



# The Vine

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March 2017

Issue No. 333

Northampton Diocesan News

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Archbishop honours relic image



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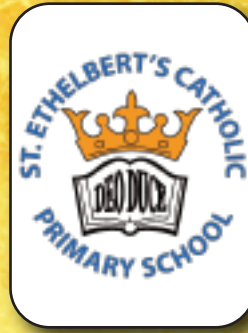
Mass for married couples



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Forty days of penance

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# Thornton serves with a smile

**T**hornton College gives something back to the local community on St Claudine's Feast Day.

Every February, Thornton College, along with other Jesus and Mary schools around the world, celebrates Saint Claudine who dedicated her life to the education of young girls.

To honour her memory, this year Thornton transformed its traditional Feast Day into a Day of Service.

During a full and varied timetable, students had the opportunity to give something tangible back to the local community. Some Senior students washed staff cars; others assisted the Housekeeping team in cleaning and vacuuming the school. Year 9 students, meanwhile, hosted a group of elderly people in the Drawing Room over morning coffee, cakes music, drama and dance.

Year 11s also paid a visit to the Winter Night Shelter Milton Keynes to talk to the volunteers about the work they do and the services they provide. In tandem, Pre-Prep

School children enjoyed baking carrot cake muffins to donate to the Shelter.

Afternoon Mass brought all the year groups together to share their experiences and talk about how they had given something meaningful and worthwhile to various communities to make St Claudine's Day so special.

Claudine Thévenet was born on March 30th 1774 at Lyon in France, the second child in a family of seven. Her family were extremely devout and Claudine was educated by Benedictine nuns of St. Peter's Abbey, in Lyon.

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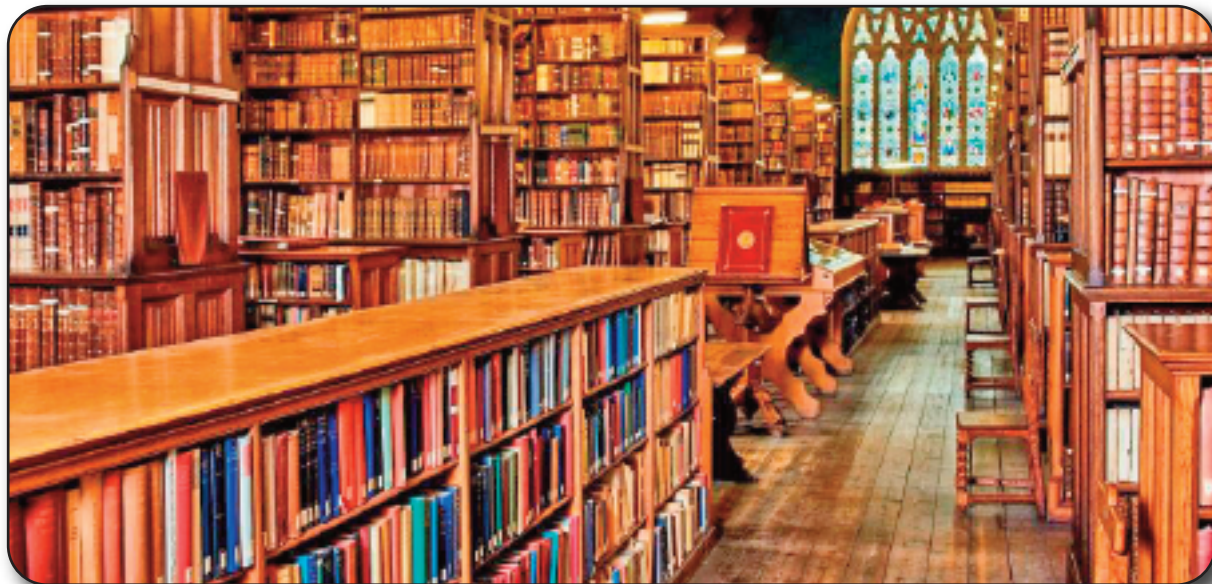
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# International research library for Ushaw



A new international residential research library, the only one of its kind in the UK, is to be developed at Ushaw College, in a £2 million project led by Durham University. It is intended that leading researchers from around the world will visit Ushaw to study and work with its outstanding collections, along with those of Durham Cathedral and the University's Palace Green Library, enhancing the thriving scholarly community that already exists in and around Durham City.

Visiting researchers will be able to reside at the 200-year-old establishment and, as well as using the library resources, contribute to a

growing public engagement programme, including public lectures, cultural events and learning opportunities.

Work on the refurbishment of the library, in order to equip it to welcome international visitors, will begin during the academic year 2017-18. The partnership will make Durham the first UK university to offer such a residential research library and will raise the profile of the collections at Ushaw, the University's Palace Green Library and Durham Cathedral.

Ushaw was founded as The English College, a Roman Catholic seminary in Douai, now north east France, in

1568. Its communities were expelled from France in the 18th century, and Ushaw College, four miles west of Durham City, was purpose-built between 1804 and 1808.

Its library includes around 30,000 early printed books and a major collection of archives and manuscripts, some of which formed part of the medieval monastic library of Durham Priory. There is a strong emphasis on theology and church history, as well as large numbers of books on more secular subjects, including art, architecture, philosophy, archaeology and early travel. Many works are extremely rare and internationally significant.

## Obituary Mgr Paul Donovan

Monsignor Paul Donovan died unexpectedly in Stoke Mandeville hospital in the early hours of January 26. Aged 60, he was being treated for cancer after collapsing during Christmas midnight Mass.



Paul trained at the English College in Rome. After completing his studies he was appointed to Kettering in 1982 and served the diocesan Marriage Tribunal as Defender of the Bond.

In 1985 he joined the Royal Navy as a chaplain and was appointed a Prelate of Honour in 2006. Following that he became Vicar General in the Bishopric of the Forces and a Queen's Honorary Chaplain. In the same year, 2007, he became director of Naval Chaplaincy Services and Principal Roman Catholic Naval chaplain.

His naval career ended with a sabbatical year in 2011, at the end of which he returned to ministry within the diocese. For two years he served as parish priest of St. Aidan's, Northampton, and moved to St. Augustine's, High Wycombe, in 2014.

***Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine  
upon him.***



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Parental permission must be sought before photographs of children are sent for publication. While we accept unsolicited feature articles, we reserve the right to edit the text or not to publish. Letters for publication must include a name and address, which will be omitted on request.

The content of each issue is decided by the editor.

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At the end of a memorable Mass in the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Bedford on 1 December, Archbishop Bernard Longley of Birmingham had a handshake and a word at the door for each one of the 300 guests and parish congregation who had attended. It was the Archbishop's first visit to Bedford and by happy co-incidence, was 35 years to the day since he had been ordained to the priesthood. Monsignor John Armitage, Rector of the Basilica in Walsingham, and many priests from a wide area, joined the Archbishop at the celebrati

# Spiritual & uplifting

The Mass at the Shrine of the Miraculous Relic Image celebrated the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. One of her titles is Patroness of the Unborn, and Archbishop Longley's homily was based on the story of the Annunciation, the Gospel passage of the day. He reminded us that Mary had had a long and arduous journey to visit St Elizabeth and connected this to the Miraculous Relic Image, which has travelled more than 3,000 miles around the country this year. In turn, tonight some people had travelled from as far away as Scotland and Wales to attend this Mass. Guests included Joe Rodriguez, Deputy Supreme Knight, Directors of the Knights of Saint Columba and Provincial Grand Knights for various Provinces of the United Kingdom. They joined the Guardians of Our Lady of Guadalupe in celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Partnership agreement in the delivery and management of the Annual National Pilgrimage Tour of the Miraculous Relic Image.

The Shrine was adorned with roses. The Shrine Musical Director, Michael Moloney, had composed music especially for the Mass. A large team of altar servers efficiently carried out their duties under the direction of Fr Gerard Byrne, Diocesan/Shrine MC. A reception followed at nearby St Frances Cabrini Italian Church before the guests went joyfully on their separate ways. Rector of the Shrine Canon Seamus Keenan commented: "We were privileged to have the Archbishop with us. It was such a genuinely spiritual and uplifting occasion for us all"

*Barbara Kay*



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# You are special

Year 2 spent a wonderfully spiritual day at St. Margaret's Church, Luton, taking part in a day of singing, activities and reflection on the theme of 'You are Special'. The day was lead by Mr Alex Heath from the local RE centre, NORES, and was based on the book 'I am Special' by Max Lucado. The day ended with a Liturgy to which parents were invited. This was an opportunity for the children to share what they had been thinking about during the day. This was the first Retreat Day for our school and it was a great success.

*Caroline Forde*



# Can you beat Woburn Sands?

St. Mary's Woburn Sands have now supported 3 houses for Syrian Refugees in Milton Keynes and have started a fourth. If this could be made known through The Vine then we would have achieved our objective of making the plight of these refugees known to the wider readership and perhaps might inspire others to help – We are in desperate times – as you know “all that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men and women to do nothing” The Pastoral Area of St Martin of Tours

will also be supporting this initiative as part of Bishop Peter's plan and indeed the Holy Fathers of showing Mercy and Opening up a Door to all who seek refuge

**.....and a response from the organisers:**

Dear Brian, and the Parishioners of St Mary's Woburn Sands  
Thank you!

On behalf of Refugees Welcome Milton Keynes I want to so how much we appreciate your thoughts and your generosity, your kindness and your donations, in helping Syrian Refugees as they settle to their new lives in Milton Keynes.

In our troubled times, it is wonderful to know of your warmth and friendship. What you are able to contribute makes an immediate difference, because we are able to provide for incoming families so they

can start to rebuild their lives.

Our work is long-term, as the humanitarian crisis of refugees and asylum seekers remains at such extraordinarily high levels. We cannot stand by and allow such suffering to happen, and your contribution plays its vital part in building a better future.

**David Wolfson**  
Chairman



## Guidelines for marriage preparation

National Marriage Week celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. The week's aim is to draw attention to the value of marriage, for individuals, family life and civil society. Everyone is invited to take part in the celebration – not just those who are married – because marriage and family life, as the place where we learn to love and live well with others, and support each other through thick and thin, in spite of our differences, is the basic building block for stability in society, and as such holds deep significance for everyone.

In a complex world where the reality is that not all marriages last, and on-going support is essential, Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia, asks for greater effort on the part of the whole Christian community in welcoming and preparing those who ask to be married in Church. By saying 'I do' the couple begin a journey that calls for great courage, generosity and commitment, and they need the welcome, and practical, relational and spiritual support of the community not only at the start, but throughout the seasons of married life, to help them live out their calling to a life-long, loving and fruitful commitment. In response to the Pope's call in Amoris Laetitia, and as a fruit of several years' work, including a survey of marriage preparation providers and a conference hosted by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales in 2011, the Department for Christian Responsibility and Citizenship have published 'Guidelines for the Preparation of Couples for Marriage'. The process proposed in the Guidelines envisages a life-long

pastoral accompaniment by the community – flexible and gradual, meeting each couple where they are, and walking alongside them in a Christ-like, loving, steady, reassuring way, in steps and stages, at all times being assured that the grace of God is at work. The Guidelines appreciate the engaged couples' need for preparation in both the relational and spiritual aspects of marriage, encouraging them and equipping them to make the best possible start, with the assurance that they do not make this journey alone – family, friends, the community of the Church, are there to support them in their 'life-long project'.

Bishop Peter Doyle, Chair of the Bishops' Conference Committee for Marriage and Family Life commented: "...I am delighted that we are launching these guidelines in national Marriage Week. I hope they will support the good work going on in our communities to welcome, accompany and help young couples prepare for a lifelong, fruitful and happy marriage. As Pope Francis has said, often they are left to their own devices, but it's precisely at this time that they need our closeness and strong spiritual support. We have a great opportunity to rediscover together the beauty of marriage and family life according to God's plan."

- The Guidelines encourage whole communities to develop their shared vision for marriage, and marriage preparation, as essential to the life and mission of the Church in their particular place. Everyone involved needs to be well trained and well informed, allowing for a flexibility of approaches in delivery and content.

- The Guidelines, intended to be descriptive rather than prescriptive, suggest a range of actions for parishes and dioceses, including the development of marriage preparation 'teams' with clergy and lay people sharing together in accompaniment of marriage and family life.

Fascinating fact: In 1946, when the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council was founded (now Catholic Marriage Care), with Cardinal Griffin's blessing, the Council (dedicated to the Holy Family), arranged for 52 Contemplative Orders in England, and further Contemplative and other orders of religious, to

pray for and support their work. For further information please see the MFL Website at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales:

**Pictures: left: Cardinal Griffin; Right, Bishop Peter.**



**THE VIRGIN EYE**  
by Robin Daniels

**The Virgin Eye by Robin Daniels inspires us to see the world anew through the innocent eyes of a child, so as to become more aware of God's presence in everyday life and encounters.**

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**This book is a treasure.**  
Sister Wendy Beckett, Art Critic, BBC's Sister Wendy's Odyssey

**I wish it had been available years ago. It should be required reading.**  
Roy Godwin, Executive Director, The Flaid-y-Brenin Trust and author of The Grace Outpouring

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Brian M. Noble, Emeritus Bishop of Shrewsbury

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Teresa Onions, Director of Pastoral Care UK for the Association of Christian Counsellors

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Canon John Udris, Spiritual Director, St Mary's College, Oscott

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Instant Apostle  
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# Celebrating our marriage

Can snow drizzle? It did on February 11 in Bedford. The crowd was gathering on a depressing winter morning for the annual Mass in celebration of marriage. But co-ordinators Paola and Eamon McMorrow had everything organised with precision. The welcomers assured us of an extra-special buffet lunch after Mass. Parish priest Fr. Patrick Hutton proudly pointed out the newly tiled floor of the sanctuary. Altar servers (each a son or daughter of Africa) flitted everywhere.

Fr. Patrick made the formal welcome at the start of the Mass. Bishop Peter welcomed the two visiting concelebrants, Mgr Kevin McGinnell, of Luton, and Fr Alessandro Reno, from Chesham. Fr Alessandro's mother was visiting from the toe of Italy. 'Benvenuta alla made di Padre Alessandro', ventured Bishop Peter. He then took care to include a welcome for the bereaved, divorced and single.

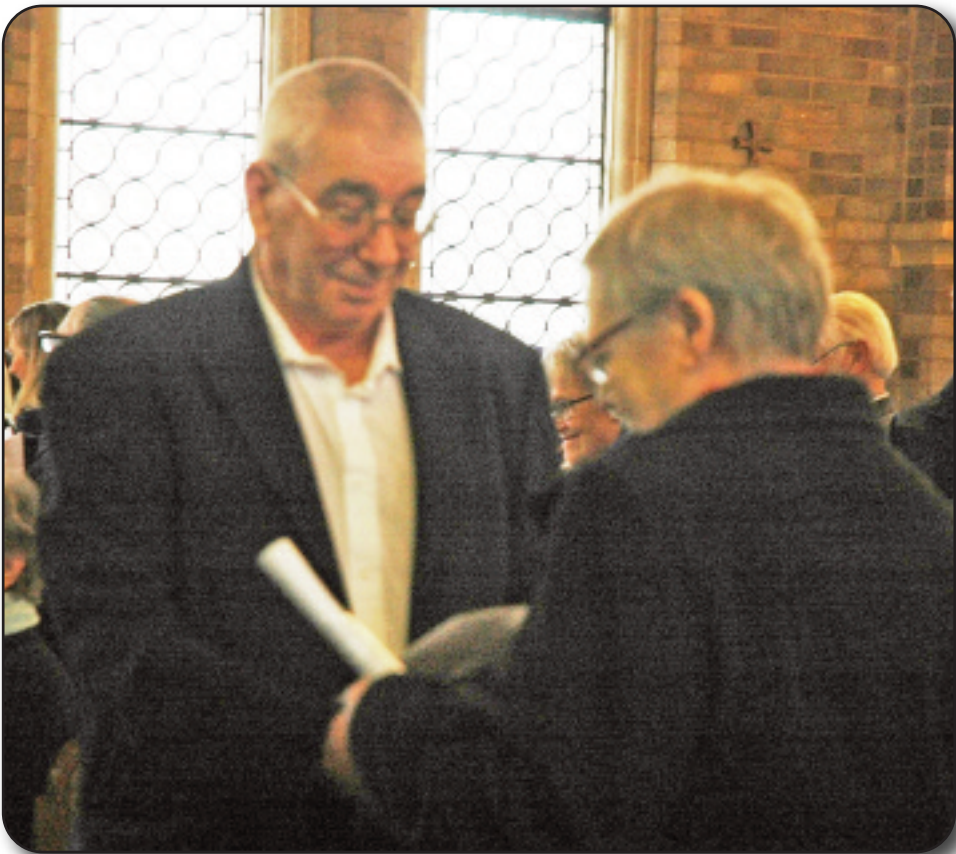
In his homily the bishop reflected on the gospel story of Cana. Mary, he said, had her moments of Joy and sorrow, just as we all do. How much do we all need the support of Jesus in the Church? We support each other when things go wrong, and he went on to remind the congregation of Pope Francis' insistence that preparation for, and support of marriage should be at the heart of every parish. Bishop Peter then encouraged the congregation to give the vocation to marriage a much higher profile. 'And don't forget to accompany and encourage the co-habittees.

The end of Mass brought almost a carnival atmosphere as the bishop presented certificates to those celebrating fifty years of marriage. Each presentation was accompanied with loud applause. Then there was forms for anyone celebrating a multiple of ten. But this was lower key. The interest now lay in getting yourself photographed with the bishop.



*Photographs:  
Page 6: top,  
the cantor:  
bottom:  
congratulations  
to a veteran  
couple.*

*Page 7:  
top; the holy  
family icon, with  
Fr Alessandro.  
Centre:  
renewing  
commitment:  
a hug.  
Bottom:  
receiving their  
certificates.*



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# Top job for Fiona

On Tuesday 17th January the new Headteacher Induction Mass for Fiona Maynard of St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School and Nursery, part of the newly formed St Peter Catholic Academy Trust was held. The Mass was celebrated by Mgr Kevin McGinnell with Fr Noel Connelly at Holy Redeemer church in Wexham, which shares a site with the school. Mrs Maynard has worked at the school for the past three years as Assistant Head and Deputy Head. The Mass was attended by pupils and families of the school, and the headteachers of the Trust's partner schools, as well as those from the St Peter Deanery. Holy Redeemer's Filipino choir added their unique touch to proceedings and Mgr Kevin spoke of the history of Catholic education in Slough and the importance of faith as an anchor in our schools.

Mrs Maynard said, "I am very proud to be leading the St Ethelbert's team and have high aspirations for our pupils' spiritual, moral and academic development. I'm very much looking forward to working with the other Catholic schools in the Trust and the Deanery to strengthen our provision in Slough."



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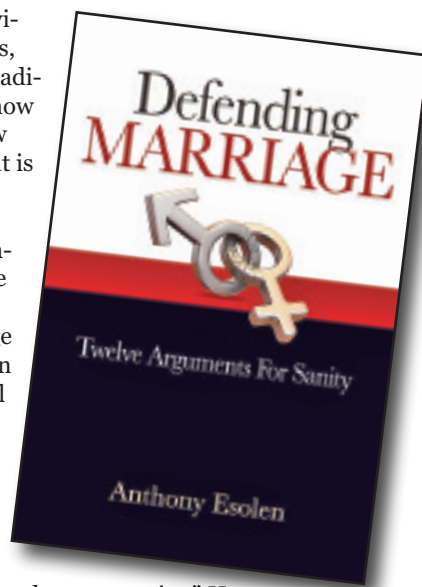
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## Book Review

### Defending Marriage: Twelve Arguments for Sanity

By Anthony Esolen. St Benedict Press

Anthony Esolen, professor of English at Providence College in the US, has written a serious, well-argued reflection on what marriage is traditionally meant to mean, why it matters and how it has been deeply undermined by recent new legislation that seeks to re-define it. His point is that it is not too late to "rebuild among the ruins" of what many western governments have done to marriage in legalising for a completely new form viz. marriage between those of the same sex. Dr Esolen argues that marriage is not simply a romantic relationship between two people (which is what the modern liberal establishment defines it as being); it also brings together two different sets of families, with all their interrelationships, in the making of a new family. Society has always privileged this unique institution because "it is the family, and not the abstracted, autonomous individual that is the foundation for the community." He is not afraid to point out what many people realise but refrain from saying aloud: that "the whole of the sexual revolution has been a colossal failure and has wrought untold human misery."



Although a Catholic, the author does not argue his case from a religious perspective but from the standpoint of what human societies require to be healthy and prosperous. Among his closely-reasoned, eloquent arguments in defence of marriage are that the institution is a public one for the good of society as a whole; that without support from society it is hard enough to make heterosexual marriage flourish, let alone a new, experimental model; that we need to recover the virtues of modesty, self-restraint and purity that in the past were associated with marriage; and that the redefinition of marriage undermines the ancient bond of male friendship. He emphasises that those who are most damaged by fragile adult relationships and divorce are the children. We have to learn to put the interests of children before adult selfishness, which is what happens when we deliberately deprive them of a mother or father, thus damaging their emotional development. Esolen is also stern about divorce which he believes should only be allowed in exceptional circumstances, such as physical or moral danger; he is clear that no-fault divorce, while seemingly a more compassionate response to unhappiness, has been destructive of all those marriages that might be difficult or unsatisfactory but which, in the past, were loyally maintained for the better security and wellbeing of the children involved.

Analysing the moral chaos of modern relationships Esolen's book can sound somewhat negative, but it should be read as a warning on how and why western governments and states have taken a wrong path without properly reflecting on the long-term consequences. In arguing for "sanity" the author hopes his book will make ordinary people, not just those of religious faith, recognise that to destroy traditional marriage affects the whole of society in ways they may not have realised; it is a book well worth pondering and debating. Esolen articulates what most people know but cannot formulate: why governments have no business meddling in the ancient institution of marriage between a man and a woman

## NEW - ST FRANCIS GROUP

In his recent Encyclical 'Laudato Si' Pope Francis reminds us that the Church requires us to treat creatures with respect and kindness, and that, to quote him directly, "Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience".

A Papal Encyclical forms part of the official teaching of the Catholic Church, so this is a very important document. In fact, as a result of this Encyclical, the Vatican now states that an examination of the conscience should include a consideration of how we have related to animals and to the environment, as well as the usual how we have related to God, to other people and to ourselves.

Think of the many cruel and unnecessary ways we exploit animals - battery cages, factory farms, blood sports, the fur trade etc... I know that some people want no attention given to animals, but that isn't the view of the Pope. We can't pick and choose when it comes to sins. Justice and morality should apply in all of our actions and decisions, and the Church teaches that causing unnecessary suffering to animals is a sin. This is clearly stated in the Catechism.

Pope Francis has called for dialogue and action concerning the care of what he calls "our common home". The way we treat animals today is a major contributive cause of many of the serious problems facing the planet today, including climate change, loss of forests and loss of species. Being kinder to animals, which the Pope is calling for, would considerably improve the situation for the planet and for us humans.

In 'Laudato Si', the Pope urges us to take our duty to animals and to the natural environment seriously. One way to respond to the Pope's call for dialogue and action is to join a local parish group to educate about and promote concern for our fellow creatures, and to be a witness in the local community to the Church's concern for animals.

What better name for such a group than 'St. Francis of Assisi Group', thus honouring both the great Saint and the Pope who chose his name specifically in acknowledgement of St. Francis? As a local group we can bring the message of 'Laudato Si' into our parish life. If you'd like to know more about this group, please contact Virginia Bell, email address:- vrbell18@yahoo.co.uk)



# Lent Fast Day

10 March 2017

Parishes and schools across the diocese are getting ready for Lent Fast Day which is on the 10 March. The confirmation group at Holy Ghost Luton who had a session about CAFOD's work were keen to be involved in promoting Fast Day in their parish and schools.

The focus country this Lent is Zambia. In the district of Mbala (northern Zambia) 72% of people live below the poverty line despite Mbala being one of the leading producers of the country's cash crops – maize and beans. People who live in poverty are older people, people living with HIV and AIDS, orphans and vulnerable children and pregnant and lactating mothers.

Lent is a time of transformation – spiritual transformation and physical. Many supporters will be making a sacrifice(s) this Lent to realise a change in their own lives and the world around them. The ideal situation is for the transformation to last longer than Lent – to make a lasting difference.

We are focusing on Florence's story which is about transformation. Florence, a widow, lives in Mbala with her children and struggles to support them. CAFOD's partners, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and



Mary, saw her dedication and commitment to growing her own crop even though it was not enough to feed her family and proposed she receive training in fish farming. Thanks to this training, she now understands how to cultivate fish and by farming fish, she can provide her family with essentials that will help them grow a future –

school fees, books, clothes, medicine etc.

Florence was given a gift of knowledge and chose to share it with her neighbours so they benefited too. She said, "When I came back, I wanted to help my neighbours as they had helped me in the past. When I was doing my work, people came to help me. I thought if they were empowered, they would benefit too."

Florence's message to CAFOD supporters is, "because of your support, my life is easier. I urge you please continue supporting me. I can send my children to school now and I can feed all my family."

This is a story that does not focus on subsistence farming – Florence isn't farming the fish to feed her family only. She is using them to make a living and to support her family. It's the next step on from a survival story. It is empowerment.

While it is possible to give someone a fish, or some seeds, it still needs regular commitment, knowledge and perseverance. So this Lent, we are asking children and young people in schools and youth groups to help turn little fish into big fish through their fundraising efforts and we're asking supporters to make a regular gift (a Direct Debit donation). Something that seems so small at first can, with regular care and attention, be transformed into something truly amazing and which will make a real difference to communities around the world. You can find all our wonderful resources for schools and parishes on our website. Alternatively, please get in touch with Deborah Purfield: northampton@cafod.org.uk or 01844 274 723

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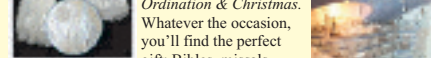
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# Pilgrimage of prayer for the NHS

## Background

I am curate in the Parish of St John the Baptist, Stafford, where the County Hospital is located. At the start of my curacy there was a protest camp on the hospital field to campaign against the removal of key services and wards from the hospital. My incumbent and I offered pastoral care to the campers and held a service there and in our church (Autumn 2014) to meet the spiritual needs of the health care staff and protestors. During the outdoor service prayers were written on blue ribbons and attached to a wooden cross which remained at the camp until it was disbanded in January 2015. On that particular day our church was holding a Prayer Day for our Community. I had a clear picture of a walk to London, carrying the cross and praying for the NHS. The verse of Scripture given to me was: Micah 6:8 "Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God."

My incumbent and I prayed about this, but (in the run up to the General Election of May 2015) the timing did not appear to be right. The cross was brought back to St John's church where it has remained in our chapel as a constant prompt to pray for the hospital and its staff through a difficult time of transition. I have always felt that if the picture was from God... then the right time would come to be obedient.

In August 2016 all clergy received a letter from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York about a national ecumenical 10-days of prayer between Ascension and Pentecost 2017. I immediately felt this vision re-emerge for me, but with greater clarity.

## The Proposed Walk

This is primarily a Pilgrimage of Prayer for our National Health Service and the thousands of Health Care Workers (Doctors, nurses and support staff) who work under increasing pressures with increasingly low morale. I feel very strongly that as an 'agent of healing' the NHS is truly an expression of God's Kingdom which provides healing and compassion to all, regardless of social standing or means, at their point of need. It is NOT a political demonstration, but a move of prayer, recognising God's heart.

We are planning to walk from Stafford (County Hospital) to London (Guys/St Thomas's) via as many hospitals as possible. At each hospital we would hold a service of prayer and offer anointing and prayer to any health Care Staff who wished to come. The next day we would walk on. I would envisage a small core of walkers undertaking the whole pilgrimage, but invite local Christians (ec-

umenically) to accompany us on their leg of the Pilgrimage.

## Organisation:

After discerning this in prayer with other Ministers in the town at our monthly ecumenical meeting, we brought it to a United service and called for those with a heart for the project to form teams to plan and pray behind it. We have now formed a planning group to confirm the details and approach Hospital Chaplains and Ecumenical (Churches Together) Groups along our Route. Once this is established and permissions have been granted, we will set up a website and make the information publically available. I feel that we should work with those on the fringes of our churches who share God's heart in this area. Mission is seeing where God's heart and Kingdom values intersect with human need.

## Why Stafford?

In many ways, Stafford has been scapegoated for the problems which are much more widespread within the NHS. There has been real loss and pain in our hospital and town, but the message of the Gospel states that there is new hope and resurrection. (Matt.5:44) "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." As Christians we should be ready to embody forgiveness and pray for a brighter future. Our MP, Jeremy Lefroy, has always felt that something good will come from Stafford's experience, bringing healing to a broken system.

The plan has the support of the Stoke Chaplaincy Team (our start-point) and the backing of Bishop Michael. We are currently approaching other regional heads of churches ecumenically

## Thu 25th May

Stafford - Cannock - Walsall 18.5 (distance)  
6h 30mins (approximate time taken)

## Fri 26th May

Walsall - Birmingham - Solihull 18.5  
6h 30mins

## Sat 27th May

Solihull - Coventry 15  
5h

## Sun 28th May

Coventry - Hospital of the Cross (Rugby) 19  
6h 30mins

## Mon 29th May

Hospital of the Cross (Rugby) - Northampton 20.5  
7h 30mins

## Tue 30th May

Northampton - Milton Keynes 20 7h



## Wed 31st May

Milton Keynes - Luton 18  
6h 30mins

## Thu 1st June

Luton Direct/Tring  
Hemel Hempstead 13.5/16  
6h

## Fri 2nd June

Hemel Hempstead -Watford - Northwick Park (Harrow) 17  
6h

## Sat 3rd June

Northwick Park (Harrow) - St Mary's (Paddington) - Guys (London Bridge) 13

*Rev. Becky Richards, Feb.1st 2017*

## A Prayer for our Health Service

*Creator God,  
Who knits each person together in their mother's womb  
It is you who reveals knowledge to scientists and doctors.  
We thank you for the heritage of medical breakthrough, expertise and welfare we enjoy in our nation,  
Freely available to us because of your revelation, and the faithfulness of previous generations.  
Renew thanksgiving in our hearts for what we have received because of others' work and sacrifice.  
Healer of nations,  
You provide insight to all who seek you,  
And defend those in need.  
We thank you for the gift of health services in our nation,  
Freely available to everyone no matter their background, income level or need.  
Give your wisdom to our government, health professionals, and advisers as they seek the right reforms.  
We bless our health service to thrive, to prosper, and to heal.*

*We bless our doctors and nurses to care, to excel, and to bring healing.  
We bless our nation to understand, to thank, and to honour those who seek to bring us health.  
For everything that is good comes from you.*

*Amen.*

## A message from Pope Francis for World Day of the Sick 2017

### Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On 11 February next, the Twenty-fifth World Day of the Sick will be celebrated throughout the Church and in a special way at Lourdes.

The theme of this year's celebration is "Amazement at what God has accomplished: 'The Almighty has done great things for me....'" (Lk 1:49). Instituted by my predecessor Saint John Paul II in 1992, and first celebrated at Lourdes on 11 February 1993, this Day is an opportunity to reflect in particular on the needs of the sick and, more generally, of all those who suffer.

It is also an occasion for those who generously assist the sick, beginning with family members, health workers and volunteers, to give thanks for their God-given vocation of accompanying our infirm brothers and sisters. This celebration likewise gives the Church renewed spiritual energy for carrying out ever more fully that fundamental part of her mission which includes serving the poor, the infirm, the suffering, the outcast and the marginalized

Surely, the moments of prayer, the Eucharistic liturgies and the celebrations of the Anointing of the Sick, the sharing with the sick and the bioethical and theological-pastoral workshops to be held in Lourdes in those days will make new and significant contributions to that service

# Forty days of penance

Lent is a solemn religious observance in the liturgical calendar that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends approximately six weeks later, before Easter Sunday. The purpose of Lent is the preparation of the believer through prayer, doing penance, repentance of sins, almsgiving, atonement, and self-denial. Its institutional purpose is heightened in the annual commemoration of Holy Week, marking the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, which recalls the tradition and events of the New Testament beginning on Friday of Sorrows, further climaxed on Jesus' crucifixion on Good Friday, which ultimately culminates in the joyful celebration on Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Lent, many Christians commit to fasting or giving up certain types of luxuries as a form of penance. Many Christians also add a Lenten spiritual discipline, such as reading a daily devotional or praying through a Lenten calendar, to draw themselves near to God.[6][7] The Stations of the Cross, a devotional commemoration of Christ's carrying the Cross and of his execution, are often observed. Many Roman Catholic and some Protestant churches remove flowers from their altars, while crucifixes, religious statues, and other elaborate religious symbols are often veiled in violet fabrics in solemn observance of the event. Throughout Christendom, some adherents mark the season with the traditional abstention from the consumption of meat, most notably among Roman Catholics.[8] Lent is traditionally described as lasting for forty days, in commemoration of the forty days Jesus spent fasting in the desert, according to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, before beginning his public ministry, after which he endured temptation by Satan. The number 40 has many Biblical references: Moses spent 40 days on Mount Sinai with God (Exodus 24:18) Elijah spent 40 days and nights walking to Mount Horeb (1 Kings



19:8) God sent 40 days and nights of rain in the great flood of Noah (Genesis 7:4) the Hebrew people wandered 40 years in the desert while traveling to the Promised Land (Numbers 14:33) Jonah's prophecy of judgment gave 40 days to the city of Nineveh in which to repent or be destroyed (Jonah 3:4). Jesus retreated into the wilderness, where He fasted for 40 days, and was tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:1-2, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-2). He overcame all three of Satan's temptations by citing scripture to the devil, at which point the devil left him, angels ministered to Jesus, and He began His ministry. Jesus further said that His disciples should fast "when the bridegroom shall be taken from them" (Matthew 9:15), a reference to his Passion.

- Since, presumably, the Apostles fasted as they mourned the death of Jesus, Christians have traditionally fasted during the annual commemoration of his burial.

- It is the traditional belief that Jesus laid for 40 hours in the tomb,[19] which led to the 40 hours of total fasting that preceded the Easter celebration in the early Church[29] (the biblical reference to 'three days in the tomb' is understood by them as spanning three days, from Friday afternoon to early Sunday morning, rather than three 24-hour periods of time). Some Christian denominations, such as The Way International and Logos Apostolic Church of God,[30] as well as Anglican scholar E. W.

Bullinger in *The Companion Bible*, believe Christ was in the grave for a total of 72 hours, reflecting the type of Jonah in the belly of the whale.[31]

One of the most important ceremonies at Easter is the baptism of the initiates on Easter Eve. The fast was initially undertaken by the catechumens to prepare them for the reception of this sacrament. Later, the period of fasting from Good Friday until Easter Day was extended to six days, to correspond with the six weeks of training necessary to give the final instruction to those converts who were to be baptized.[citation needed]

Converts to Catholicism followed a strict catechumenate or period of instruction and discipline prior to baptism. In Jerusalem near the close of the fourth century, classes were held throughout Lent for three hours each day. With the legalization of Christianity (by the Edict of Milan) and its later imposition as the state religion of the Roman Empire, its character was endangered by the great influx of new members. In response, the Lenten fast and practices of self-renunciation were required annually of all Christians, both to show solidarity with the catechumens, and for their own spiritual benefit

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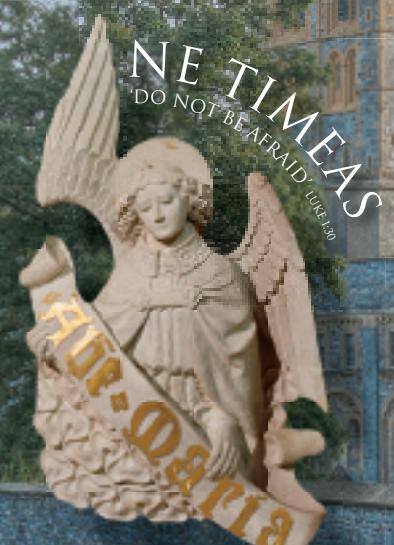
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School of the Annunciation



continued from page 1

In 1789, the French Revolution broke out. Two of Claudine's brothers joined the anti-Revolutionary forces. The revolutionary government in Paris ordered a brutal repression in Lyon as an example, in which those who had fought against the revolution were to be executed. Claudine witnessed her brothers execution. Their last words to her were: 'Forgive, as we forgive.' Claudine began to care for orphans and abandoned children in Lyon at the request of her parish priest. In 1816 she formed a group that would become the Religious of Jesus & Mary at Lyon in 1818. She was beatified on October 4th 1981 by Pope John Paul II, and declared by him to be a saint on March 21st 1993.



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