and throw up many questions.

Where is Harvey now?

Why did it happen?

How do I feel about others involved?

How do I look to my future when life seems so fragile?

What does this mean for me?

Can I be the same at school?

Why do others react differently to me?

What do I do with all these feelings?

Every school community meeting such violence and sadness is extremely vulnerable, from the chair of governors to the youngest year seven pupil. They will need a lot of love, patience, and readiness to learn from this all too common experience.

Last year there were 57 murders involving a knife or sharp objects. 17 of those murders were committed by under 16 year old pupils. There has been a 94% increase in reported knife crimes since 2014. This is an epidemic and a scourge on our youth and education system. It has been a priority for politicians of all parties in recent decades. Commentators point to drugs, to gangs membership, poor parenting and lack of policing. Everyone seems to be worried because they know that the root of the problem is anger and fear. Fear of other people, fear on the streets, fear about bullying. How can any policing, school policy or security system manage such fear and anger without turning our schools and our wider communities into prisons, threatening the peace and innocence of the young? I have no answers.

I do know that All Saints School in Sheffield will be meeting the challenge head on with the wisdom and kindness that has been the hallmark of the school for decades. It is a place where the young people know that they are loved, a community that they can call a home. But a home that has now been desecrated by an explosion of fatal violence. The school will be responding with respect, understanding and affection to the students and trying to keep the normal routines of as a lifebelt in a sea of confusion. The school will rise again and continue to be a welcome home for so

many young people as it has for decades. The love and dedication of the staff will have been tested and not found wanting through this disaster.

Please keep them all in your prayers and read the reflection below in their name as they move through the challenging weeks ahead.

## To the school community at All Saints Sheffield....

Don't try to make sense of this  
Don't seek reasons or revenge.

In the end some justice will be done  
But for now, we need to simply pause

To reverence the passing of a life  
To count the years unlive  
The gift of a life unshared.

The bruising shock of loss  
Tremors through a school community  
Through families and staff  
Leaving them weak at the knees  
Speechless before such sadness.

May we be able to hold each other  
With gentleness and listening hearts.  
May we create pools of silence  
In which we can sink some of the grief.  
May we draw close in sadness  
And become a family of faith.

Because we believe beyond words  
That we will see Harvey again.  
"The ties of love and friendship  
Are not broken by death"  
In the eyes of the unwise he appeared to die, but he is with God  
In the eyes of the unwise he appeared to die, but he is with God  
We are told in the Catholic funeral service.

Right now, such words make no sense  
Loss is our heartfelt focus.  
But we know that in time,  
All this loss will be caught up  
Into the story of cross and resurrection  
And we can entrust Harvey to Christ.  
But for now, let us feel the hurt and sadness  
And hold tight to each other in hope.

David OMalley



In the eyes of the unwise he appeared to die, but he is with God



Harvey Willgoose

## World Day of the Sick



Each year on February 11, the Catholic Church marks the World Day of the Sick. This is a time to offer prayers for those who suffer from illness and for their caregivers. The Catholic Church marks this annual World Day on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

In his Message for the 33rd World Day of the Sick, Pope Francis says God remains close to those who suffer, through

encounter, gift, and sharing. Pope Francis concludes his Message with a special word for those who are sick and suffering, reminding them that they have an "especially important" part to play in the Jubilee. "Your journey together is a sign of hope for everyone, 'a hymn of dignity, a song of hope'." As the church marks the World Day of the Sick, please pray for those who suffer from illness and for their caregivers.



# Mabel received over 1,700 cards



Every pupil at Saint Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy sent a birthday card to a 103-year-old following a public appeal.

More than 120 cards were taken by a group of pupils from the school, in New Mills, to Watford Care Home resident Mabel. The school also recorded all pupils singing happy birthday to Mabel.

Following a public appeal on Facebook and other media outlets, Mabel received over 1,700 cards from the local community, including the cards from Saint Mary's.

Pupil Alfie said: "We were told in assembly about Mabel and that she was a 103-year-old who didn't have any family and that she would like some birthday cards so we all made one and took them to her at the care home."

"It made feel happy that we were helping Mabel and hopefully we made her feel happy too. We all felt a bit sad when we were told that she didn't have any family and might not get any birthday cards," pupil Eva said.

Pupil Lexie said: "We are always thinking about Catholic Social Teaching principles and that means helping charities and helping the homeless so helping those in need."

"We all recorded a happy birthday message for Mabel so that came from the whole school and then some of us brought the cards and flowers to the care home."

"This links to one of our Catholic Social Teaching principles about family and community. That is because Mabel doesn't

have any family and we wanted to show her that she is part of a bigger family."

Patricia Chapman, Headteacher at Saint Mary's CVA, said: "It was an absolute pleasure to be part of this wonderful occasion. We are part of a family and a community and as a Catholic school we continually strive to help others. We always support those most in need and instil in all our pupils the right to respect human dignity. This may only be a small act of kindness, but it means a lot to Mabel and our pupils."

## New online Catholic History Timeline launched for England and Wales

More than just a list of dates, the Timeline is an educational tool for the general reader but also created with a history undergraduate seeking to understand a particular period of Catholic history in mind.

Beginning with the arrival of Christianity in England and Wales and ending at the present day each of the significant moments in the Timeline feature an in depth article.

Not fixed at the present time the Timeline will continually develop as more articles

are added and as new academic research results in the further development or replacement of the existing articles.

Sources are identified for each of the articles that make up the Timeline and suggestions for further reading are offered. The Timeline has been developed for the English Catholic History Association (ECHA) by their Vice Chair and editor of their Newsletter, Dr Margaret Turnham whose academic interest is Catholic history. The Timeline forms a key part of the ECHA website.

Pope Francis said in his letter "Renewal in the Study of Church History (21.11.24) that studying Church history is a way to preserve memory and build the future, as well as the best way to interpret the reality that surrounds us. He quotes from St Philip Neri that people "if they do not know history, they will eventually no longer know the faith."

These comments echo our vision and are what we are hoping to achieve with the Timeline project.

The Timeline is divided into five periods to enable ease of access:

- The early Medieval period AD 313-1066
- The later Medieval period 1066-1536
- The Reformation in England and Wales 1536-1559
- The Penal Times 1559-1850
- The Modern era 1850-2019

The period covered runs from AD 313 when Christianity was recognised as an official religion in the Roman Empire, swiftly followed by the first mention of the Church in England and Wales in the record of a group of bishops who attended the Council of Arles in France in AD314. It ends with the canonisation of St John Henry Newman in 2019.



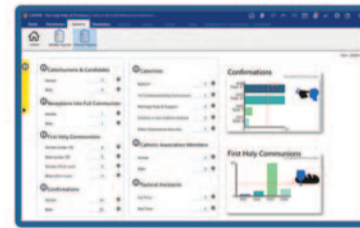
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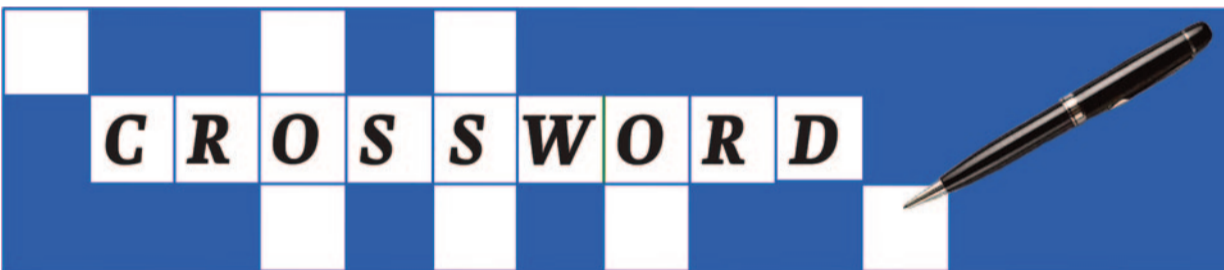
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You can use both sets of clues to solve the puzzle: the solutions are the same.

**CRYPTIC Across**

- 7 Judge what is good for Idaho with time (6)
- 8 He shone a light on voting in Aleppo's fringe areas (6)
- 9 They believe it's hot west of the river in India (6)
- 10 Variant doctrine is inadmissible in court, one conceded (6)
- 11 Lord reportedly seen in the dock... (4)
- 12 ...do a crime that's convoluted in relation to an OT book lady (8)
- 14 Statue in NT book spies during the war brought to America (8)
- 17 David hid here - there's nothing before hotel to the east (4)
- 19 Title of fellow, one being hugged an hour after midnight by a famous sister (6)
- 21 Chart from Ugandan's starting point to a port on the Indian Ocean (6)
- 22 Knowledge that is, about time, attributed to Jethro's folk (6)
- 23 Investing in land; but, in truth, I missed out (6)

**CRYPTIC Down**

- 1 Resort in Italy and Rhode Island to putting on a short skirt (6)
- 2 Senior lecturer's interest in widespread erosion (6)
- 3 Runaway renegade Simeon brings you and me down (8)
- 4 Slippery oil removed from Philistine city in the OT (4)
- 5 Where to get French stock belonging to us during Mad Cow Disease (6)
- 6 Priest gets limitless headgear in support of prophet (6)
- 13 Repeated attack suppressed petrified

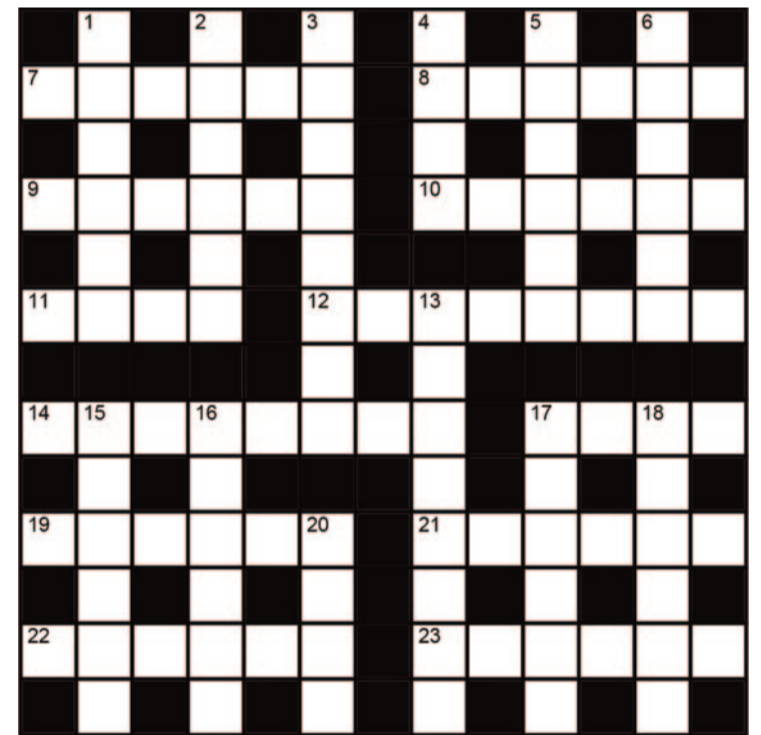
- commanders-in-chief here (8)
- 15 Declared 'nail' is in the dictionary (6)
- 16 God appears very large to girl (6)
- 17 Job's friend's pub is in one of the 'cities of the plain' (6)
- 18 Delicate, initial pieces eaten - tea is taken, eventually (6)
- 20 Long-suffering patient? (4)

**QUICK Across**

- 7 Judge of the Hebrews whose name is said to mean 'Mighty Warrior' (6)
- 8 Greek god of light (6)
- 9 Adherents of a 5000 year-old religion (6)
- 10 Belief that rejects the orthodox tenets of a religion (6)
- 11 Dock: pillar (4)
- 12 Esther's uncle (8)
- 14 Behemoth; monster (8)
- 17 Desert where David hid from Saul (4)
- 19 Prophet who sang in praise to the Lord for the crossing of the Red Sea (6)

**QUICK Down**

- 1 Italian lido resort on the Adriatic (6)
- 2 Someone, often a lay person, who delivers the lessons in a church service (6)
- 3 Runaway slave owned by Philemon (8)
- 4 Where the Ark was taken after being stolen



- by the Philistines (4)
- 5 Paris Stock Exchange (6)
- 6 Hebrew prophet featured in both books of Kings (6)
- 13 One the Black Hills of South Dakota known for its giant relief carvings of four US presidents (8)
- 15 Conjectured (6)
- 16 The greatest of all the gods of ancient Egypt (6)
- 17 One of Job's three friends (6)
- 18 Small; dainty (6)
- 20 'Blessed are the ----, for they will inherit the earth' [Matt/KJV] (4)

**SOLUTION**

Across: 7 Gideon, 8 Apollo, 9 Hindus, 10 Heresy, 11 Pier, 12 Mordecai, 14 Colossus, 17 Ziph, 19 Miriam, 21 Maputo, 22 Kenite, 23 Realty. Down: 1 Rimini, 2 Reader, 3 Onesimus, 4 Gath, 5 Bourse, 6 Eltisha, 13 Rushmore, 15 Opined, 16 Osiris, 17 Zophar, 18 Petite, 20 Meek.