

Holocaust
survivor's plea
on migrants
pg 21

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Million reasons to act as SVP warns of rise in food bank use

**Trussell Trust report lays bare scale of problem
as food banks forced to extend opening hours to
accommodate working parents in desperate need**

Andy Drozdziak

Catholic social charity St Vincent de Paul (SVP) has joined the Trussell Trust in sharing deep concerns that record numbers of emergency food parcels are being handed out amid a sharp increase in food bank users.

A record near-three million emergency food parcels were handed out at food banks from April 2022 to March this year, with the number provided for children topping a million for the first time.

Trussell Trust say this is a 37% increase compared to the previous year, and that many of the latest recipients of help are working parents who simply "cannot make ends meet."

SVP CEO Elizabeth Palmer said the Trust's figures reflected the experiences of SVP workers around the country. "Our Conferences and frontline projects have seen a sharp increase in the number of people accessing food banks, food pantries or free or subsidised hot meals over the past year," she told the *Universe*.

"We are also concerned that people who have never previously relied on food banks before are now coming forward. This includes people and families who are in-work but still cannot make ends meet."

"In-work poverty is a reality for many people and must be addressed."

A record 2,986,203 emergency food parcels were given out between April 2022 and March this year – the most parcels food banks in the charity's UK-wide network have ever distributed in a single year.

The number is more than double the amount distributed by food banks in the same period five years ago, the charity said.

Some 1,139,553 parcels were distributed for children, up from 835,879 the previous year and a rise from less than 500,000 in the 2017–2018 year. More than 760,000 people used a food bank in the network for the first time.

Elizabeth Palmer said it was a heart-breaking situation: "Our regional centres support thousands of people each month, and have stepped up their support due to rising demand."

She cited examples such as the St Vincent's centre in Newcastle, which provides a hot meal to an average of 150 people every week; "the number of people accessing this service are increasing each year," she said.

The Trussell Trust said the problem is "not a regionalised issue", with an increase of at least 28 per cent in each area of the UK, but the highest rise is in the north east of England, with a 54% rise in the number of parcels being distributed compared to the previous year.

Worryingly, SVP said the level of need is now "far outstripping the donations that we've been receiving", meaning food banks are having to purchase more food themselves and source more storage space – costs they can afford to meet.

It said food banks are also having to extend their opening hours to accommodate employed people who need to access their emergency support around their working patterns.

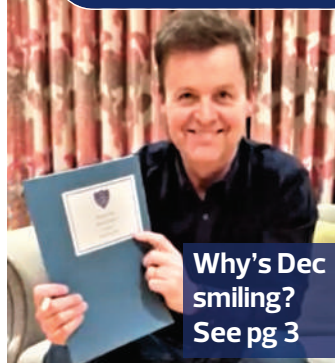
Help from the Government in the form of the Cost of Living Payments saw a temporary dip in need for food banks, the charity said, but the organisation criticised the short-term nature of support. Elizabeth Palmer backed calls for "more investment and support."

Continued on page 2



Director of CAFOD Christine Allen makes her point as she joined a number of Catholic groups in London last weekend for The Big One climate change demonstration. See page 11 for more. Photo: Louise Norton

Inside



Why's Dec smiling?
See pg 3

**Church has a duty
to lead on climate
change crisis**

– pg 12

**Musk removes pope's
'authentic' blue tick**

– pg 15

**US Catholics remain
divided over Biden's
bid for second term**

– pg 16

**UN chief begs world
to remember Somalia**

– pg 19



**Tennis champ
Venus has
fun with her
dog-friendly
work-out**

IN COMPANION

Million reasons for action, says SVP

Continued from page 1

"We support calls by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Trussell Trust to increase rates of Universal Credit and legacy benefits through their 'Guarantee our Essentials' campaign.

"However, we also want to see more investment and support to help people find meaningful and secure employment," she said.

The Trussell Trust is calling on the Government to make a long-term commitment that benefit rates will always be enough to afford the essentials, urging that the principle of a minimum Universal Credit to protect people from going without essentials be enshrined in law.

The organisation also said the Government should set out a long-term strategy for local crisis support and commit to a multi-year settlement of funding.

Emma Revie, the trust's chief executive, said the latest figures are "extremely concerning and show that an increasing number of people are being left with no option but to turn to charitable, volunteer-run organisations - this is not right".

She added: "If we are to stop this continued growth and end the need for food banks then the UK Government must ensure that the standard allowance of Universal Credit is always enough to cover essential costs."

Right, King Charles III talks to food bank delivery drivers during a visit to The Felix Project in Poplar, East London, to recognise the staff, volunteers and partner organisations who work to provide meals to some of London's most vulnerable people.



Gambling ad ban 'doesn't go far enough', say MPs

The Culture Secretary has faced cross-party calls to "think again" over gambling advertising regulations in football, after MPs said a voluntary ban on gambling sponsorship on the front of match-day shirts was not enough.

Labour's Paul Blomfiel said families bereaved by gambling addiction "will be ... deeply disappointed by the failure to tackle advertising, and particularly in football" as he spoke of the "shocking number of children who are addicts or have problems with gambling", while Tory Sir Iain Duncan Smith said: "On advertising and children, I simply want to say: not far enough."

Culture Minister Liz Frazer told the Commons: "We are seeking a balance between allowing people to go about their lives who are not suffering harm, at the same time as protecting those people who are, unfortunately, harmed."

More on White Paper: see page 5

Northampton latest diocese to divest from fossil fuels

Over half of Catholic diocese now shunning investments in activities linked to climate change

The Diocese of Northampton has announced it is divesting from fossil fuels, meaning that half of all Catholic dioceses in England and Wales have now divested.

The diocese announced its decision, along with 31 other faith institutions from the US, UK, Australia, Canada, Italy and France, making their assets permanently off limits to fossil fuel companies.

A statement from the diocesan trustees said: "The Diocese of Northampton prohibits direct investment in any company, regardless of the sector, which generates more than



10% of its revenues from fossil fuel production."

The Diocese of Northampton explained that it has followed "a number of religious organisations in this important step for our ecology."

"It is hoped this policy will represent the diocese's ongoing commitment to protect the earth God has given to us. This powerful act will increase the

pressure on governments to stop financing the fossil fuel industry," the Diocese added.

The Laudato Si movement describes disinvestment of fossil fuel in the following terms: 'Making sure your finances do not fund the extraction of fossil fuels around the globe. That means either selling assets related to the fossil fuel industry or committing publicly never to invest in those dangerous and dirty industries.'

"It means investing in a better future, and shifting power away from companies that are not aligned with climate science."

Alongside Northampton, the Catholic diocese of Catania, Italy, will also be divesting, as well as three religious orders, including the Carmelites, eight Catholic charities, a Catholic parish in Canada, seven Church of England dioceses, and many others.

Archbishop Giovanni Ricchiuti, Pres-

ident of Pax Christi, Italy, one of the divesting Catholic charities, said: "The Pax Christi Movement joins the Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign because it embraces the urgent message for social and environmental justice contained in Pope Francis's encyclical Laudato Si'.

"Each of us must do our part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere, replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources.

"But it is also necessary to urge policymakers to quickly develop policies that will permanently replace energy production from extractive fossil [fuel] sources that, as we know, damage the climate of our planet and exploit entire populations."

It is estimated that religious institutions manage a combined \$3trillion (£2.42trillion) of investments globally, and faith groups have divested from fossil fuels more than any other sector in recent years.

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Dec gives William top marks for adventure story starring TV duo

Andy Drozdziak

An eight-year-old Catholic primary school pupil received a huge surprise when his hero, Declan Donnelly, one half of TV duo Ant and Dec, told him that he loved a story he had written about the popular presenting team.

William Potts, a Year 4 pupil at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic primary school in Peterlee, wrote a story for a writing activity about Ant and Dec on a desert island. William's teacher, Sarah Howells, sent the story to popular Geordie Declan 'Dec' Donnelly, who recorded a video, congratulating William for the "fantastic work."

The *I'm a Celeb* and *Saturday Night Takeaway* presenter was filmed reading William's story – and delivered his seal of approval on camera.

"I've just finished reading your story about Ant and Dec – me – on the desert island with the helicopter," Dec told William on the film. "I absolutely loved it. I thought it was absolutely brilliant, amazing, fantastic work. I'm going to give it 10 out of 10, and I'm going to sign it as well."

"I can't wait to read your next one. Keep up the good work and keep working hard," Dec added.

William was delighted to receive the comments in the video. "I was really shocked and really impressed. I was honoured to get the video," he said.

Sarah Howells explained how William's story managed to reach Dec Donnelly. "Dec is my partner's relative and, at a family gathering, I mentioned how one of my children had written a lovely story about him and Ant," she said.



William and his teacher Sarah Howells and his story

"He was keen to read it and suggested making a video to show him how much he thought of the story."

She also shared the effect the video had on other pupils.

"It was amazing to be able to give

a child this experience," Sarah said.

"It was great to see how much it inspired the children to want to write more. The class was so excited for him, and it was great to see his face after he watched the video."



Great news – The Universe is going back into print!

THAT'S RIGHT: your favourite weekly Catholic newspaper is **GOING BACK INTO PRINT.**

Starting **May 19th**, all your Catholic news, views and faith articles will be available in a printed version.

We'll still be publishing **The Universe** in a digital format for those who prefer to read their news online, but for those who have asked if we can go back to having a printed version – **you asked, and we listened!**

The new printed version of **The Universe** will be posted directly to print subscribers from **Friday, 19th May**. It will be identical to the digital version, the only difference will be that it's a paper copy – just like it was before the pandemic!

To subscribe to this new format **Universe** or for further information, please call Michelle Jones on 07436 617650 or email her at michelle.jones@universecatholicweekly.co.uk

In brief

Covid inquiry wants Whatsapp access

The Covid public inquiry has demanded all WhatsApp texts sent by ministers and other key figures involved in the pandemic response.

The chair of the independent investigation, Baroness Hallett, has "made clear her determination to leave no stone unturned in relation to exchanges via the popular messaging app."

Responding to concerns raised by a KC representing families who lost loved ones to the virus in Scotland, the retired judge said "this inquiry will conduct a full and thorough investigation into and analysis of what the messages mean for the public of the United Kingdom".

Missing girl's family criticise Met

Relatives of a young woman who the serial killer Levi Bellfield claims to have murdered two decades ago have accused the Metropolitan Police of failing to take the case seriously because of their race.

Bellfield has confessed to the kidnap, rape, assault and murder of university student Elizabeth Chau in 1999, when she was 19. Her family, originally from Vietnam, said police did not tell them of Bellfield's confession, first made in October 2022, and say it should not have taken seven months for officers to question Bellfield further. "Their lack of care is shocking. We felt ignored because of our race and Elizabeth's gender," the family said.

CBI admits 'mistakes' as members flee

Business representative group the CBI has acknowledged that it failed to "filter out culturally toxic people" from its number, leading to "a number of terrible consequences" including allegations of sexual harassment.

In a letter to members, president Brian McBride, admitted that the organisation had "made mistakes" and "badly let down" its staff. More than 50 of the lobby group's key members – including NatWest and John Lewis – publicly quit or suspended their links to the business group last week after new allegations emerged including a woman who said she was raped by two male colleagues.

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In brief

Children reading more books

The number of books read by children in the UK and Ireland rose by almost a quarter last year, according to a report. The 2023 What Kids Are Reading report found that pupils read 27,265,657 books in the 2021-2022 academic year, 24 per cent more than the 2020-2021 academic year, with social media trends credited.

However, the researchers found that, while average book difficulty rose as pupils became older, this was in line with the rate the pupils should have been improving in reading.

Starmer suspends Diane Abbott

Keir Starmer has sought to avoid a new anti-semitism row by suspending the party whip from Diane Abbott, after the former shadow home secretary was accused of playing down racism against Jewish people.

In a letter to *The Observer*, Abbott argued that minority groups – such as Irish, Jewish people and those from the Traveller communities – faced similar levels of prejudice to people with red hair. Abbott has claimed her remarks were made in error because an “initial draft” of her thoughts had been sent for publication.

A spokesperson for the Labour party said the comments were “deeply offensive and wrong”.

Millions miss emergency alert

The national emergency alert system test “descended into a farce” after it failed to work on up to 10m phones. Although the government insisted the test had been a “success”, customers on Three, one of Britain’s biggest mobile networks, failed to receive the 10-second alert. Some phones received the alarm up to 20 minutes after the scheduled 3pm test, and Welsh speakers said the computerised system made up the word ‘Vogel’, which is a ski resort in Slovenia.

However, the Cabinet Office insisted that the “vast majority of compatible phones” received the alert”.

Care homes use ‘revenge evictions’

Care homes in England are using “revenge evictions” to stifle complaints from residents, *The Observer* claimed. King’s College London found that at least one in 70 care residents in England received a notice to quit last year, often after the resident had complained. In one case, a 96-year-old woman was issued a notice to leave after her daughter had requested access during the Covid restrictions.

MP praises charity as he opens 10th modern slavery safe house

Andy Drozdzak

South Swindon MP Robert Buckland has praised the “vital” work of Medaille Trust as he met survivors of modern slavery and officially opened the charity’s 10th safe house.

The new safe house is the charity’s second in Wiltshire and provides nine en-suite rooms and extensive garden grounds, which staff hope to use to grow fruits and vegetables, for male survivors of modern slavery.

The other Wiltshire house caters for female survivors.

Sir Robert said: “I am aware that a number of agencies are collaborating to tackle modern slavery in Wiltshire. But it is also vital that while we go after traffickers, we provide refuge and care to the men, women, and children escaping from those who exploit them. That is why I am delighted that Medaille Trust has expanded its work in this area by opening a new safe house for survivors of modern slavery.”

For minister Sir Robert praised the charity’s “incredible work” and his experience of meeting survivors.

“While at the house, I was able to meet and chat with some of the survivors and the staff supporting them. I was happy to hear about Medaille’s work in providing not just accommodation but personalised support so that these survivors can recover from their terrible experiences and rebuild their lives,” he said.

“Medaille is a valued subcontractor under the Government’s Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract (MSVCC) with The Salvation Army, which funds supported accommodation for victims of modern slavery. This charity is doing incredible work in my constituency, and I look forward to it continuing to grow and expand its work. As MP for this area, I stand ready to support it as much as possible.”

CEO of Medaille Trust Garry Smith said: “The number of victims of modern slavery is sadly growing signifi-



MP Sir Robert Buckland cuts the tape to officially open the new safe house, watched by Medaille Trust CEO Garry Smith and safe house manager Katie Zaccaro

cantly every year. It is essential that all agencies respond to this increase with much-needed support for those who escape and seek refuge and protection. We have grown from one safe house in 2006 to 10 safe houses today offering accommodation to 133 men, women and children, through the generosity of supporters.

“We hope to expand and reach out

to more victims of modern slavery fleeing their exploiters by providing refuge, protection, and vital support to help them rebuild their lives.”

Senior safe house manager Katie Zaccaro said: “I have been able to develop the project, alongside my colleagues, to a point where we are open and able to provide nine new beds for victims of modern slavery.

“It has been exciting to see it blossom to this point, with the grand opening being a pivotal moment for both service users and staff alike.

“I was delighted to be able to welcome Sir Robert Buckland and showcase the important work we all do here at Medaille, providing accommodation and support with passion and care.”

Online abuse survivors tell PM they are ‘ignored and overlooked by tech companies’

Survivors of internet grooming and exploitation have urged the Prime Minister to strengthen the Online Safety Bill as they claimed technology companies have ignored and overlooked the violence they face.

The group, including online safety campaigners whose names have been changed to protect their identity following abuse, have written to Rishi Sunak to repeat calls for a mandatory violence against women and girls (VAWG) code of practice in the Bill.

Other signatories include former *Love Island* contestant Sharon Gaffka, TV presenter Charlie Webster and presenter and activist Natasha Devon.

Ms Gaffka has previously spoken of being the recipient of unsolicited

images, threats of sexual violence and misogynistic abuse online on a daily basis.

The letter comes as a survey commissioned by the NSPCC suggested the vast majority of people (79 per cent) think the Bill should take specific action to protect women and girls from violence and harmful content online.

The online YouGov survey of 2,031 adults suggests there is overwhelming public support for the campaign, the NSPCC said.

The Bill, aimed at tackling illegal and harmful content by imposing new legal requirements on big tech companies, is currently being debated in the House of Lords.

The letter to Mr Sunak describes violence against women and girls online as a “pervasive and growing threat” that impacts too many people across the UK.

The signatories state in their letter: “Whilst our experiences are different, we have all been ignored and overlooked by technology companies who have not taken violence experienced by women and girls online seriously enough.

“Technology companies have failed to recognise the risks posed by their platforms, designed systems exposing us to significant harm, and made it unsafe for us to report our abuse.

“They have never seen our perspective or experiences as something to

learn from, listen to, and act on, but instead operate independently of the women and girls who face violence on their platforms.”

A code of practice, they stated, would ‘guide online services in how to tackle VAWG online, ensuring the prevention of harm is built into platforms.’

The group argue that unless companies are required to do this ‘the specific risks women and girls face will continue to go unaddressed’.

They ask the Prime Minister to ensure that ‘we are able to assess the steps companies are taking and hold them accountable for implementing meaningful changes that offer their users better protection.’

'Graduated driving licence' considered

New drivers aged under 25 may be banned from carrying young passengers as part of a "graduated driving licence".

The plan, which is being considered by the Government, has the backing of Support for Victims of Road Crashes, an advisory committee to the Department for Transport.

It would impose a ban on carrying passengers under the age of 25 in the first year or six months after passing the test.

In the six years to 2020, 590 young drivers and 357 young passengers aged under 25 died on the road.

Politicised civil service mooted

A Conservative peer who is leading a Government review on how the civil service operates has called for a more "robust culture" in Whitehall and an increase in 'politicisation' of the previously neutral officials.

Francis Maude, who is expected to report shortly to Rishi Sunak, argued that Whitehall needs "to be more robust and less mealy mouthed about 'politicisation'".

Plans to bring in more politicisation of Whitehall by allowing ministers greater powers to appoint their own civil servants – including some with overt political affiliations – are being considered. His plans "will cause deep alarm across Whitehall", Westminster commentators said.

Minister promises to tackle betting firms over addiction

The much-delayed gambling White Paper setting out Government proposals on regulation will help "redress the power imbalance between punters and operators" while preventing addiction, Culture Secretary Lucy Frazer has claimed.

Campaigners are hopeful it will include plans for a levy on gambling companies, affordability checks and maximum stakes for online slot machines to match those found in land-based gambling.

However, reports suggest that the majority of measures, including the exact level of stake limits of online slot machines and curbs on digital marketing such as "free" bets or bonuses, will be subject to further consultation, signalling even more delay to long-awaited changes.

Ministers are undertaking the most comprehensive review of gambling laws in 15 years to ensure they are fit for the digital age following an explosion in online betting and a string of high-profile cases where customers have suffered huge losses or taken their own lives.

Initiated in December 2020, the much-postponed review has been supervised by four culture secretaries, six gambling ministers, and three prime ministers, and its official release stalled four times throughout government turmoil and the pandemic.



But writing in *The Times* yesterday (Thursday), Ms Frazer said that gambling apps on mobile phones had for some become "a trapdoor to despair and isolation".

Ms Frazer said the regulations towards gambling have not matched the advancements in the industry, particularly due to the rise of smartphones and the internet.

"British punters spend almost £10 billion a year on online casino games, sports betting and other forms of commercial gambling," Ms Frazer

said. "Our phones have opened up a digital wonderland where everyone can access a maze of flashing slot machines, virtual races and blackjack tables."

"That's why the Government is committed to an overhaul of the rules with an approach centred on balance: to protect the most vulnerable, but not to get in the way of the majority of people who want to have a simple flutter."

Ms Frazer said the Gambling White Paper will target the power balance

between punters and operators, it will do more to protect children and fund research on how to prevent gambling addiction in the future.

Peter Jackson, chief executive of Flutter Entertainment, whose brands include SkyBet, Paddy Power and Betfair, said: "We welcome the publication of the White Paper, which marks a significant moment for the UK gambling sector."

"While we will need to review the detail of the proposals once published, we believe proactive change will lead to a better future for our industry."

"We will continue to constructively engage with the Government and Gambling Commission as part of any subsequent industry consultation processes, with a focus on providing support to the minority at risk of gambling harm without interfering disproportionately with the enjoyment of the vast majority."

Christian charity CARE has long criticised betting firms' access to MPs, and said there were barriers preventing safeguards to stop more people sliding into gambling addiction.

Among other reforms it has called for wholesale changes to gambling laws, including a 5 per cent mandatory levy which would mean betting firms giving a proportion of their income to research and treatment for gambling related harms.

NI wants powersharing rules changed to avoid future deadlocks

More than two-thirds of people in Northern Ireland believe big changes are required to the powersharing structures created by the Good Friday Agreement, a new survey has found.

The same proportion of the population, 70 per cent, think the peace accord of 1998 has failed to deliver stable governance, according to the poll commissioned by Westminster's Northern Ireland Affairs Committee.

That level of scepticism about the deal's success in delivering stability remained consistent across age, religion and political affiliation.

The survey, conducted by YouGov and Ohio State University (OSU), found that 55 per cent of people believe the Good Friday settlement has failed to produce effective governance.

The powersharing institutions incorporate a governance system based on mutual veto powers, enabling blocs of unionist and nationalist MLAs to stop moves that otherwise command majority support and, in extreme circumstances, pull down the institutions and prevent them operating.

The DUP is currently exercising its veto to blockade Stormont in protest at post-Brexit trading arrangements.

In 2017, Sinn Féin collapsed the ministerial executive amid a furore

about a botched green energy scheme.

The Government is currently facing calls from some of the DUP's main rivals, particularly the cross-community Alliance Party, to change the rules to allow the majority of MLAs to get back to work.

The DUP contends that changing the system without unionist consent would undermine the principles of the powersharing agreement.

The survey found that three out of four people feel the requirement for major decisions to have cross-community support, with blocs of nationalists and unionists able to exercise vetoes, is now leading to a failure to address pressing policy issues.

The exercise was commissioned as part of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee's inquiry into the effectiveness of the Good Friday Agreement structures.

Committee chairman Simon Hoare said the poll provided an "important snapshot" of current thinking in the region.

"These findings show current thinking among people from all backgrounds in Northern Ireland. It is clear more work is needed before the rules on governing Northern Ireland are accepted and working properly."

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— COMMENT — 'Government needs to think again after emergency phone call is botched'

The national emergency alert system test descended into a farce last Sunday afternoon (23rd April) after it failed to work on up to ten million phones.

The Government, however, has insisted that it was indeed a "success" – though some senior MPs have suggested the scheme was a waste of taxpayers' money and should not be repeated and the programme scrapped. Jacob Rees-Mogg, the former Cabinet minister, said it was an "expansion of the reach of the state".

To be fair to this Government initiative, it is designed for those at immediate risk of emergencies such as flooding and wildfires, and is intended to be used only in life-threatening situations. But there has been little detail of who exactly will control this new power to intrude into all our lives. In a few years time, will our eardrums constantly suffer at the whim of alarmist officialdom?

Even with forewarning this alert was incredibly disruptive. Consider the impact on household pets who hate loud noises – and how many cinema films and theatre matinees did the siren spoil? Two Premier League matches were underway, not to mention the London Marathon. Any victim of domestic abuse who keeps a secret second phone risks having its hiding place exposed.

The new alert system will also present a new hazard for Britain's drivers. Even if you manage not to swerve when your phone starts shrieking at you, picking the handset up to turn off the alert is illegal and carries a £200 fine and six penalty points.

Let us hope we will be spared the recent experience of Florida residents, millions of whom received a botched alert test last week from their governing authorities – at 4.45am in the morning..!



Lifting the dark clouds in society through the lens of Catholic social teaching

Providing 'Education for Hope': Leeds Trinity University launches the 'Beyond the Dark Clouds' Lecture Series 2023, inspired by Pope Francis's call in his encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*

Education and Catholic Social Teaching
Dr Ann Marie Mealey



When we look at our local, national and international communities today, perhaps the most unifying aspects of living we see more clearly are vulnerability and darkness.

Questions of integrity concerning individuals in leadership, in professions we put our trust in, and the questionable activities of institutions that are meant to uphold values around transparency, accountability and impartiality are commonplace. And they are becoming so common now that we run the risk of not 'seeing' behaviours any more and taking them as part and parcel of life itself. This can create a sense of confusion and further darkness for those who do want to see change and are praying and hoping to see it in their lifetime.

But we must see this time of confusion and mixed-priorities as an opportunity to 'teach' and reawaken in the world a sense of the spiritual and the energy that is needed to bring about a humane political and social world which 'involves a constant attention to the common good and a concern for integral human development' (*Fratelli Tutti* 267). We must never

forget and get confused about the fact that the Church 'has a public role over and above her charitable and educational activities' (*FT* 267). And so does the Catholic university.

The open door that Catholic universities can provide to a Church that is focused on finding more humane ways of living must not be underestimated. Universities can be the key locus where the much-needed debates about justice, goodness, respect for cultural diversity, community living and peaceful international relations can take place – with openness, scholarly friendship, and academic rigour.

In his Message for the World Day of Peace (1 Jan 2021, no. 8), Pope Francis describes the role of Catholic education to be "an act of hope that, from the present, looks to the future." It should "pass on a system of values based on the recognition of the dignity of each person, each linguistic, ethnic and religious community and each people, as well as the fundamental rights arising from that recognition."

It is in this spirit that at Leeds Trinity University we have chosen to call our inaugural online lecture series '*Beyond the Dark Clouds*'. Inspired by the call made by Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti* to acknowledge the existence of the 'Dark Clouds Over and Closed World' and to call on everyone to seek greater integration integration of peoples and communities for the "fostering of

peace and fellowship [...]", we want to provide a platform where contemporary issues facing our world can be discussed through a theological lens, and particularly through the lens of Catholic social teaching.

Guided by the mission of our foundresses The Cross and Passion Sisters, our lecture series brings together scholars and community leaders locally, nationally and internationally to discuss topics such as law enforcement, the police, the nature of education, business ethics, spirituality, leadership, faith and education and contemplation and the arts. Many of the staff at Leeds Trinity share the Church's desire to get involved in public discussions about how to humanise our world and to bring about the conditions that enable the flourishing of all individuals and groups – even if they are not persons of faith themselves. This is hugely humbling as it shows that our efforts to create a more humane world in the context of a Catholic University is a shared mission.

As the very first Director of Catholic Mission at Leeds Trinity, it is my great pleasure to launch this online lecture series from our university. Please join us as we learn and grow together in the hope of sensitising everyone about who our neighbour really is and to help to repair the 'shattered dreams' of our world.

The first in the series took place this week (April 24th) with Professor Tobias Winwright, from St Patrick's College, Maynooth, arguing convincingly that the principles contained within the Just War tradition can be used as a possible framework for interpreting where legitimate force could be justifiably used by the police and thereby minimise reactions that are reactionary and unnecessarily aggressive.

Professor Winwright also encouraged participants to consider the possibility of re-naming the police force as 'guardians and servants of life' so we can begin to pave the way for the much-needed new narrative around policing as well as for the development of a training programme for the police that includes a focus on character and moral virtue.

The next lecture is on Monday, 15th May when our very own, Professor Tony Blockley, Head of Policing and Criminology at Leeds Trinity University, will be discussing the role of faith in policing and communities today.

Thank to to all those who attended this first lecture – as Nelson Mandela reminds us, '[...] winner[s] are dreamer[s] who never give[...] up.' Therefore, let us dream!

• **Dr Ann Marie Mealey is the Director of Catholic Mission – Leeds Trinity University.**

Home Secretary Suella Braverman meets police recruits during a visit to Northamptonshire Police's Giffard House Training Centre. This week's Leeds Trinity lecture considered a new way to view policing in modern Britain



That's a gem of a boost, says TV's Huw

Andy Drozdziak

BBC news presenter Huw Edwards has welcomed a new grant for the protection and restoration of churches, including iconic Manchester Catholic church the 'Hidden Gem'.

Grade II listed church St Mary's in central Manchester, affectionately known as the Hidden Gem, has received a £30,000 National Churches Trust Cornerstone Grant and a £6,000 Wolfson Fabric Repair Grant to fund urgent roof and dome repairs.

The work also includes restoring the fabric of the church, and the parish said it is "pleased" to receive the grant.

In total, 21 churches and chapels and meeting houses have received a total of £351,500 from the National Churches Trust – four of which are on the Historic England At Risk Register.

National Churches Trust Vice President Huw Edwards believes the grants are timely, given the current financial situation. "With many churches facing a struggle to survive, the latest grants are a tremendous boost to congregations, heritage lovers and to many

communities in the UK who increasingly rely on the support provided by churches," he said.

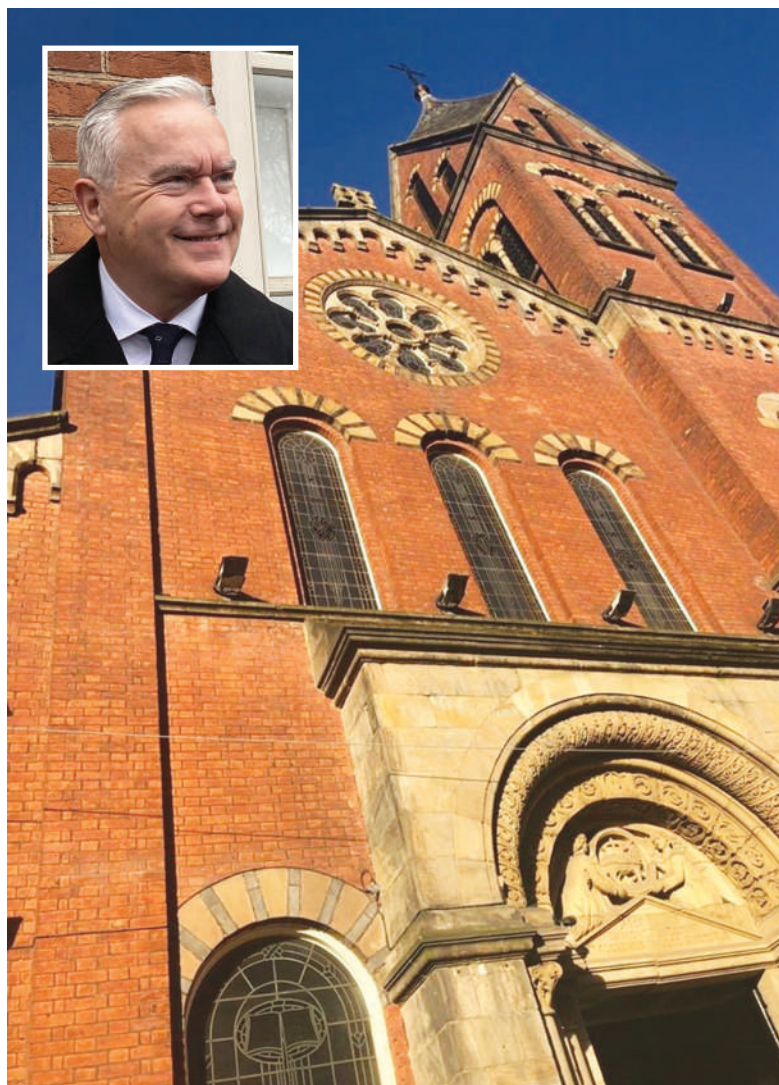
"The grants safeguard important local heritage and keep churches open and in use for the benefit of everyone."

He added: "The National Churches Trust helps hundreds of historic churches each year and with the support of local people keeps them thriving today, and tomorrow."

As part of a partnership with the Wolfson Foundation, support of £66,500 is provided by Wolfson Fabric Repair Grants which support repair work at Listed churches in the UK.

National Churches Trust said the grants would help ease problems with many UK churches: "There are over 900 churches on the Heritage at Risk Register, and the Church of England alone faces a £1 billion repair bill over the next five years. Churches sit at the heart of our communities and stand between the past and present."

"Our grants will help churches make essential repairs and keep our best-loved churches and places of worship open."



Manchester's much-loved 'Hidden Gem' – St Mary's – will receive £30,000 from the National Churches Trust, a move that was welcomed by NCT vice president, broadcaster Huw Edwards (inset)

Sinn Fein head to attend the coronation

Sinn Fein's vice president Michelle O'Neill has surprised many by announcing that she will attend the coronation of King Charles III next weekend.

The party's leader at Stormont said the gesture demonstrated her commitment to building good relations and advancing peace and reconciliation.

In September, she attended the Queen's funeral service in London.

The move to attend the coronation is the latest signal of the vastly improved relations between the republican movement and the monarchy since the outset of the peace process in Northern Ireland.

"I have accepted an invitation to attend the coronation of King Charles III," said Ms O'Neill. "We are living in a time of great change. A time to respect our differing and equally legitimate aspirations."

"I am an Irish republican but also recognise there are many people on our island for whom the coronation is a hugely important occasion. I am committed to being a First Minister for all, representing the whole community; therefore, as First Minister Designate, I will join President of Ireland Michael D Higgins, international figures, Church leaders, other party leaders and the Assembly Speaker Alex Maskey for the coronation in London."

Stonyhurst to exhibit historic First Folio

Stonyhurst has announced its Museum and Archives will host a Shakespeare exhibition this summer.

Entitled 'Folio 400: A Summer of Shakespeare', it will exhibit its own copy of the First Folio of William Shakespeare as part of worldwide celebrations marking 400 years since its publication.

The display will explore the history and stories of approximately 40 objects from its museum and archives, each linked to plays within the First Folio.

The First Folio is described by Stonyhurst as "one of the great wonders of the literary world." Published in 1623, it was the first printed edition of Shakespeare's collected plays and contains 36 of his works. It was brought together by two of his friends, John Heminges and Henry Condell.

The First Folio will be exhibited in

the Do Room at the college. The display will touch on the significance of St Omers Jesuit drama, and the part played by the accrual at St Omers College of Jesuit relics from all over the world, and their influence on the dramatic performances for which Stonyhurst College was so famous.

The exhibition will be open to the public through a ticketed event from 7th July every Friday and Saturday until 17th August.

In 1623, it is believed 750 copies of the First Folio were printed, seven years after the death of its author: 235 copies are known to have survived with 50 in the UK. Stonyhurst holds one of these copies within its Museum and Archives, the oldest collection of museum objects in the English-speaking world.

Stonyhurst said the exhibition would be an opportunity to draw up lessons, provoke conversations and put on dramatic performances linked to Shakespeare.

"The pages of the Folio will be turned daily so pupils can read through the plays in short bursts," Stonyhurst said. "We're looking forward to sharing this significant part of history with its pupils and the wider community."

Left, Stonyhurst pupils with the Shakespeare First Folio
Photo Vanessa Fry



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Eastertide time

Sir John Battle



We got through Lent in Yorkshire in an extended winter, with colder, challenging days, and spring is now breaking through in the blossom on the trees.

Each year we get through Holy Week to the Easter Alleluias and the brightening light. But as the Easter story of Thomas, who doubted the Resurrection, reminds us, the Risen Christ still bears the marks of his suffering. The wounds were clearly evident and the holes still there. In other words, the Resurrection does not cancel out the Crucifixion and any painful memories of it. It remains present in Christ's resurrected body. Ours therefore is a double experience, enabling us through the Resurrection to proclaim that 'we are now saved', and yet we know it is simultaneously 'not yet'.

The Christian challenge is in holding that 'now' and 'not yet' together in our daily lives as we look to imitate Christ himself. The timeframe is all and so, as we celebrate, there can be no let up in our responsibility to address our personal and collective trials.

I always find the remark about timeframes attributed to Antoni Gaudi, the brilliant Catholic architect of the Sagrada Familia Church in Barcelona, encouraging. His design drew on the Bible, the architectural tradition of Europe and Catalonia's nature. His work started in March 1882 but it was not until 2010 that it was consecrated by Pope Benedict XVI, and to this day is unfinished, as craftsmen continue to work on the interior's beautiful, organic treelike pillars. When asked why the work was not sticking to schedule, Gaudi replied that, unlike them, he "worked to God's time".

His response is an antidote to the time-driven panickers and those who lead us into a fatalistic apocalyptic vision of the future. The great contemporary physicist Michio Kaku has just published *Quantum Supremacy* in which he outlines the future possibilities of transformative quantum computing, moving us into machines using subatomic particles to make faster and huge calculations. But he warns us not to get ahead of ourselves in over-imagining the imminent impacts of new technologies. There is still a long way to go, which gives us space to build in moral responsibility.

The Church's social teaching has long insisted that we focus on responsible moral and ethical principles of our technological developments, and to make the dignity of the person and care for creation front and centre. That is positively reinforced by the Easter message of deep hope. We need not be afraid.

Tour offers chance to learn history of beloved cathedral

The Catholic Union and the Friends of Westminster Cathedral hosted a joint event this week to raise funds for the Cathedral.

Around 30 members of the Catholic Union took part in a private tour of Westminster Cathedral on Monday 24th April, the Solemnity of St George. The tour was conducted by Professor Andrew Sanders, a former Vice-Chair of the Friends.

The tour is one of a number of events being organised by the Friends to mark the 120th anniversary of the completion of the Cathedral in 1903.

Professor Sanders told the group how the land the cathedral was built on used to be marshland around the River Thames. Prior to the cathedral being built, the site was used as a local prison, but thanks to the vision of Cardinal Vaughan and many others we have the famous landmark we know today.

Construction work on the cathedral started in 1895 and was completed just eight years later. The first Mass was said in the Cathedral on 19th March 1903 in the Lady Chapel.

The Cathedral estimates that it costs £6,000 per day to keep its doors open. The Society of Friends of Westminster Cathedral was established as an independent charity founded in 1977 to support the life of the Cathedral.

James Somerville-Meikle, Deputy Director of the Catholic Union, comments: "We're delighted to have partnered with the Friends for this event.



The group pictured during their tour of the Mother Church of the archdiocese of Westminster... 'The occasion of the cathedral's 120th anniversary is a moment for celebration...'

"The occasion of the cathedral's 120th anniversary is a moment for celebration, and an opportunity to help secure its future.

"For many Catholics in London, and across the country, the cathedral holds a special place in our hearts. It has so often provided a place of peace and solace during moments of change and uncertainty.

"Thank you to Fr Slawomir Wito and Professor Sanders for putting on such a wonderful evening. I hope the event is another step towards raising

much needed funds for the cathedral."

Fr Slawomir Wito, administrator of Westminster Cathedral, said: "I was delighted to welcome the members of the Catholic Union to the Mother Church of the Diocese, to share some of the history and the beauty with all who attended this special event.

"My hope from the evening is that it will help everyone to grow in appreciation of what the cathedral is, what it represents, and its mission in today's world."



London prepares for coronation as 'ring of steel' expected for visiting dignitaries

The countdown to the King's coronation has begun as preparations enter their final phase with just eight days to go.

Westminster Abbey, the venue for this deeply religious service, has shut its doors to visitors following its annual Anzac Day on Tuesday, and is being prepped for the historic ceremony. A dais known as the coronation theatre is being built, as the clergy involved intensively prepare for their important roles.

The BBC is checking its technical equipment ahead of the live television broadcast, while airport style scanners and checkpoints will be set up ready to screen the 2,000 guests.

Chairs inside the Abbey will be arranged, decorations or hangings will be added and the church will be spotlessly cleaned.

Eventually the Coronation Chair, which dates from around 1300 and on which the King will be crowned, will be carefully moved onto the Cosmati Pavement. It will take centre stage facing the High Altar in the Sacrament.



Temporary stands are erected outside Buckingham Palace

The coronation theatre and coronation chair will remain in place when the Abbey reopens on 8th May, with visitors who have booked timed tickets able to see the historic scene until 13th May.

The ancient Stone of Destiny will be brought from Scotland to be placed under the chair, as is tradition, while crowns have been resized, jewels polished and careful checks made to the robes and gowns due to be worn by the King, Queen and senior royals.

The elaborately-decorated invitations have been posted and received, and feature a colourful abundance of wildflowers and wildlife and the motif of the head of the Green Man.

Rehearsals for the big day have taken place inside Buckingham Palace where a replica of the coronation stage has been built.

But with Westminster Abbey now closed, in situ rehearsals can take place, with the King and Camilla expected to join some in person.

Detailed planning documents set out directions for the movement of the King and his consort inside the abbey and the placing of the clergy at the crucial moments.

Orchestrating their positions is key to ensuring the day goes smoothly, especially during the high-pressure anointing and the crowning.

Rehearsals for the parade have taken place in the eerie silence of London's early morning, as hundreds of service personnel have followed the procession route on horseback. More than 6,000 members of the armed forces will take part on the day, and uniforms are being polished, horses groomed and routines meticulously practised.

The police, too, have been preparing for the coronation. A ring of steel is expected in the capital. Policing minister Chris Philp described it as a "huge policing operation", and heads of state and foreign royals from around the world are set to travel to the UK, and thousands of people, including a few protestors will gather to see the newly crowned King and Queen.

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In brief

Asbestos still kills 5,000 a year

Asbestos is “the forgotten killer” that is still claiming 5,000 lives a year, a new report has found.

The *Sunday Times* said that the substance, which has been banned for decades, can still be found in 1.5 million buildings.

Asbestos “lingers in the memory, the way the three-day week does, black-and-white TV and the Falklands conflict, a problem from a bygone age that we have put behind us,” said the paper. “Except we haven’t.”

Vicar jailed for climate protest

A retired vicar has been jailed for causing a public nuisance after he staged a sitting protest in a busy London road with Insulate Britain.

Reverend Mark Coleman, 63, disrupted the City of London during rush hour when he sat in the road at the Bishopsgate junction, along with other activists.

Meanwhile, Extinction Rebellion warned it will unleash the “greatest acts of civil disobedience” unless Rishi Sunak meets its demands.

Northern Ireland at faith jobs parity

The Equality Commission said Northern Ireland has almost the same number of Catholics and Protestants in its workforce for the first time since records began more than 30 years ago.

A new report found that from a total workforce of 564,296 in 2021, 43.5 per cent were Protestant and 43.4 per cent were Catholic. In 1990, just 34.9 per cent of the workforce was Catholic, with 65.1 per cent Protestant.

The watchdog credits legislation that has stamped out discrimination in employment in the region.

Barclay latest to be accused of bullying

The health secretary has been accused by the Royal College of Nursing of trying to “bully and silence” nurses after the government blocked a planned May Day strike.

A ‘pre-claim’ letter was issued in Steven Barclay’s name, demanding the RCN cancel industrial action planned for 30 April to 2 May.

Pat Cullen, the RCN’s general secretary, described the move as “nakedly political” and The Guardian said it was “an extraordinary escalation of a dispute over the planned strike days”. The government said the strike would “put patient safety at risk”.

Sudanese left at the mercy of a deadly fight for power

WORLD AFFAIRS

Paul Jackson

The situation in Sudan is veering towards chaos, after a three-day ceasefire to mark the Islamic festival of Eid-al-Fitr in Khartoum, held across the country – just. But despite that the World Health Organisation says more than 330 people have been killed in a week.

Now, with reports emerging that arms are being sent from Egypt and Libya, there are growing fears the situation could develop into a fully fledged civil war that could draw in regional powers.

The violence represents a power struggle between the country’s military, led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, often referred to as Hemedti. The pair were respectively leader and deputy leader of a transitional government which was supposed to hand over to a civilian administration after the 2019 ousting of the former president, Omar al-Bashir. Instead the pair launched a military takeover in October 2021.

The RSF began as a militia, the Janjaweed, comprising fighters from Darfur in the west of Sudan. It was set up by al-Bashir, who ruled Sudan from 1993 until April 2019 when he was deposed by the army in 2019 after months of popular protest against his regime.

A true conflict entrepreneur, Hemedti has switched sides repeatedly. He rose to prominence fighting for al-Bashir in Darfur, then led an uprising against him in 2007 before switching sides again in a deal that made him a general. In 2013 he folded the Janjaweed into a new group, the RSF. This gave him a considerable power base which in



People fleeing clashes between the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces and the army gather at the bus station in Khartoum, Sudan
Photo: El-Tayeb Siddig, Reuters

Yevgeny Prigozhin, an ally of the Russian president, Vladimir Putin who is believed to be the founder of the Wagner Group has denied the allegations: “I have nothing to do with the Meroe Gold company, this company has never belonged to me, I do not know anything about this company.” He has also denied being associated with any entity known as the Wagner Group: “I am not aware of any evidence that the Wagner Group exists. The legend of ‘Wagner’ is only a legend.”

2019 was instrumental in ousting al-Bashir and then again in 2021, seizing power alongside the head of the army. Now the pair has fallen out.

Paramilitary power brokers

Far from being a short-term Sudanese problem, this conflict between two rival centres of military power illustrates a common long-term problem in Africa. There has been a history of authoritarian rulers setting up their own armed groups to counter possible military insurrection. And the continent has been ravaged by conflicts featuring non-state armed groups developed with the backing of international players with either commercial or political interests rivalling those of the state.

After seizing the presidency of Zaire in 1965, Mobutu Sese Seko set up a range of special paramilitary units, including the Special Presidential Division, which were loyal to him rather than the constitution and tended to be drawn from the same ethnic group. Likewise in Zimbabwe the ‘green bombers’ acted as a virtual private army for former Zimbabwe president Robert Mugabe as he

fought to hold on to power.

These paramilitary militias are typically used for a wide range of activities including political or party-based violence, or as a counterweight to formal armed forces if they are perceived as a potential threat.

What defines these groups is the willingness to use violence as a means to a political end and loose command and control, usually tied to personal patronage or ethnic links. They tend to grow out of regional disputes. And they often show a willingness to be flexible in terms of loyalty and the pursuit of resources.

These groups are frequently allied to other mercenary organisations that may provide fighters, training or some command and control. The arrival of Russian mercenaries from the Wagner Group in Mali, and South African firm Dyck Advisory Group (DAG) in Mozambique has recently shed light on a new wave of mercenary activity across the continent.

The Wagner Group has denied any involvement in events in Sudan, saying in a post: ‘Due to the large number of inquiries from various foreign media about Sudan, most of which are provocative, we consider it necessary to inform everyone that Wagner staff have not been in Sudan for more than two years.’

DAG, meanwhile, describes itself as having a ‘long history of providing bespoke solutions having undertaken security-based operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Central African Republic, Malawi, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Mozambique, for a variety of high profile clients’.

Wagner has been identified as operating in a number of countries, from Mali and Libya to the Central African Republic, where it was accused by Human Rights Watch of human rights atrocities. Now it is apparently active in Sudan as well, where it has been accused of using gold from Meroe, north of Khartoum, to boost Russia’s war effort in Ukraine.

Pot of gold

In 2017, al-Bashir reportedly travelled to Russia to ask Putin for support. Shortly afterwards a new gold-mining company, Meroe Gold, began operating in Sudan, Africa’s third-largest gold producer. Wagner’s chief role was to protect mining interests and support the regime of al-Bashir. After al-Bashir’s ousting in 2019, Wagner’s main focus has reportedly been on Sudan’s gold mining operations.

More recently, relations appear to have developed between Wagner and the RSF, with Hemedti flying to Moscow in February 2022 to meet Vladimir Putin. Days later, according to a CNN investigation published in July, an aircraft loaded with gold flew from Sudan to Russia’s military base at Latakia in Syria. CNN estimated that around 90 per cent of Sudan’s gold production worth an estimated US\$13.4 billion (£10.8 billion) has allegedly been smuggled out this way.

This week CNN has reported a quote from ‘Sudanese and regional diplomatic sources’ that Moscow is supplying the RSF with missile technology during the current conflict – specifically surface-to-air missiles to counteract the Sudanese air force.

The creation of paramilitary forces such as the RSF usually does not end well. And the involvement of external mercenaries serving both political and commercial interests complicates things further. In Sudan it has enabled a group initially formed as auxiliaries for a previous dictatorship to become a serious player in both business and government.

Such powerful and wealthy individuals are unlikely to hand over power in a hurry. This raises urgent questions about the immediate future of Sudan and also the longer-term future of the use of fragmented security structures on the continent.

Paul Jackson is a Professor of Politics, University of Birmingham



Mary's month is a time to pray for our mission

The charity Mary's Meals is encouraging Catholics to get on their knees in May and pray for its mission.

During May, the month traditionally dedicated to the Virgin Mary, the charity is asking people to pray that its work continues to flourish and grow, and that more children's lives will be transformed by receiving a daily meal in school.

The charity, which feeds more than 2.4 million children every school day, strives to encourage hungry children into the classroom where, instead of searching for food, they can gain an education. Prayer is seen as a helpful response during the current cost-of-living crisis.

"At a time when people may feel they are unable to donate, joining our Pray In May campaign – perhaps just taking a minute out of their day – is an important way to show support for our work and to let the children who eat Mary's Meals know that there are people thinking of them," Fran Lawson, supporter engagement officer at Mary's Meals, said.

Fran Lawson said their mission is to provide "light in darkness" for many hungry children.

"By asking for God's continued



Mary's Meals gives school children a life-changing nutritious meal every day

blessing for our mission, we can give strength to those poverty-stricken communities where Mary's Meals is a beacon of hope," she said.

"Our meals provide light in darkness for those suffering from the challenges of conflict, extreme hunger and natural disasters in places including Ethiopia, Yemen and South Sudan."

Suggestions for getting involved in Pray In May include praying the rosary for the charity's work, encouraging a church to host a holy hour, asking parish groups to organise a time of prayer for Mary's Meals, and helping children to pray for the charity's work.

Mary's Meals has produced a series of downloadable resources to support these activities, which are available on its website by **clicking here**.

Groups in united call to tackle climate crisis

Andy Drozdziak

Catholics campaigners joined many groups and movements in London for 'The Big One', a four-day rally, from 21st to 24th April, demanding Government action on the environmental crisis.

The peaceful protest, which was organised by Extinction Rebellion (XR), was supported by around 200 other organisations, including the Laudato Si' Movement (LSM).

A spokesman for LSM said it was joining the rally "to demand that the Government faces the reality of the climate crisis. We need to bring an end to the fossil fuel era, an end to pollution and an end to loss of biodiversity," the movement said.

CAFOD also had a strong presence at the protest, as they gathered to pray for leaders to take the action needed to tackle the climate emergency and declare that they have no faith in fossil fuels.

Its director, Christine Allen, reiterated this point: "Pope Francis has called on every one of us to take collective responsibility to care for our common home – that means leaving behind the fossil fuels that are destroying our common home."

"We cannot continue to allow a sit-

Demonstrators make their point outside Westminster
Photo: Louise Norton



uation where fossil fuel companies reap record-breaking profits while people in communities that have contributed least to the climate crisis pay the price."

Laudato Si' Movement members met on each of the four days and joined in with other Christian and Faith organisations for prayers.

Each of the four days was designated to reflect varying concerns, exploring themes of 'unite to survive', 'earth day', 'running out of time', and 'choose your future'.

A Mass was celebrated at the Faith Hub in Parliament by Fr Joe Ryan,

parish priest of London's West Green parish. The liturgy was organised by Laudato Si Animators, and followed a colourful March for Nature, involving tens of thousands, to mark Earth Day.

UK dioceses were also well represented, with Justice and Peace campaigners attending from the Dioceses of Westminster, Birmingham, Clifton, Southwark, Plymouth, and Wrexham.

There were also attendees from Pax Christi England and Wales, the Archbishop Romero Trust, and the Young Christian Climate Network as well as the Columban Justice, Peace and Ecology team.

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A tolerant society must accept faith

James Sommerville-Meikle
Deputy Director
The Catholic Union

We have just celebrated the great feast of Easter. After the 40 days of Lent, we unveil the cross and lift it high as we proclaim the resurrection.

Many of us will have been wishing friends, family, and colleagues a 'Happy Easter' over the last couple of weeks, to share our joy with others. Yet the results from the Catholic Union survey found that many people do not feel able to express their faith at work.

Almost half of responders to our survey said they did not feel able to talk openly about their faith with colleagues, and a third reported being disadvantaged at work because of their religion.

There were particular problems in hospitals, universities and the police. One lay chaplain in an NHS hospital spoke of a "pathological closing down" of chaplaincy work, while another said "I do not feel comfortable wearing a cross at work".

The results reflect what many of us have known and felt for a long time; that it is increasingly difficult to be a faithful and open Catholic at work in this country. This should be something that concerns everyone who wants to live in an open and tolerant society.

While the census results for 2022 show that Christians now account for less than half of the population in England and Wales, over 60 per cent of people said they belonged to one religion or another. In a country where the majority of people have faith, surely we need to make sure this is reflected and respected in workplace practices.

Religious freedom is also the canary in the mine for many other freedoms we enjoy. If people feel disadvantaged at work because of their faith, there is a good chance that other groups in society may also be suffering. Tolerance cannot exist only for one set of people; it needs to be applied across the board.

We are not asking law makers and enforcers to reinvent the wheel. There are already laws in place in respect of freedom of religion and expression, in the European Convention on Human Rights and elsewhere. What we need to see is a greater understanding and respect of these freedoms, and better enforcement when people are let down.

The Catholic Union is making this point loudly and clearly to those in positions of authority. Thank you to all Universe readers who took part in our survey, which has helped to make this work possible.

These 50 days of Easter seem like a good moment to make sure that Catholics can hold the Cross high in their hearts and on their person when they go to work. We will all suffer if we live in a land where this is not possible.



Church has responsibility to tackle climate change crisis

ST MARY'S
UNIVERSITY

Dr Roland Daw



For over two years, I have been leading the research elements of the Guardians of Creation Project. The project is the result of a partnership between the Catholic Diocese of Salford, St Mary's University, and the Laudato Si' Research Centre at Campion Hall, Oxford University, which was established to take an interdisciplinary perspective on the technical, sociological, organisational, and theological paths to decarbonisation in the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

Despite our disciplinary diversity, fundamentally, my colleagues and I have been collectively preoccupied with a single question: 'How does one translate the teaching of *Laudato Si'* into concrete action in dioceses?'

To answer this question, we have run and commissioned several empirical studies, producing seven publicly available reports that offer guidance to parishes, schools, and dioceses on responding to the ecological crisis.

In England and Wales, where most of our work has taken place, care for creation has benefited from explicit and growing episcopal support. In 2019, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales set out its commitment to avoiding the worst consequences of the ecological crisis in its statement *Guardians of God's Creation*, from which our project took its name. In 2022, the Bishops' Conference reviewed and updated its 2002 statement, *The Call of Creation*, which emphasised the responsibility of England and Wales and all rich countries to contribute to limiting the effects of climate breakdown by participating in the energy transition. Then, in the same year, the Bishops' Conference passed a resolution asking that all Catholic dioceses in England and Wales establish a carbon accounting methodology and declare their decarbonisation targets.

The Catholic Church's share of the problem is much larger than many assume. Even if we only look at the emissions from heating and powering Church-owned buildings in the United Kingdom, we estimate



Pictured at the Guardians of Creation report launch are Roland Daw (St Mary's), Jenny Williamson (Church Marketplace), Emma Gardner (Salford Diocese), Bishop John Arnold (Salford Diocese), Pauline Morgan (Salford Diocese), Edward de Quay (LSRI).

the total carbon footprint could be approaching one million tonnes. For context, this is more than the entire fossil fuel combustion and industrial production-related carbon emissions of Somalia or Eritrea. If one were to total up all the carbon from activities more broadly associated with the mission of the Church in the UK, such as parishioners driving to and from Mass, the embodied carbon in Church maintenance, and so on (we call these 'Scope 3' emissions in the lingo), we estimate that this number would grow by an order of magnitude or more. This would bring the Church in the UK's carbon footprint to a place where it exceeded that of the entire fossil fuel combustion and industrial production-related emissions of countries such as Jamaica or Uruguay.

Given that we know that the suffering caused by the ecological crisis is unevenly distributed around the globe, the scale of the Church in the UK's contribution to climate change can be a hard pill to swallow. Although most of our work has been done in the UK context, we have no reason to believe that the scale of the Church's contribution to climate change should differ elsewhere in the Global North where approaches to heating and private travel are similar.

So, how are Catholics in the Global North engaging with the issue? The evidence on this is mixed. On the one hand, some analysis suggests that the intensity and longevity of public engagement with *Laudato Si'* could end up being comparable to that of *Humanae Vitae*. On the other, some analysis

suggests that neither the encyclical itself nor its sentiments are getting much traction with many in positions of authority inside the Church herself. Our data indicate that many Catholics in England see care for creation as a central part of their own faith. However, they do not necessarily see this reflected in the institution of the Church. Parishioners' perceptions of clergy leadership on the issue are particularly poor, with parishioners in our sample reporting that, whilst Pope Francis has been influential in shaping their environmental beliefs, their parish priest had been less influential than celebrities or local government.

Turning to Catholic education, we surveyed 677 11-14-year-old pupils in Catholic schools on this issue: 86 per cent said they were worried about climate change, which is rather saddening. However, the good news is that 75 per cent felt that their actions could help prevent climate change, which suggests that a cohort of concerned but empowered young people could emerge from English Catholic schools over the coming years.

Curiously, however, only 33 per cent of the young people in Catholic schools we surveyed had heard of *Laudato Si'*. This suggests that while these young people could be motivated to take action on the ecological crisis, more could be done to show them how that action can connect to the Catholic faith.

Despite the troubling nature of some of our findings, we are seeing promising early signs at the institutional level. Two years ago, few dioceses in England and Wales had formal environmental policies, and none had decarbonisation plans. Today, more than half have environmental policies, and the Bishops' Conference has resolved that all dioceses in England and Wales should establish and report their decarbonisation targets.

Our interventions in schools have



86 per cent of Catholic pupils surveyed was worried about climate change, but 75 per cent felt that they could help prevent it... yet only a third had even heard of *Laudato Si'*...

proven effective as well. We have found that a short programme of lessons, now freely available for download along with our other guidance, dramatically increases young people's ecological self-efficacy and understanding of Catholic social teaching on the ecological crisis.

The Guardians of Creation Project itself is gaining recognition. Last month, the project lead, Dr Emma Gardner, joined Cardinal Vincent Nichols's Loyal Address to His Majesty the King to represent the Catholic Church's environmental response. This month, Dr Gardner and Bishop John Arnold, the project sponsor and England and Wales's lead bishop for environmental matters, are visiting Rome and meeting with Pope Francis. Over the coming months, we will run a series of workshops helping interested dioceses from around the globe start their journey towards decarbonisation. We welcome contact from interested parties anywhere in the world.

Dr Roland Daw is Senior Lecturer in Strategy and Entrepreneurship at St Mary's University, Twickenham.

Want to know more?

Click this panel for Guardians of Creation resources



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In brief

Vatican stays quiet over Ukraine PM

Pope Francis held a half-hour meeting with Ukraine's Prime Minister, Denys Shmyhal, at the Vatican on Thursday.

In a short statement, the Vatican remarked: "During the cordial discussions, various matters connected to the war in Ukraine were highlighted, with particular attention to the humanitarian aspects and efforts to restore peace."

In addition, the statement said, "several issues regarding the life and activity of the Church in the country were raised."

Such bland reports are usually a sign that the real matters discussed are sensitive, and would be in keeping with the pope's policy of refusing to directly criticise Russia over the conflict.

Also in attendance were Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, and Archbishop Paul R. Gallagher, the Vatican foreign minister

Shmyhal told reporters that he had asked for the Vatican's assistance in returning to Ukraine children taken by force to Russia. As many as 20,000 are feared to have been forcibly removed from Ukraine and taken to Russia.

Religious prayers 'oxygen for Church'

The prayers of nuns and monks are like oxygen for all members of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis said.

"Their prayer is the invisible force that sustains the mission," he told people at his weekly general audience April 26.

These are "sisters and brothers who renounce themselves and renounce the world to imitate Jesus on the path of poverty, chastity, obedience and to intercede on behalf of all."

They are great evangelisers, he said. "In reality, monks and nuns are the beating heart of the proclamation," he said; "their prayer is oxygen for all the members of the body of Christ... they are the true strength that carries people of God forward."

Home visit back on cards for pope

Pope Francis has said that he is hoping to visit his homeland of Argentina next year.

As he prepared for his latest overseas trip, to Hungary on 30th April, he told reporters that he hankered after a trip home, "which had been planned for 2017, but had to be cancelled because of elections."

The pandemic then made planning a major papal visit "complicated," he said, so "Argentina is still waiting. I want to go, I hope to go."

Pope confirms women will be voting at October synod

Cindy Wooden

At least three dozen women will be voting members of the assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October, Pope Francis has decided.

The Holy Father approved the extension of participation in the synodal assembly to 'non-bishops' – to include priests, deacons, consecrated men and women and lay men and women, the synod office said.

Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, relator general of the synod, told reporters April 26 that about a fifth of the synod's 370 members would not be bishops, and at least half of that group would be women.

Adding women and young people to the membership will make sure "the Church is well represented" in the prayer and discussions scheduled for 4th-29th October at the Vatican, the cardinal said. "It will be a joy to have the whole Church represented in Rome for the synod."

"As you can see, the space in the tent is being enlarged," Cardinal Mario Grech, synod secretary-general, told reporters, echoing the title that had been chosen for the working document for the just-completed continental phase of the synod. The docu-



Pilgrims holding drawings of a heart and a sign for the Sacred Heart Institute of Cadoneghe, Italy, join Pope Francis for the recitation of the 'Regina Coeli' prayer

ment said that in local and national synod listening sessions there were consistent questions about how to promote greater inclusion in the Catholic Church while staying true to Church teaching.

"The Synod of Bishops will remain a synod of bishops," Cardinal Grech

said, but it will be "enriched" by representatives of the whole Church.

The pope's decision to expand the categories of synod members, the statement added, is in continuity with the Catholic Church's growing understanding of the synodal dimension of the Church and "the consequent un-

derstanding of the institutions through which it is exercised."

Since the Synod of Bishops was re-instituted after the Second Vatican Council, the voting members of the synod have all been men. The membership was primarily cardinals and bishops.

Archbishop rejects assisted suicide after comments taken as sign of support for euthanasia

Cindy Wooden

The president of the Pontifical Academy for Life has affirmed his opposition to assisted suicide, but called on the Italian Parliament to end confusion over the issue by drawing up clear laws on when to stop end-of-life care.

His statement came after his remarks at a debate on end-of-life issues were claimed to have defended euthanasia and medically assisted suicide.

But supporters have said his comments were taken out of context, and Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia "is in full conformity with the Church's magisterium, and reaffirms his 'no' to euthanasia and assisted suicide."

Euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide are not legal in Italy. However, in 2019, the Constitutional Court ruled that those involved in an assisted suicide are not punishable when the patient is "suffering from an irreversible pathology" causing "physical and psychological suffering that is intolerable."

The court urged Italy's Parliament to take up the matter with democratic debate and clear legislation to fill the legal void so the judiciary would not be left to regulate.

But Parliament has failed to act so far on the issue.

In such a context, Archbishop Paglia

had told the debate, "it is not to be ruled out that a legal mediation is feasible in our society that would allow assisted suicide under the conditions specified by Constitutional Court."

This comment was seen as backing assisted suicide, particularly as the archbishop went on to say that he would never assist with a suicide, "but

Archbishop Paglia has said he remains fully supportive of Church opposition to assisted suicide



I understand that legal mediation may be the greatest common good concretely possible under the conditions in which we find ourselves."

The academy said that the archbishop held that "assisting a suicide is a crime, but then spelt out four specific and particular conditions in which Italian law says the crime carries no penalty."

To try to end obvious confusion over whether it was a crime or not, "the archbishop said that a legislative initiative could be possible which preserves both the criminality of the act and the conditions in which the crime carries no penalty, as the court re-

quested Parliament to legislate."

"Archbishop Paglia holds that the criminality of the act remains and is not overruled," his office said.

In addition, the experience of countries where medically 'assisted death' is permitted shows that "the pool of people admitted tends to expand; competent adult patients are joined by patients in whom decision-making capacity is impaired, sometimes severely, including psychiatric patients, children and members of the elderly with cognitive impairment."

Cases of involuntary euthanasia without true consent have thus grown, the archbishop said. "The overall result is that we are witnessing a contradictory outcome: in the name of self-determination, we are constricting the actual exercise of freedom, especially for those who are most vulnerable."

The desire of terminally ill patients to spare themselves and their families further suffering and the difficulty caregivers have in seeing their loved ones suffer have made questions about end-of-life care a pressing issue, he said.

Pain relief, palliative care and supportive accompaniment of the sick and their family members is essential, and with serious palliative therapy "the demand for euthanasia disappears, but not always."

Anglican Mass in Catholic church 'a mistake'

A "breakdown in communication" led to permission being given to a group of Anglican clergy to celebrate the Eucharist in Rome's Basilica of St John Lateran, Auxiliary Bishop Guerino Di Tora of Rome has said.

Anglican Bishop Jonathan Baker of Fulham, a suffragan bishop with responsibility for Anglo-Catholic parishes in the dioceses of London and Southwark that have requested not to be served by a woman priest or bishop, celebrated the liturgy on 18th April as part of a conference in Rome for Anglo-Catholic clergy.

Bishop Di Tora expressed "deep regret" after a group of about 50 priests, accompanied by their bishop, all from the Anglican Communion, celebrated at the main altar of Rome's cathedral, contravening canonical norms.

Benedictine Father Martin Browne, an official at the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, said that "everyone acted in good faith and without any intent to cause offence or embarrassment."

Vatican norms don't rule out services in a Catholic Church by denominations not in full communion with the Church, but they tend to occur when no church is available. But Rome does have an Anglican parish

"One presumes that the request to celebrate Mass was granted in that spirit of reciprocity and welcoming," he said, as the Church of England occasionally welcomes groups from other churches, including the Catholic Church, to celebrate the Eucharist."

New deal to help Church beat abuse

The heads of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors and a section of the Dicastery for Evangelisation have signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at improving assistance to victims of abuse, bishops and local churches both in mission countries and emerging communities.

Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley of Boston, president of the commission, and Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, pro-prefect for the first evangelisation and the new particular Churches section of the dicastery, signed the agreement at the Vatican last week.

The enhanced collaboration will include sharing resources, information and formation and "promoting concrete structural change to build a culture of safeguarding," according to Vatican News.

Cardinal O'Malley said, according to Pope Francis' new mandate, the papal commission's new role is "to promote a culture of safeguarding in all the dicasteries of the Curia. The agreement with the Dicastery for Evangelization is just the first step of evangelization that culture and "we'll be working with other dicasteries in a similar fashion."

Pope hears call for Church to heighten its focus on families

The ministry of lay Catholics, whether instituted by the Church or inspired by the Holy Spirit to serve the needs of others, flows from baptism and a recognition that every Christian is called to take part in the mission of the Church, Pope Francis said.

"All ministries are an expression of the sole mission of the Church, and they are all forms of service to others," the pope said during a meeting with members of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life, which was holding its plenary assembly at the Vatican.

Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, prefect of the dicastery, said by focusing on "laity and ministry in a synodal Church," members of the dicastery discussed ways "to promote a readiness for service that stems from the many gifts and charisms that the Holy Spirit arouses in the people of God, and which give rise to ministries for the benefit of all."

"In particular, we discussed the challenges of those experiencing marital crises of all kinds, which involve the consequent short-circuiting of the transmission of the faith," he said.

"Today there is a greater need than ever, in the area of family ministry, for a specific ministry, for an authentic closeness and witness on the part of



Pope Francis greets Santiago Pérez de Camino Gaisse, a staff member of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life, Leticia Sánchez de León and their children during an audience at the Vatican

married couples at the service of families for the pastoral care of those experiencing crises and problems."

While all ministry in the Church, lay or ordained, begins from the call of baptism, Pope Francis said that in the specific area of a Catholic couple's service to other couples in need, ministry has its "sacramental foundation in marriage" as well.

When most Catholics hear the phrase "lay ministries" they think of those formally instituted, like lector,

acolyte and catechist, the pope said.

"These ministries are characterised by a public intervention of the Church and a certain visibility. They are connected with ordained ministry, because they involve participation in the task of the priest, even though they do not require ordination."

But, he said, "the instituted ministries do not represent the full extent of the ministeriality of the Church, which is broader and, ever since the first Christian communities, regards

all the faithful."

Many of those other ministries, he said, while not requiring a formal institution by the Church, are, nevertheless, inspired by the Holy Spirit for the good of the Church and the world.

"First a charism appears, inspired by the Spirit; then, the Church acknowledges this charism as a useful service to the community; finally, in a third moment, it is introduced and a specific ministry spreads," he said.

Laypeople participate in "the prophetic and regal function of Christ" when, for example, they minister to the poor or to migrants, he said.

"In these areas of charity, many services can arise that take the form of genuine ministries," he said. "It is a broad space of commitment for those who wish to live in a practical way, in relation to others, the closeness of Jesus that they have often experienced firsthand. The ministry thus becomes not only a simple social commitment, but also something beautiful, a true Christian witness."

However, ministry must never become "self-referential," he said. "I get angry when I see lay ministers who are 'puffed up' by their ministry. They seem to be default priests," the pope said. "Please, clean up this problem."

Musk's Twitter purges 'blue checks' from Pope Francis

Megan Marley and Rob Beswick

On the very day Elon Musk launched SpaceX rocket Starship on its ill-fated maiden voyage toward space, that final frontier, Musk's company Twitter did boldly go purging blue verification check marks from users who had not signed up for its paid Twitter Blue service by 20th April. One of those to lose its highly valued accreditation was Pope Francis.

The nine papal Twitter accounts, first set up under Benedict XVI in 2012, tweet a daily message from the Holy Father in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Latin, French, Polish, Arabic and German. They have a combined total of 53 million followers

"(H)e unverified the pope! we're doing another avignon baby," quipped Twitter user Anthony Oliveira (@meakooa), comparing the Twitter CEO's actions to the 1378-1417 Great Western Schism, when the Catholic Church had at one time three men alleging to be the true pope – one in Rome, one in Avignon, France, and the other in Pisa, Italy. That papal verification issue was settled at the Council of Constance with the election of Pope Martin V.

"When blue smoke emerges from the Vatican that's when we know they verified a new pope," replied Niko

Stratis (@nikostratis).

"Counting down the days until Mass on Sunday has a second collection for the Pope's Twitter Verification fund," said another Twitter user Jim R. Lynch (@JimRLynch), in a reference to the monthly fee 'celebrities' have to pay to have their online presence authenticated by the social media giant.

The Vatican press office, noting that the nine @Pontifex accounts have a total of more than 53 million followers, said that it understood Twitter was changing some of its policies. But it added, "The Holy See trusts that they will include certification of the authenticity of accounts."

That same day, following the loss of its blue checkmark, each papal account received a new grey verification checkmark designating 'a government or multilateral organisation account.'

The blue checkmark after a Twitter user's name originally served as a way to let people that the account was authentic. Accounts had to be 'authentic, notable and active' and submit specific verification information to fit a specific category of verification.

But Twitter owner Musk said that the original way verification of high-

profile accounts was given out was "corrupt and nonsensical" and vowed to remove the ticks.

However, there is some controversy over who receives a Twitter endorsement after a number of 'celebrities' with a million-plus followers revealed that they had received a Twitter blue tick without paying for the privilege.

US author Stephen King revealed that he had received one on Elon Musk's personal approval, after publically saying he would never pay for one. And BBC football pundit Robbie Savage revealed to listeners on his BBC Radio 5 Live 606 phone-in show that he had received a blue tick free – "on account of me being so high-profile, with my 1.3 million followers."

Quite why the Holy Father hasn't received similar treatment is unclear, but it does open the possibility that future parody accounts claiming to be on behalf of Pope Francis could cause problems for the faithful. "It is too easy to set up an account, claiming to be Pope Francis or the Vatican, and write all sorts of nonsense," said a member of the Vatican communications department. "We will have to keep a close eye on Twitter and see if we can stop any false accounts before they cause upset or confusion."



This is not an unlikely outcome: the loss of authentication has led to a slew of parody accounts being set up overnight after high-profile users refused to pay Musk's fee.

One of the worst affected was former Democrat Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, who awoke on 21st April to find that a new Twitter account in her name had announced a fresh bid for the White House.

It was soon taken down but

highlighted the difficulty people will have in the future in differentiating real accounts from imposters.

The new system made no sense, said John Grosso, digital editor of National Catholic Reporter, a leading US Church newspaper. "If anyone can pay for verification, it diminishes the value of the checkmark, or the value that the checkmark had: the ability to tell legitimate news sources and people from non-legitimate ones."

In brief

Spanish Church asks others to join in tackling abuse

Spain's Catholic bishops have adopted guidelines for tackling sexual abuse by clergy, while also urging the prohibition of surrogacy and restating the Church's political independence in key upcoming elections.

"It is not enough to ask for forgiveness: we want this scourge to disappear from our society, and are therefore continuing to collaborate with judges, prosecutors and the ombudsman, providing all the information we have and activating our protocols," said Cardinal Juan Omella of Barcelona, president of the bishops' conference, who attended his first Rome meeting April 24 as a new member of the pope's Council of Cardinals – the pontiff's advisers.

"However, we regret this painful issue is not being addressed in its global dimension but insistently analysed as a drama exclusively within the ambit of the Church. The Church confesses its sin, but deplores that an issue affecting many other sectors of society is not being properly exposed, so a solution can be sought which encompasses the full extent of this social problem."

On a separate note, the bishops' conference called for a ban on surrogate motherhood in Spain, adding that the "development of healthy democracy" required that "no individual, majority or state" should attempt to "create, modify or destroy" established values, particularly centred on the family model.

DeSantis sends tough signal on crime

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has reinforced his hard-line Republican characteristics by signing into law a bill that will eliminate the state's requirement for juries to agree unanimously on whether a death sentence should be the punishment for convicted felons in capital punishment cases.

The legislation, which has met criticism from the state's bishops, lowers the number of jurors needed to hand down a death sentence to the lowest threshold of any US state, from 12 to eight.

DeSantis said, "Once a defendant in a capital case is found guilty by a unanimous jury, one juror should not be able to veto a capital sentence."

Michael Sheedy, Florida Catholic Conference executive director, called it "stunning" that Florida lawmakers "would weaken a common-sense law passed just six years ago that required unanimous agreement by a jury in order to sentence someone to death."

Biden confirms re-election plan as Trump pours scorn on 'calamitous presidency'

Catholics split over news: some welcome Biden's 'steady hand' over Trump turmoil, but criticism by pro-life groups of 'most pro-abortion president ever' shows he has not secured the faith vote

Kate Scanlon & Rob Beswick

President Joe Biden has confirmed that he will seek a second term in the White House – and success in the 2024 vote would make him the first Catholic to serve twice in the Oval Office.

In a video message, Biden said, "When I ran for president four years ago, I said we are in a battle for the soul of America. And we still are."

"The question we are facing is whether in the years ahead we have more freedom or less freedom. More rights or fewer," Biden said. "I know what I want the answer to be. This is not a time to be complacent. That's why I'm running for re-election."

Amid video images from the 6th January 2021 assault on the US Capitol and of Biden's likely rivals, former President Donald Trump and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, speaking to supporters, Biden said, "MAGA extremists are lining up to take on those bedrock freedoms."

MAGA – the acronym popularised by Donald Trump in his presidential campaign, standing for 'Make America Great Again' – is strongly linked to the chaos in Washington in 2021 and what many see as a riotous attempt to stop Biden taking over as president. Trump is thought to be Biden's most likely challenger in 2024 at this stage, despite currently being cited in a number of legal cases, including fraud and sexual assault.

Biden heavily criticised his predecessor in his launch video, claiming he would cut Social Security, reduce taxes for the very wealthy, ban books, and abortion and same-sex marriage.

Biden's announcement was warmly welcomed by some in the Church, who appreciate the calm way he has dealt with issues including the pandemic, foreign affairs and economic

President Biden pictured in a screen grab of his official launch video



development. However, his support for abortion and increasingly harsh actions toward migrants at the southern border have come under fire from some Catholics.

Earlier this year US bishops criticised Biden's plan to use Title 42, a pandemic-era rule permitting immigration officials at the Mexican border to block migrants seeking asylum from entry previously implemented by the Trump administration. The Church also pushed back on comments made by Biden in which he suggested bishops were not calling for a ban on taxpayer funding for elective abortion, as they have called for such a ban.

Kristi Hamrick, vice president of media and policy for Students for Life Action, responded to the news by saying Biden is "the most pro-abortion president of all time, at least in terms of his policy and personnel," and put his support for abortion "front and centre in his announcement video, which should be a message to every presidential candidate."

"Abortion is a crucial issue in this election, and every candidate must be prepared to address how we bring hope and a future to all our citizens, born and preborn," Hamrick said. "Anyone running for federal office will need to have federal plans, so that Joe Biden's aggressive abortion agenda can be confronted by candidates who want to protect life."

However, Stephen Schneck, a Catholic activist and retired Catholic University of America professor, said that Biden offered a "no drama" presidency, built on "tested, and confident leadership, both internationally and domestically."

He added: "We need a steady hand at the top. After COVID and weekly existential crises under the former president, Americans yearn for a return to normalcy."

Opinion polls suggest Americans

aren't eager for Biden's re-election, however: only half of registered Democrats want him to run, and a third of Americans overall.

Biden's age is one stumbling block: he is 81 in November, and if he is re-elected would be sworn in as president in his 83rd year, making him by far the oldest president ever.

Ironically, while the second oldest president in office was Ronald Reagan, who left the White House when 77, if Biden were to be beaten by Trump he would become the second oldest president, returning to the White House at the age of 78.

Donald Trump said Biden had "a calamitous and failed presidency," and criticised his record on immigration and crime. Trump also repeated his unfounded claims that his previous contest against Biden was "rigged."

The claim has been rejected in the courts.

The former GOP leader claimed he would "rescue our economy, crush inflation, stop unauthorised migration at the Southern border" – which he called an "invasion" – and "prevent World War III from happening," a reference to Trump's opposition to current US support for Ukraine which has allowed that nation to resist Russia's full invasion.

Trump has previously stated he "will have it (the war) solved in 24 hours" if he becomes president again.

Trump faces a few declared candidates, including Nikki Haley, Vivek Ramaswamy and Asa Hutchinson, but his biggest opponent appears to be Floridian Ron DeSantis, who is seen as a likely contender for the 2024 Republican presidential primary but has not declared his candidacy.

If DeSantis were to secure his party's nomination, the election in 2024 could be between two Catholics.

Trump loses pro-life support over new abortion view

Donald Trump has had his pro-life credentials challenged after Catholics pushed back on his argument that abortion should be left to the states after the Supreme Court ruling 'Dobbs' that overturned Roe v Wade in 2022.

Susan B. Anthony of Pro-Life America, a group which works to elect pro-life candidates and which previously backed the one-time Republican president, said Trump's new campaign line was "untenable."

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of SBA Pro-Life America, said "Trump's assertion that the Supreme Court returned the issue of abortion solely to the states is a completely inaccurate reading of the Dobbs decision and is

a morally indefensible position for a self-proclaimed pro-life presidential candidate to hold."

Previously Dannenfelser previously praised Trump for governing as "the most pro-life president in history."

Last June the Supreme Court ruled in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* and overturned its 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision that had made abortion a constitutional right, and returned the matter of abortion to state legislatures.

"President Trump believes that the Supreme Court, led by the three justices which he supported, was right when it ruled this is an issue that should be decided at the state level,"

a spokesperson for the Trump campaign said.

"Republicans have been trying to get this done for 50 years, but were unable to do so," Trump campaign spokesman Steven Cheung said. "President Trump, the most pro-life president in history, got it done. He will continue these policies when re-elected to the White House. Like President Reagan before him, President Trump supports exceptions for rape, incest and life of the mother."

The campaign statement was noteworthy as Trump has remained quiet on abortion since the Dobbs ruling, telling supporters that he does not wish to engage on the issue. On his

Truth Social platform Trump blamed pro-life voters for the Republican Party's underperformance in the 2022 midterm election cycle.

Dannenfelser argued in response to the campaign's statement, "Life is a matter of human rights, not states' rights."

"Saying that the issue should only be decided at the states is an endorsement of brutal late-term abortions in states like California, Illinois, New York and New Jersey," she said. "The only way to save these children is through federal protections, such as a 15-week federal minimum standard when the unborn child can feel excruciating pain."

US court protects abortion drug

The Supreme Court has safeguarded access to a widely used abortion drug by freezing lower-court rulings that placed restrictions on medication abortion. The future of the drug had been called into question after a Texas judge sought to invalidate its long-standing approval. The new ruling is a “striking victory for the Biden administration and its allies” who “suffered a withering defeat at the Supreme Court last year when the conservative majority reversed the *Roe v. Wade* precedent”, said CNN.

Mass graves ‘from Kenyan cult’

Police in Kenya have recovered 58 bodies from mass graves thought to be followers of a Christian cult who believed they would go to Heaven if they starved themselves.

The leader of the cult, Paul Makenzie Nthenge “is thought to have encouraged his followers to starve themselves to death to ‘meet Jesus’”, reported The Times. Interior Minister, Kithure Kindiki, said the “horrendous incident must lead not only to the most severe punishment of the perpetrator of the atrocity” but “tighter regulation” of “every church, mosque, temple or synagogue”.

£55bn run on Credit Suisse

Beleagured banking giant Credit Suisse saw 61.2 billion Swiss francs (£55.2bn) leave the bank during a first-quarter collapse this year that culminated in its emergency rescue by domestic rival UBS. The announcement “gives an insight into the scale of the bank run that caused the 167-year-old lender to fail.

Appeals for peace as Sudan slips further into anarchy

Pope Francis has appealed for an end to violence in Sudan and a return to dialogue as a ceasefire agreed between political rivals for the control of the country, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, often referred to as Hemedti, came to an end.

“I invite everyone to pray for our Sudanese brothers and sisters,” he told a 30,000-strong crowd gathered in St Peter’s Square.

The pope had already expressed his concern about Sudan after fighting between forces loyal to the two generals began on 13th April: since then hundreds of civilians have been killed and the country is slipping into anarchy as violence, shootings and bombings were reported across the capital Khartoum and elsewhere.

Electricity, internet and access to food and water have been cut off for many of the people.

Pope Francis said: “Unfortunately, the situation in Sudan remains grave, and therefore I renew my appeal for an end to the violence as soon as possible and for a return to the path of dialogue.”

The UN refugee agency, UNHCR, reported that between 10,000 and 20,000 people had fled Sudan’s western Darfur region in the previous few days and sought refuge in neighbouring Chad, which already hosts more than 370,000 Sudanese refugees. Chad is one of the world’s poorest nations and has no infrastructure to accommodate the new arrivals, however.

The majority of those arriving are women and children, who are cur-



British citizens pictured on a crowded emergency evacuation airlift flight by the RAF, from Khartoum to Cyprus

rently sheltering out in the open, with the UNHCR calling for international aid to provide water, food, shelter and basic health care.

The focus for the UK, the US and other western nations has been on evacuating its citizens amid often chaotic scenes.

The British evacuation mission had lifted over 600 people to safety by Thursday amid warnings there is no guarantee on further flights if the ceasefire were not to be extended.

More than 2,000 British nationals in Sudan have registered with the

FCDO under evacuation plans, but thousands more could be in the country. Foreign Secretary James Cleverly tweeted: ‘The 72-hour ceasefire in Sudan ends April 27...we cannot guarantee how many further flights will depart once the ceasefire ends.’

Africa minister Andrew Mitchell told Sky News that if the combatants don’t lay down their arms and return to barracks, “there’s going to be a humanitarian catastrophe in Sudan.”

The first British evacuees reaching safety told reporters of their relief at reaching safety from a “nightmare”.

Speaking outside the airport, one man said: “It’s absolutely fantastic to be back. It’s been a nightmare. We’ve never seen anything like it before.

“We saw it on the television before but we never thought it was going to happen to a peaceful country like Sudan.”

“Khartoum is like a ghost city, everyone is leaving Khartoum now.

“We are very grateful to the British servicemen and women who risked their lives to come to Sudan and help us out.”

Sudan nightmare’s origins: pg 10

Russia accused of Catholic persecution after seizing church in occupied Ukraine

Gina Christian

Russian forces have reportedly seized a Catholic church in Ukraine in the port city of Berdyansk after troops stormed the city’s Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The church has been described by local Ukrainians as a place where ‘the needy could receive support, and residents and guests of the city had the opportunity to hear organ music.’

Since ‘the very beginning of the (Russian) occupation, the church provided shelter and help to all who needed it,’ a spokeswoman said.

Felix Corley, editor of Forum 18 News Service, which monitors violations of religious and other freedoms in several former Soviet nations, told news agencies that the seizure of the church has not been confirmed “but wouldn’t be out of line with what the Russians are doing” in Ukraine.

The church itself was empty and the last priest to be based there, Fr Mateusz Godek, is now serving St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Pavlohrad, some 180 miles north in



The Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Ukraine’s Dnipropetrovsk region.

In November 2022, two Redemptorist priests who had been based at the parish, Father Bohdan Galeta and Father Ivan Levitskyi, were kidnapped by Russian militia. The priests served both the Latin-rite and Ukrainian Catholic communities.

While their status and whereabouts remain unknown, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, head of the global Ukrainian Catholic Church, said in December that he had learned the priests were being “tortured without mercy” and appealed for their release.

ISW, which has closely monitored Russian aggression against Ukraine for several years, said “Russian occupation authorities are continuing to oppress Roman Catholics in occupied Ukraine, likely in an effort to suppress Ukrainian religious institutions beyond Moscow’s control.”

In its latest report ISW assessed that Russia is “committing gross violations of religious freedom” in Ukraine as part of its full-scale invasion, with some 66,000 war crimes reported since February 2022. Ukraine has filed charges of genocide by Russia with the International Court of Justice. More than 19,300 Ukrainian children have been abducted by Russia over the past year, Ukraine’s government said.

ISW found that Russia is persecuting

believers from a number of denominations in Ukraine, including the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) and the Ukrainian Catholic and Roman Catholic Churches, as well as Baptist, Lutheran, evangelical Protestant, Mennonite, Pentecostal and other Christian communities. Muslim and Jehovah’s Witness congregations also have been targeted.

Among the violations are the capture and killing of clergy; looting, vandalism and destruction of houses of worship; and raids, searches and detention of congregants.

Several places of worship have been closed or nationalized, particularly those of the OCU, created in 2018 after breaking with the Russian Orthodox Church’s (ROC) Moscow Patriarchate, which is closely aligned with the Kremlin. ROC Patriarch Kirill, a staunch ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, has blessed his country’s invasion of Ukraine, assuring his followers that “sacrifice in the course of carrying out your military duty washes away all sins.”

Suspects burned to death in Haiti

At least 12 suspected criminals have been beaten to death and burned in Haiti. The country’s “tailspin” into “humanitarian crisis and bloodshed” saw “bloodied men being forced to lie on the asphalt by rifle-wielding police before bystanders piled tyres on top of them, doused them with petrol and set them alight”, said The Guardian.

Haiti has descended into increasing lawlessness since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021.

Putin spokesperson’s son joins mercenaries

The son of President Putin’s spokesperson has been fighting in Ukraine with the controversial Wagner mercenary group.

British-educated Nikolai Peskov, son of Dmitry Peskov, joined up with his father’s approval and received a medal for bravery during a six-month tour that just ended, he said. Wagner is called a ‘private military company’ in Russia but it has international notoriety for alleged war crimes and other abuses in Ukraine.

Iraq's Christians are still living in fear, 20 years after invasion

It's 20 years since US-led forces invaded Iraq to overthrow its leader, Saddam Hussain. Since then the situation for many religious minorities in the country has worsened, as Dale Gavlak of OSV News discovered

Twenty years after the US-led invasion of Iraq started and six years after Iraq declared victory over the Islamic State, whose attacks started in 2014, the country's religious minorities are still trying to surmount challenges.

According to the UN International Office for Migration (IOM), more than 200,000 Yazidis who survived the Islamic State's brutality are still displaced, living in and outside camps across Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region. The Islamic State abducted thousands of women and girls as sex slaves and massacred thousands of men.

Christians in the Kurdistan region say that while they appreciate the relative stability and security in which they now live, they feel apprehensive about the future because of the recent history of violence in Iraq that forced them to pull up roots.

"My family once lived in the capital, Baghdad, but with the Church bombings and sectarian attacks on Christians and other minorities after the 2003 war, we had to move up north to Dohuk," an Iraqi Armenian man named Arsen said.

This Kurdish region also hosts Assyrians and other Christians, some of whom escaped IS, which attacked Mosul and the Nineveh Plains towns. In addition, camps for internally displaced Yazidis, who were targeted by IS militants for death, sexual slavery and forced labour, dot the area.

It is said that such camps are to be closed by the year's end, but many wonder where this will leave the Yazidis, who feel that their own Government betrayed them by failing to protect them from Islamic State atrocities.

"How can camps be closed when thousands of families have been living there for a long time? It's like taking them to the streets. There needs to be a viable alternative," Fr Emanuel Youkhana, a priest of the Assyrian Church of the East, said.

The Yazidis with whom OSV News spoke added that they cannot return to Sinjar, their ancestral land where many of them lived at the time of the IS attacks because their homes and businesses were destroyed.

"There is no security, or livelihood possibilities there. Instead, there are a variety of military forces in Sinjar: whether it's the Kurdish PYD (Democratic Union Party), Yazidi unit fighters, the Iran-backed Shiite Hashd al-Shaabi militia, Iraqi army. There are also Turkish airstrikes and an open border to Syria. I share their fear with them for Sinjar," Fr Youkhana said.

In March, the Government of Iraqi Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani allocated \$38.5 million to rebuild Sinjar and villages in the Nineveh Plains.

Fr Youkhana runs the Christian Aid Program Northern Iraq (CAPNI) for displaced Iraqis around the city of Dohuk. This Catholic organisation also rebuilds homes and helps to restore livelihoods in several towns in the Nineveh Plains following its destruction.

"We are motivated by our Christian values because we are a Christian faith-based organisation and the basis of our work is love. In the case of Iraq, to share love means that you have to take care of people in need. And so, we address the needs of these vulnerable communities," he said.

CAPNI aids the displaced in more than 25 remote villages in the Duhok area by providing basic health

checks and treating chronic diseases. It is also helping to repair damaged homes.

Over the past five years, CAPNI also has rehabilitated more than 1,450 houses, 32 schools, nine churches, and 200 shops in the Nineveh Plains towns. Now, it is focused in the next three years on encouraging sustainable development by providing livelihood opportunities to unemployed youth and vocational training for others.

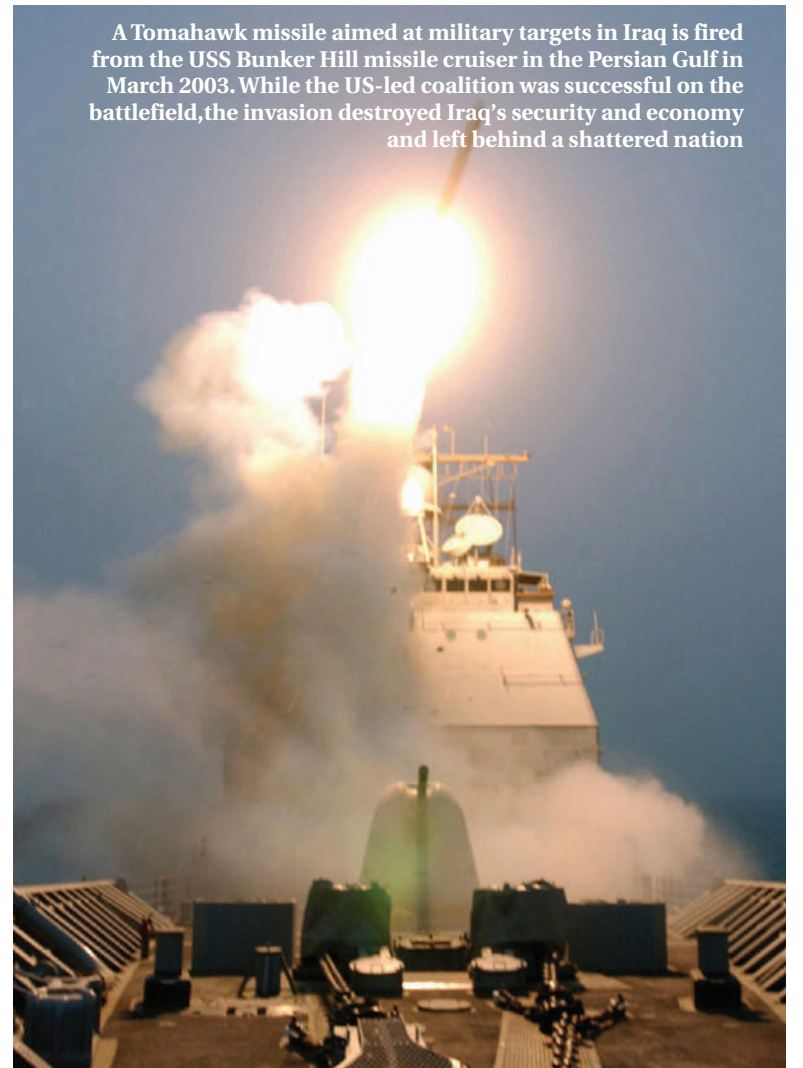
"We are trying to help people have a stable and sustainable income," Fr Youkhana said. The projects require funding of \$3.3 million annually, but one challenge is funds as the war in Ukraine persists.

Microloans are available for those with business skills and a business plan either in agriculture, or in towns where there is a need for mobile phone maintenance, air-conditioning installation, car mechanics, to name a few enterprises. Grants also are available to female-headed households to start businesses often at home.

Fr Youkhana pointed to a project where Yazidis are working in eight greenhouses provided by CAPNI where a variety of vegetables can be produced even out of season, including, for the first time, broccoli. "They are able to receive a better income as a result of the project," he said.

CAPNI also is engaged in peace-building and advocacy work for minorities in Iraq. "What happened

A Tomahawk missile aimed at military targets in Iraq is fired from the USS Bunker Hill missile cruiser in the Persian Gulf in March 2003. While the US-led coalition was successful on the battlefield, the invasion destroyed Iraq's security and economy and left behind a shattered nation



from the Islamic State invasion cannot be forgotten. It should be addressed openly to learn from it, to avoid it ever happening," Fr Youkhana said of the Dutch government-funded project aiding those on the Nineveh Plains.

Iraqi Chaldean Catholic Church leaders, such as Cardinal Louis Sako, patriarch of Chaldean Catholics, and Archbishop Bashar Warda of Erbil have repeatedly urged authorities to protect and respect all of the Iraqi citizens.

On the recent Iraqi National Day for Tolerance – 6th March – adopted by the Government to

commemorate the historic visit of Pope Francis in 2021 to the country, Fr Youkhana made high-level presentations, including to the Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid, where he warned of the worrying trend of Iraq's religious and ethnic minorities leaving the country.

"Once Iraq loses its minorities, the majority is no more the majority," Fr Youkhana said. "We will continue to advocate for as long as it takes."

Revising Iraq's schools curricula to remove prejudice and encourage respect for all of Iraq's rich ethnic and religious minorities, too, is part of CAPNI's work.



Members of the Iraqi Special Operations Forces take their positions during clashes with the militant Islamic State in the city of Ramadi in June, 2014. Many of those who survived the Islamic State's brutality are still displaced, living in and outside camps across Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region

TALKING POINT

UN chief begs world to remember Somalia, as he fears millions at risk

In Somalia, 8.3 million people are in urgent need of assistance due to widespread drought that has displaced 1.4 million people, most of whom are women and children, according to the United Nations.

The world body also cautioned that as food prices rise, so do the rates of hunger and malnutrition in the East African nation.

“Today, the situation is once again alarming,” warned U.N. Security-General António Guterres, during a visit to Mogadishu, Somalia’s capital.

“Climate change is causing chaos. Somalia has experienced five consecutive poor rainy seasons, and this is unprecedented.”

He noted, “Poor and vulnerable communities are pushed by the drought to the brink of starvation, and the situation can get worse.”

The UN chief’s warnings came after a joint UN-Somali government report indicated that as many as 43,000 people, half of them children under 5, died in Somalia last year from hunger, and that anywhere between 18,000 and 34,000 more people were likely to die there as well before June.

Those numbers might be even higher, said Kev del Castillo, who oversees emergency response and recovery programs for Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Somalia.

“Too many children are dying ... and they will continue to die if the international community doesn’t pay attention,” he said.

CRS, one of the Catholic Church’s overseas aid agencies, is doing what it can to help, del Castillo said. Its humanitarian aid programmes had reached more than 1 million people across Somalia’s most vulnerable districts, mostly with health, nutrition and water services.

The need was especially great in Somalia’s various camps for internally displaced persons, “where people are living under barely survivable conditions and with substandard resources,” he said. Del Castillo, who is based in Somalia, described seeing “children barely holding onto their life, in their mother’s arms.”

“Our main goal throughout this drought has been to prevent deaths and slow down the deterioration of conditions,” del Castillo said, adding CRS also was training local community health care workers and personnel to assure longtime sustainability of its programmes.

The UN secretary-general’s recent visit to Somalia was “one important step” toward increasing international attention on what was happening there, he said, but more was needed.

“Many people have written off Somalia as a place that will always struggle for stability, and some people don’t feel the need to support



a place that they might view as hopeless,” said del Castillo.

Among reasons for hope, he noted, were the weakening in the country of the Islamist al-Shabaab militia, which has terrorised Somalia for years, the increased control of the government, and the opening of the country’s economy “to more opportunities.”

Del Castillo said Somalia “has the potential, but it needs international support and the investment that has been missing for too long.”

Bishop Giorgio Bertin, who has been apostolic administrator of Mogadishu since 1990 and is president of Caritas Somalia, said that Guterres’ visit to Somalia “should help not to forget” the crisis in the country, at a time of other major world crises – such as the war in Ukraine and the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey.

With its limited budget from Italy and some private donors, the bishop said Caritas Somalia was helping approximately 11,000 Somalis, mostly women and children, with water, shelter, and latrines. It was looking at possibly building a school in the Bakool region, but insecurity is “still a problem” due to a continued presence of al-Shabaab.

“We are trying to arrange a kind of

more permanent presence” in Somalia, said Bishop Bertin, who operates out of the tiny neighbouring nation of Djibouti. He has headed the Diocese of Djibouti since 2001.

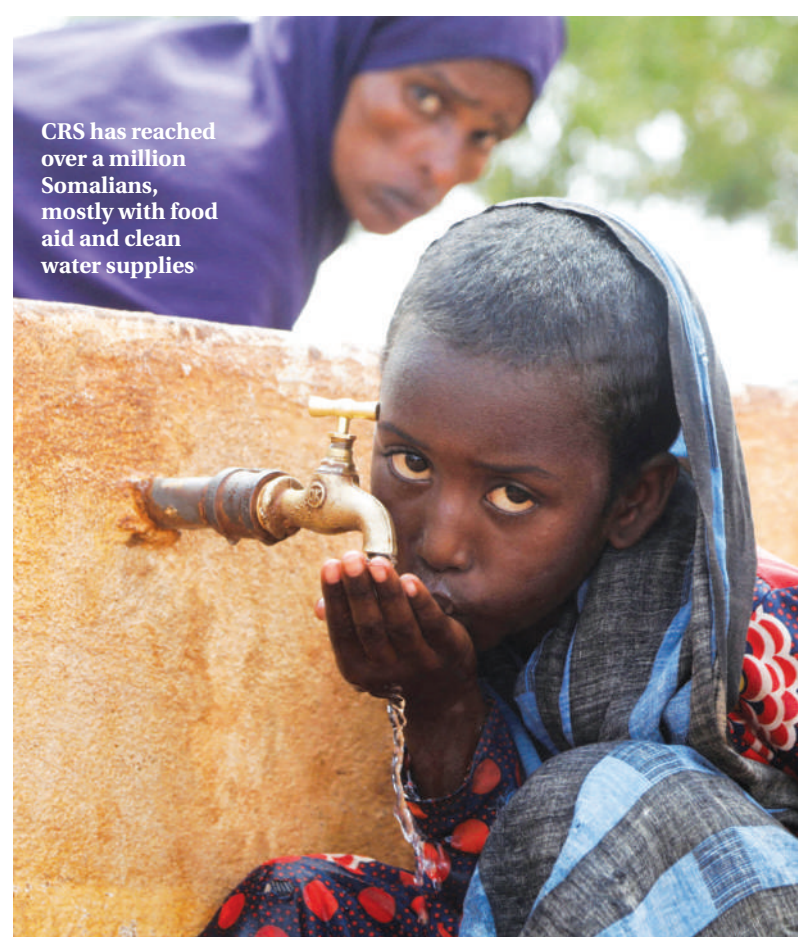
In efforts to expand Caritas assistance to Somalia, Bishop Bertin said he met regularly with Somali officials, including that country’s National Assembly president and the minister of religious affairs last December in Mogadishu.

He just returned from a three-day meeting in Kenya on repatriating migrants and refugees, where he discussed various ways of assistance with Somali representatives.

“I can say that at the individual level there are good people and good minds among the Somalis, but I would implore that they should try to co-operate among themselves ... and also with the different institutions being reborn from a federal state,” said the bishop.

CRS’ Del Castillo, meanwhile, implored the world to do more to “close the door on three decades of turmoil and devastation” in Somalia.

“My request to the world: to give Somalia a chance, to pay attention to its needs and to understand that this country is full of good people,” he said, “who have been faced with a lifetime of challenges.”



CRS has reached over a million Somalis, mostly with food aid and clean water supplies

HEART OF THE MATTER

JAMIE STUART WOLFE

Welcome, new Catholics! Sorry about the mess...

12 simple steps to help converts get comfortable with their new Church – from someone who has trod this path before

Becoming a Catholic was one of the best decisions I ever made, and certainly the most life-changing. But in truth I had only a vague notion of the deep waters I was wading into. What would have been helpful over the past 40 years? Here are a dozen things I wish I had heard and internalised sooner, and some concrete items that established Catholics ought to consider.

1) Formation never ends, but you'll be (mostly) doing it yourself from here on in.

As St. John Paul II said, "All formation ... is ultimately a self-formation. No one can replace us in the responsible freedom that we have as individual persons" (*Pastores dabo vobis*, No. 69).

The vast majority of Catholic Churches offer a guided process of intense catechesis and prayer aimed towards those preparing for baptism, confirmation and Eucharist – and conversion. After that, the training wheels come off and you are ready to ride. But remember: the best way to keep your own faith growing is to contribute to the formation of others.

2) There are some people who seem ready to canonise new Catholics while the chrism is still wet on their foreheads, and others who are equally ready to view them with doubt.

Worse than either, though, are those who will push new Catholics into leadership roles too quickly. Don't ask.

And don't say yes. New Catholics need to allow themselves some time and space to acclimate.

3) Those who enter the Church and have gone through a guided process of catechesis probably know more about the Catholic faith than at least 75 per cent of their co-religionists.

If you're a cradle Catholic, don't let that discourage you. If you're a convert, don't let it make you feel proud – or frustrated. It's a sad reality that the formation catechumens and candidates receive is almost always superior to what is provided to everyone else.

4) The Church is even bigger than you thought, and it's easy to get lost.



Newbies would do well to find a few tour guides who can show them around what they know and love, but without pushing it as the best-or-only path for everyone. Each of us should discover our leading grace. That means trying on different types of Catholic spiritualities – and there are dozens – until we find one that fits. All of us should be careful not to impose a veneer of monastic spirituality over our secular lives. Our task, as St. Francis de Sales puts it in his *Introduction to the Devout Life*, is to 'be who you are and be that well.'

5) When the Church hurts and/or disappoints you – and she will – love her anyway.

Popes, bishops, priests, deacons, religious and fellow parishioners will all fall short. Some will admit their errors and do what they can to correct them. Others will ignore bad behavior and continue to justify it or cover it up. Loving the Church

doesn't mean excusing anything that is contrary to the Gospel. It does mean avoiding anger and the desire for revenge.

Speaking or acting prophetically can be costly. Integrity, however, is always worth the price.

6) There are all kinds of self-described Catholics.

Resist the temptation to hyphenate yourself and go narrow. Instead, enjoy the fact that there's room for all valid forms of authentic



Becoming a Catholic was one of the best decisions I ever made, but in truth I had only a vague notion of the deep waters I was wading into...

Christian discipleship in the Church. That's what makes us catholic!

7) Find a spiritual director and a posse of go-to saints who can be your touchstones.

Make holiness your goal. Be patient with yourself but persevere. Recognise that the things most likely to keep you from becoming a saint are deficits in human formation, and we all have them.

8) Root yourself in a parish and decide to live with the things you don't like.

In the great scheme of things, personal preferences, tastes and opinions don't matter. What does matter is joining and participating; if there are things that you don't enjoy as much, accept that you can't have everything.

9) Keep praying.

When it seems like no one is listening, pray more.

10) Don't expect Catholic life to be

easy. Remember: we are following someone who was persecuted and put to death when he didn't deserve it.

11) Don't become a Sacristy Rat.

Participate in the mission of the church to be Christ in the world. Those who never leave the loft will always be preaching to the choir.

12) Faith is personal, not institutional.

Keep Jesus first. Not even the church can (or should) take his place. The Eucharist draws people to the church and the Eucharist is what keeps us here. Nothing else comes close.

Sometimes we forget that while the Church is a treasury of God's grace, it was meant to be lived in. Welcome home, new Catholics, (and sorry about the mess).

Jaymie Stuart Wolfe is a sinner, Catholic convert, freelance writer, wife and mum of eight grown children. She writes a biweekly column, 'Called to Holiness'.

VATICAN LETTER

JUDITH SUDILOVSKY

Holocaust survivor pleads for world to open its heart to today's refugees

When the raging ocean finally spit young Regine Canetti out, lifting her up a huge wave onto the thorny coast of the Turkish town of Silivri, she was stunned and shaken, her clothing fairly ripped from her body by the stormy sea.

But this isn't the story of a modern migrant daring to take on the Mediterranean in a bid to find safety; rather, this scene was played out in December 1940, as 19-year-old Canetti, her parents and younger brother were escaping from the Nazis on the wood-hulled schooner name *Salvador* along with 350 other Bulgarian Jewish refugees.

They had originally left the Bulgarian Black Sea port of Varna on 3rd December, with 10 times the ship's capacity for passengers, hoping to reach British Mandatory Palestine.

With no engine or navigational equipment, three days after it left the Bulgarian shore, the *Salvador* was finally towed into Istanbul's port, where it remained for a week, before it was ordered back into the Sea of Marmara.

"It was a terrible, stormy sea, and we couldn't continue," recalled Canetti, now 102 and a member of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion living in the order's convent in the Jerusalem Ein Kerem neighborhood.

"But the Turks couldn't accept us and we had to stay at sea," she continued. "After a few days we ran out of food. The good Jewish population in Istanbul heard about our boat from the news – it was not like today where everyone has phones – and brought us food every day. But we were illegal refugees and when it was a sunny day, the Turkish government told us we had to go."

In a scenario that continues to play out today as refugees crowd onto unsafe ships desperately seeking safety on foreign shores, the *Salvador* encountered a severe winter storm and the hull of the ship broke apart and sank a mere 330 feet from shore, west of Istanbul. More than 220 passengers perished, among them Sr Canetti's mother and brother.

"We knew how to swim but in that sea you couldn't swim. It was impossible. Once you were in the water there was no mother, no father, no brother, just pieces of wood floating by and the waves pushing. I made a terrible effort but I couldn't swim," Sister Canetti said as she sat in the convent's lush green garden retelling once more the story of her survival, one she has related countless times during her lifetime.

18th April marked Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel, while

the next day, the 19th, the world commemorated the 80th anniversary of the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto – a fight started out of desperation in the district of the German-occupied Polish capital where Nazis forced the Jewish population to live in unlivable conditions.

"There came a moment when I said I can't do this any more and just then, a big wave came and threw me on shore," Sister Canetti said.

Eventually, the young Regine was able to find her father among the survivors, and they were helped by the local Jewish community.

Though Jews in Bulgarian-occupied regions of former Yugoslavia and Northern Greece were deported to Nazi extermination camps in German-occupied Poland and murdered, the deportation of Bulgaria's own 48,000 Jews was halted due to public protests and the intervention of prominent figures, including two Bulgarian Orthodox Church prelates, Metropolitans Stefan of Sofia and Kiril of Plovdiv.

Instead Bulgarian Jews were internally deported and their property confiscated, and young men conscripted into the Labour Corps, but unusually for central and eastern Europe, the majority of Bulgarian Jewry survived the war.

"There is persecution everywhere, even today, but it can't be compared to the Holocaust," said Sister Canetti. "People are persecuted in Africa, in Asia. But the Holocaust



was a plan for the total annihilation of the Jews. (The Nazis) wanted to concentrate all the Jews in one place, in (German-occupied) Poland, and then annihilate them."

Her own survival was confirmed when she was clandestinely sent to Mandatory Palestinian with other young Jews who had survived the shipwreck, and her father followed her later.

Regine was sent to work in a kibbutz, and not being able to speak a word of Hebrew or English to

communicate with anyone, it was a far cry from her privileged upbringing studying at the Catholic boarding school. When the Bulgarian Sisters of Sion got word of the fate of their former student and her father, they contacted their community in Jerusalem, who invited her to join them. With her father's permission, she went to Jerusalem with the community and, in time, converted to Catholicism and joined the order.

The Sisters of Sion, also known

“

We should have our eyes and hearts open because there are so many refugees today, so many different people (in need)

officially as the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion, was founded by French-Jewish convert Father Théodore Ratisbonne in 1842 and is a community called to witness God's faithful love for the Jewish people.

"I was born to a Jewish family but we were not very Jewish. But I had spiritual feelings," she said. "When I came to Israel, I felt alone in life, and when I came to Jerusalem with the sisters, I felt at home."

"The thing that saved me was the Sisters of Sion – their solidarity. If it weren't for the Sisters of Sion, I don't know what would have happened to me. We should have our eyes and hearts open because there are so many refugees today, so many different people (in need). We need to keep our eyes and hearts open to help."

She spent 60 "very happy years" as a teacher at Sisters of Sion schools, including in Egypt, and even until recently had reunions with her former students once a year in Paris. On her 100th birthday, they came to visit her in Jerusalem. Every year, she still attends the official memorial service in Israel for those Jewish refugees who drowned in the tragic shipwreck of the *Salvador*.

Maybe, she ponders, if she had felt she was receiving more help from the Jewish community in Israel when she arrived, her life would have taken a different trajectory.

"I am always in communication with God," she said. "Now that I am approaching him soon, I am more in touch."

Today, she is still asked by mainly Israeli groups to tell her story, and though she is tired and wants to stop, when she is asked, she speaks.

"I am the only survivor left of the shipwreck, the only one left to tell their story," she said. "Many Israelis ask me to tell my story, but they have a very different understanding of what it is when God calls you. I will still tell my story as long as I am asked to do so and as long as I remember. I don't have the right to say no. I can't refuse because they want to know. Sometimes there are people that don't know the Holocaust happened. So I tell them what happened."



TALKING POINT

ELIZABETH SCALIA



The ‘mouse-nuns’ live a life of good faith under GK Chesterton’s nose

What could possibly bring England’s most famous literary Catholic G. K. Chesterton, a religious order of female mice and a prize wheel of cheese together?

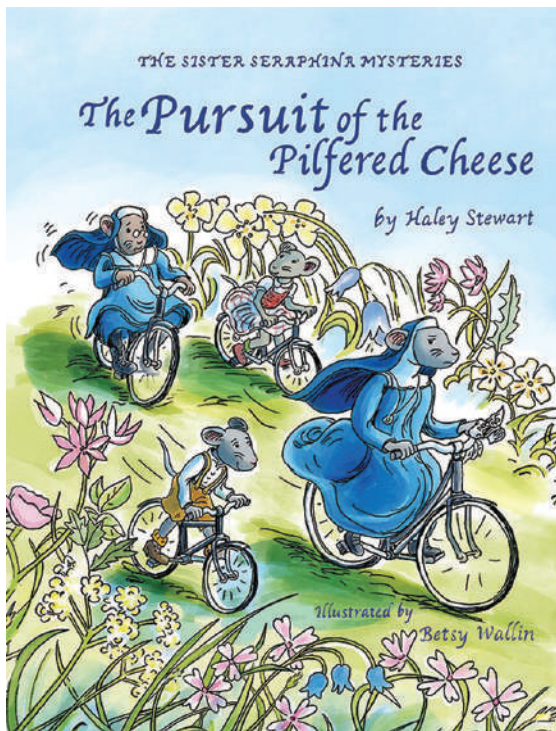
Perhaps just some human imagination and a gifted mum’s wish to give young readers an adventure – one that helps to both hone deductive reasoning skills and burnish the faith in a delightful way.

Award-winning US writer Haley Stewart, editor of *Word on Fire Sparks* (a children’s literature interest at Word on Fire), mother of four and longtime host of a popular faith-related podcast for children called *Fountains of Carrots*, chatted with the *Universe* about the origins of her recently published children’s book, *The Pursuit of the Pilfered Cheese* (available from Pauline Books and Media through online stores), which tells the beautiful tale of a group of intrepid ‘mouse nuns’ who live under the floorboards of GK Chesterton’s house...

Universe: What inspired the story? Was it one of those things you just woke up with? And why mice-nuns?

Haley Stewart: As strange as it sounds, it really was one of those things you just wake up with. I awoke one morning from a vivid dream about an order of mouse nuns who live under G.K. Chesterton’s house. The more I thought about the rodent nuns the more I fell in love with them.

The idea simmered for a few months, and then I finally started



writing it out during the COVID lockdown.

Universe: Is there any particular reason why this active mouse world exists under the floorboards of Chesterton’s sitting room?

Haley Stewart: Initially it was just because that was part of my dream, but the more I thought about it, the more I liked having the nuns be inspired by Father Brown’s detective skills so they could solve local crimes and mysteries.

I liked having the nuns be inspired by Father Brown’s detective skills so they could solve local crimes and mysteries.

I also really love British children’s literature from Chesterton’s era, so having the story set in England in the first half of the 20th century just felt right.

Universe: Closing the school under threat of the orange cat – was the COVID lockdown feeding some of this, do you think?

Stewart: Perhaps, although I didn’t think of that at the time. More practically, the story needed a reason for the stolen cheese to be

such a big deal. Without it, the fundraiser might fail, and they couldn’t keep their beloved school open and safe for students!

Universe: Lord Reginald wanting to buy the prize cheese seemed a “tidy” resolution that would have solved all their problems but would have also been a loss to the community. Can you go into that a little bit?

Stewart: I wanted to highlight the difference between someone who was guided by love and charity, like the abbess, and someone guided by greed, like Lord Reginald.

He doesn’t even necessarily want to eat the cheese; he just wants to collect it and to protect it from being enjoyed by those he considers less worthy or less discerning than himself. He’s such a snob, and I think Chesterton would be disgusted by him!

I also wanted to show how there is no such thing as a personal sin – sin always affects the community, and this seemed like a good way to show how greed hurts everyone, not just the greedy person.

Universe: Without spoilers, what can children and their families learn about how to address complex dilemmas from your story, and about mercy, too?

Stewart: There are several moments in the story when it would be easy for the nuns to jump to conclusions, make accusations and understandably respond with anger.

While they find the whole situation of the theft highly distressing, they don’t react this way.

The Sisters of Our Lady Star of the Sea are so compassionate, even to people who become entangled in the crime. But they are also just; they refuse to allow powerful people to harm the mice of the village. They put all their faith and creativity into trying to do the right thing, and in the end it all works out!

Universe: The illustrations by Betsy Wallin are really delightful. Had you ever worked together before, or was that a happy accident?

Stewart: Finding the right illustrator was a long, difficult process. When my publisher found Betsy, I could tell she was perfect. The way she has brought the characters to life is such a gift! I think she must love the mice of St. Wulfhilda’s every bit as much as I do.

Universe: ‘The Curious Christmas Trail’ was a happy surprise for fans of the Sisters of Our Lady Star of the Sea and their students. Will the community be chasing down another mystery anytime soon?

Stewart: Yes! Our mouse friends are going on holiday to the seaside, where a new mystery awaits them in *The Strange Sound by the Sea*, which releases this summer!

***The Pursuit of the Pilfered Cheese* is available through Amazon and other online book stores**

Being there for life’s last gasp, as God waits patiently

Effie Caldarola

My friend volunteered in a programme called NODA – it stands for No One Dies Alone.

It was not meant to walk the long journey through terminal illness with someone. It was, in fact, quite literal. At the hour of death, none of us should be alone.

The hospital might have a suffering patient who was living on the streets and they could not identify next of kin. Or perhaps someone was on their deathbed and their relatives were far away. Or the loved ones they had were very few and couldn’t be at the bedside 24/7.

My friend would be called near the end, and would be there for that person as they left this world. He would hold their hand, pray with them or for them. If he knew they were Catholic, he might softly say a rosary as they, often unconscious, grew closer to death.

For him, it was a moving and important ministry.

But what happened, I asked, ever curious about that great mystery that lies before us. What happened at death?

“I don’t know,” he answered honestly. “All I know is that they fell into the hands of a merciful God.”

Right now, we are in the great season of Easter, these 50 days of celebrating Jesus’s victory over death. We rejoice, “always” as St. Paul advises, while we await the feast of Pentecost.

But we have just watched Jesus die and even as we rejoice in resurrection, bits of our hearts still dwell in that tomb.

Thoughts about death bring me to my mother. She was suffering from dementia, not eating anymore and growing weak. We knew the end was coming, but she lingered in the nursing home. I was in a graduate programme, and I had a weekend of

intensive classes ahead of me. Knowing my mum was ill I planned to leave my home and come to her side at the weekend.

But my brothers sounded the alarm. The time was near. I raced home earlier than planned, but still arrived a few hours after her death. Seemingly not aware, she had nonetheless clung to life.

My brothers wondered if she’d been waiting for me.

I regret not leaving sooner, but am consoled by the image not of Mum waiting for me, but of God waiting patiently for her.

Years before, I was at college when my dad died. We knew he was quite ill, but we had hope. Arriving back from college on the bus one day – this was before mobile phones – my cousin Fran met me and we rushed through the city streets to the hospital. Again, I was too late by mere minutes.

People have told me beautiful stories of death. One friend, the baby of a large family,

recalls walking into the room where his mother had just passed, and at the threshold being held in an intense, unforgettable sense of peace and presence.

Likewise, the Jesuit Father Greg Boyle, writing of his mother’s death in *‘Forgive Everyone Everything’* (available from Loyola Press), relates how she suddenly looked up and ‘let out a glorious, wondrous gasp,’ and died. ‘And no one in earshot of the sound,’ he writes, ‘would ever fear death again.’

Death is a mystery, an unknown. Jesus taught us, despite his fear in the garden, how to die well – with integrity and commitment. But he first taught us how to live, and that is our focus during this Easter season.

We’re all pilgrims, walking together on this brief sojourn. Is there anyone, a friend, a relative, who needs our forgiveness, our love, our hand? Now, while the day has not yet ended?

A VIEW FROM THE PEWS

MICHAEL CAINE,
ST WINEFRIDE'S PARISH, LYMM, CHESHIRE

The lexicon of the Church

Cathedral, Basilica, Shrine, Chapel... what is the difference?

Having travelled to many countries and seen many hurches, I suddenly realised that I didn't know the difference between types of churches used in the Catholic church.

Here I'll try to explain in simple terms, the differences between a cathedral, basilica, shrine and chapel within the Catholic Church.

What is a cathedral?

'Bishop' is the title given to an ordained member of the Roman Catholic Church and head of an area of land called a diocese.

A cathedral is a church run by a bishop; it's the principal church within a diocese, which is the area of land over which a bishop has jurisdiction.

The major factor differentiating a cathedral from a church or chapel is the presence of a bishop. A cathedral is the home church for the bishop or archbishop of a diocese. It takes its name from the bishop's chair, called a '*cathedra*' in Latin.

Cathedrals are the mother churches of their dioceses and act as focal points for services and celebrations for those worshipping in churches throughout the diocese. Its primary purpose is to be a place of Christian worship. They also have choirs involving adults and children, both boys and girls, and produce music of a very high standard.

What is a basilica?

A basilica was a large oblong hall or building in ancient Rome. It had double colonnades and a semi-circular apse, used as a law court or for public assemblies. As

Basilica of Notre Dame in Lourdes



Christianity grew, its name was used for a large and important church building.

In the Catholic church, a basilica is a designation given by the Pope to a church building, conferring special privileges. They are either major basilicas – of which there are four, all in the diocese of Rome—or minor basilicas, of which there were 1,810 worldwide, as of 2019.

The ancient four major Basilicas of Rome are:

The Basilica of St Peter,
The Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls,
The Basilica of St Mary Major
The Arch-Basilica of St John Lateran.

A basilica has the highest permanent designation. A cathedral however may or may not have the status of a basilica. It is where the bishop's throne is and that would give that cathedral a greater status than a basilica.

Shrine

Canon 1230 specifically states, 'The term shrine signifies a church or other sacred place to which the faithful make pilgrimages for a particular pious reason with the approval of the local ordinary.' The distinguishing mark of a shrine is that it is a place to which the faithful make pilgrimages.

Chapel

A chapel is a place of worship; it's

all about the physical space and is usually smaller than a church – sometimes little more than just a room – and can be within a church itself or in a secular place like a hospital or airport.

Smaller spaces inside a church that have their own altar are often called chapels; the Lady chapel is a common type of these.

You can find a more complex description of these places of worship by accessing the internet.

JOURNEY IN FAITH

CHRIS MCDONNELL

A good man is lost at the passing of Michael Winter

We have lost the voice of a good man, after the writer, teacher, priest and family man, Michael Winter, died in hospital last Sunday morning after a brief illness.

Michael Winter was ordained priest for the Catholic diocese of Southwark in 1955. He served for the next nine years as curate and parish priest in a variety of parishes in the diocese. Later he pursued further studies in theology at the universities of London, Cambridge and Fribourg (Switzerland), where he was awarded the Doctorate in Theology in 1977.

He resigned from active ministry in 1986

and turned to university teaching and writing in subsequent years.

Apart from a number of books and many articles, Michael helped with the formation of the Movement for Married Clergy, advocating the option of marriage for clergy of the Latin Rite. To Michael, one man, two vocations seemed perfectly plausible.

A frequent contributor to the letters page of the *Tablet* journal, he spoke and wrote with integrity, his life experience and academic qualifications supporting his argument.

He was persistent in discussion yet was always a good listener. As secretary of MMAc he guided the movement through difficult and frustrating years trying to engage in dialogue with the Bishops' Conference. Their lack of response was deeply frustrating to Michael. Yet he remained throughout loyal and faithful to the Christian faith by which he lived and in which he died.

His broad vision of our faith and his insight into evident needs of our time will remain with us. The title of an early book, *Mission or Maintenance* is an apt summary

of his position. Should the Christian concentrate on maintaining what we have got, or actively be missionary in outlook and daily life?

It was a seminal book of its time and remains relevant to present day discussion.

Every so often voices arise in the Church that demand our attention and just as often they are ignored.

Michael did not live to see his vision of an option for priests to marry but he did the spade work for that story to be told.

He was indeed a good man.

Michael Winter, RIP

CREDO

FR HUGH DUFFY



Why pray? Because the Lord wants you to

When the disciples were looking for Jesus, on one occasion, they found Him “in a deserted place where He prayed” alone (Mark 1:36). Why, you may ask, did Jesus pray? After all, He was the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, and lived His life on earth in union with the Father.

Yes indeed, but don’t forget: Jesus was human, He was tempted like us in all things (but sin), and needed to spend time alone in communion with the Father.

Jesus needed to pray, and so do we.

Some people imagine that prayer springs forth spontaneously from an overflowing heart, and surmise that if the heart does not start to pray by itself they can never pray. Such a notion is wishful thinking. It is true that forced prayer is no prayer, but it is also true that prayer, like any activity of value, demands effort.

You do not have to be a polished speaker to pray. Your stammering is all accepted and understood by a generous God who knows the secrets of your hearts. No matter the confusion of your mind or heart, no matter how awkwardly you reach for words, the Holy Spirit, St. Paul reminds us, “intercedes for us through wordless groans” (Romans 8:26).

Prayer does not even require words. It can be a quick thought, a sudden elevation of the mind towards God in time of need or as a gesture of gratitude.

Jesus insists on the need to “pray always” (Luke 18:1), and not to lose heart. Prayer is always more than words; it is an attitude that puts God first in your life. Jesus tells the parable of the dishonest judge who granted a poor widow’s request because of her attitude of never losing heart. “Will not God,”

He says, “secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night?” (Luke 18:7) So, pray always whether you are sitting or standing or walking without having to use words. God never spurns a contrite or grateful heart.

Some people also wonder why we have to ask God to answer our prayers. Does not God already know what we want even before we ask Him? Did Jesus not say, “when you pray, go into your room, lock the

door; and your Heavenly Father, who knows your needs, will grant them in secret?” (Matthew 6 : 6)

So, why ask God to answer your prayers?

God wants you to ask Him to answer your prayers because He wants to have a trusting relationship with you. Like a loving parent who would say to a child who needed something, “why didn’t you ask me; don’t you know I would have given it to you,” God wants you to come to Him with your troubles. He wants you to trust Him to answer your prayers. Even though the Lord knows what you need before you pray, He wants you to ask Him, from the heart, because He loves you as a father.

There are different ways to pray, and I will mention a few practical ones:

1. The simplest form of prayer is the prayer of Petition.

Asking God to help you with a

particular need or asking God to help someone you know with a particular need.

There are few things you can do for another person that is more beautiful than sincerely praying for him or her.

It is a good practice before you go to bed at night to pray, not only for your own needs, but to include, in your prayer, the needs of others who are near and dear to you.

2. Another form of prayer is the Prayer of Thanksgiving or Praise.

When you rise in the morning, greet the new day with a prayer of thanks for all the Lord has bestowed upon you : the precious gift of life, the gift of friends and family, the gift of your little pets (if you have pets), the gift of health if you are so blessed, the gift of good neighbours, the gifts of faith, hope, and love.

Prayer of Thanksgiving like this, first thing in the morning, will go a long way to renewing your spirit and adopting a positive approach to the rest of the day.

3. Meditation is, perhaps, the most valuable form of prayer.

It turns the mind to the contemplation of the Word of God in the scriptures as a means of spiritual and personal renewal. The Lord’s

Prayer is a magnificent meditation, and can always be prayed slowly, and thoughtfully.

Remember, one ‘Our Father’ prayed well is better than a thousand repeated over and over again.

The Lord reminds us not to prattle on like pagans when we pray, thinking to gain a hearing through the multiplication of words (Matthew 6 : 7). As a person thinks, so does he or she act. And, what better way to think and act than to ponder God’s word and act upon it? Prayer, Jesus reminds us, is not about repeating the words, “Lord, Lord,” but “hearing the word of God and keeping it” (Luke 11:28). Meditation requires discipline, the kind of discipline that is able to set time aside each day to contemplate the Word of God (in the scriptures) and to practice it.

Why pray? Do you really need to ask? You pray because your Father in Heaven is eager to help you by establishing a personal relationship between you and His Son, through the Holy Spirit. He wants to establish this relationship, not only with you, but with all His “chosen ones,” all of humanity, by answering their prayers also.

Prayer! What a marvelous gift God has given us.



Prayer does not even require words. It can be a quick thought, a sudden elevation of the mind towards God in time of need

SUNDAY WORSHIP

ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC PRIESTS



Jesus's image of the shepherd still resonates with us, 2,000 years later

30th April 2023 – 4th Sunday of Easter, (A)

1st Reading: Acts 2:14, 36-41
Paul and Barnabas preach the Gospel first to the Jews, then to pagans, who receive it with joy

Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. . . Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"

Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him."

And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

So those who welcomed his message were baptised, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

Responsorial: Psalm 22: 1-6

R./: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want

*The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit. (R./)*

*He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of
darkness
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and
your staff;
with these you give me comfort.
(R./)*

*You have prepared a banquet for
me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with
oil;
my cup is overflowing. (R./)*

*Surely goodness and kindness shall
follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I
dwell
for ever and ever. (R./)*



'The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.'

2nd Reading: 1 Peter 2:20-25
In praise of the early martyrs, who came triumphantly through times of great persecution trusting in Christ, the Good Shepherd

If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Gospel: John 10:1-10
Christ is the true Shepherd, each one personally; and no one can take away his sheep

"Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

Again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved,

and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

The Good Shepherd

Jesus often illustrated his teaching by referring to shepherds and sheep. He sees himself as the Good Shepherd foretold by the prophets. Today's gospel considers the relationship between the Good Shepherd and the sheep. The imagery is old. The message is topical. It is relevant to us. By faith we accept Jesus, Our relationship is a deeply personal one. The bond of love uniting us is based on the love that unites the Father and Jesus. Our new existence is founded on God's unbreakable love and faithfulness.

In order to enter eternal life we must listen to Jesus and obey him. The alternative opening prayer puts this in practical terms. We have to tune our minds to the sound of his voice. Self-centredness can make us deaf to the voice of Jesus. Easy

options can draw us into easier paths than the one he has traced. Pressure to abandon Christian principles is inevitable. But God is faithful and will not let us be tempted beyond our strength. No one can drag us away from him, The Father has entrusted us to his Son. The same God who kept faith with Jesus by raising him from the dead will also raise us by his power.

Paul and Barnabas 'spoke out boldly', and made an impact. A courageous proclamation of the gospel to our contemporaries can be as fruitful now as it was in apostolic times. All the baptised, particularly those who are confirmed, are bound to spread the faith. Laity as well as priests and religious are in the service of the Risen Lord. Our faith urges us to take personal part in the work of evangelisation. Are we doing so? How many evils persist in our society just because good people say nothing and do nothing? A breviary hymn of Eastertide (no.25) spells out what is expected of us by the Risen Lord: Now he bids us tell abroad/ How the lost may be restored/ How the penitent forgiven/ How we too may enter heaven.

'Good Shepherd Sunday' is a good occasion for us to think and pray about how the Catholic Church will fare for priests in the future. In the British Isles the average age of ordained priests is over 65, a statistic that demands significant change in how to recruit priests for the future, and what is to be expected of them. Pdraig McCarthy made this point thus: "There is no such thing as a priestless parish. There may not be an ordained priest there, but the parish is a priestly people. How will this priesthood of the baptised take flesh in the coming decades? What factors which had value in the past are now hindering the mission of the church? What new model of ministerial priesthood is needed?"

Here are three questions worth pondering by us all, bishops, priests and laity:

- 1) Who will be the true shepherds in the coming years?
- 2) How will those shepherds carry out the mission to those outside the fold?
- 3) What needs to change so that each community can celebrate the Eucharistic every Sunday?

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH FR DOYLE

God wants us to keep Sunday special – but some chores still need to be done

Q. My question concerns the Third Commandment – keeping holy the Lord’s day. I do not believe chores, such as cooking, minor clean-ups and mowing, to be work. Does the Church consider all chores to be work? It’s difficult not to do some household chores. I thank God for this commandment, for I do look upon Sunday as a day of rest – to spend with family and enjoy the day. My non-Catholic husband, who works from home, is in a very challenging situation, without sufficient staff. On Sundays, he works almost eight hours before resting–otherwise the week’s schedule would be overwhelming.

A. I credit you for your sincere desire to set Sunday aside as a special day, which honours the fact that even the God of all creation rested on the Sabbath. You have captured the spirit of the Catechism of the Catholic Church which says: ‘Sunday is a time for reflection, silence, cultivation of the mind and meditation which furthers the growth of the Christian interior life’.

Basic household maintenance is exempted from the prohibition against ‘servile work’ on that day – doing the dishes, preparing a meal and what you describe as ‘minor clean-ups’ are certainly permitted. A modest amount of gardening or lawn cultivation can be recreational and surely not ‘servile’. What the Sabbath command means to avoid is unnecessary shopping or heavy housekeeping that could be deferred.

Employment needs or economic circumstances may prevent one from observing the Sabbath rest, and the Catechism envisions and exempts this. Your husband’s current challenge, in my mind, fits in here.

I would hope, though, that his circumstance will only be temporary; while I don’t know his religious history or principles, the Catechism wisely notes: ‘The faithful should see to it that legitimate excuses do not lead to habits prejudicial to religion, family life and health’.

I might point out, particularly among Western men, there can be a slavish addiction to Sunday televised sports, doing damage to the Sabbath goals of family time, reflection and rest.

And finally, nowhere does your question mention Sunday Mass, which must always be the central feature of a Catholic’s Sabbath observance. For 2,000 years, followers of Jesus have come together as a family of faith to celebrate the day of Christ’s resurrection and to be nourished by his body and blood. As you know, it is an absolute priority to attend Mass, in relationship with the Lord and with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Grandparents are keen to see their grandchild baptised by his non-practising parents



Q. Our son and his wife-to-be are not practising Catholics. They have a little girl, now 20 months old, who needs to be baptised. How do we as parents approach the subject without turning them against the faith completely or against us?

A. Let me say first that I admire very much your love for Catholicism and your desire to pass on the benefits of the Catholic faith to your granddaughter. My goal is the same as yours: to bring her parents back to regular practice of the faith so they can offer strong religious support to their child.

The wording of your question, though, may be significant. You say that your granddaughter ‘needs to be baptised.’ Is it possible that you think that is her only chance for Heaven? I raise the question because there are some people who believe that. So let me clarify that first. In 2007, the Vatican’s International Theological Commission, with the approval of Pope Benedict XVI, said that the concept of limbo reflected “an unduly restrictive view of

salvation” and that the mercy of God offers good reason to hope that babies who die without being baptised can go to Heaven.

Now, on to your question. Canon 868 of the Church’s Code of Canon Law states that ‘for an infant to be baptised licitly ... there must be a founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic religion.’

Right now, as you describe the situation, that sounds doubtful. If you see an opportunity in a quiet way to speak to your son about the religious path he might be considering

for their daughter, then do it.

But be careful not to force it. To strong-arm your son about his religious responsibility could have a negative effect, including jeopardising your relationship with him for a long time.

Do you think it might be better for now simply to pray for them, that they will reach the choice of baptism on their own? And remember that God cares about the baby’s salvation even more than you do, as scripture tells us: “God wants everyone to be saved and to fully understand the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

Q. I like decorating my home with religious art to draw my heart and mind to God. I sometimes find vintage religious pieces on online auction websites that I can’t find elsewhere. Some online resellers have items like used chalices and vestments (stoles) for sale. Does it go against Church teaching to purchase such items to be used on a home altar for prayer and devotional practices only?

A. What you are doing is not only permissible – it is laudable. It pleases me to know that the items you describe will be used once again for devotional purposes. Sometimes people think that, once blessed for religious use, something can never change hands at a reasonable profit. That is incorrect.

What you are purchasing is not the blessing, but the material object. So even chalices or stoles once used in celebrating the Eucharist can be put to later use in the manner you suggest. You are not trafficking in spiritual goods, not committing the sin of simony.

Simon the Magician, in the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, tried to offer the apostles money so that he could bestow the Holy Spirit by laying his hands on people. That is not what you are doing at all.

Q. I understand that Catholics can’t spread out ashes over the ocean after cremation – and that ashes can only be buried or kept at home. Both my sister and her daughter are Catholics. My sister told me that she has instructed her daughter to use her ashes as fertiliser on plants or trees after cremation. Is this allowed?

A. This question – and many similar ones – reflects readers’ continuing fascination with the disposition of bodily remains. You are correct in your understanding–almost!

The Church teaches that ashes from cremation should be buried or entombed in sacred ground – but not kept at home! In the Church’s mind, cremated remains should be treated with the same reverence as the body of a deceased person.

In 2016, the Vatican issued an instruction regarding burial practices for Catholics. That document specified that either the body or the ashes of the deceased should be buried in sacred ground and that cremains should not be kept in private homes or scattered on land or at sea, nor ‘preserved in mementoes, pieces of jewellery or other objects.’

Burial in sacred ground, said the Vatican, prevents the deceased from being forgotten and encourages family members and the wider Christian community to remember the deceased and to pray for them.

The Church’s Code of Canon Law continues to express a preference for burial over cremation because it more clearly expresses the Christian belief in an eventual resurrection when the person’s body and soul will be reunited. As for using the cremains for fertiliser, that is in no way envisioned in Catholic teaching – or permitted. **Please note that this column does not accept reader inquiries or questions**



The Sabbath command means to avoid unnecessary shopping or heavy housekeeping that could be deferred.

■ SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY

DAVID TORKINGTON



Christianity was born in the family

David continues his course on Our Lady’s Teaching on Prayer. This week, Our Lady of Mount Carmel

When, after her almost 3,000 appearances at Garabandal between 1961 and 1965, Mary called herself ‘Our Lady of Mount Carmel’; she wished to say something important. She was in fact teaching the children, and through them to us, something extremely profound. She wanted to identify herself with the contemplative spirituality that is contained in the teaching of the Carmelite orders who chose her as their patroness. However, she did something quite unexpected. She did not encourage the girls to enter Carmel to pursue vocations as contemplative nuns, but to stay in the world and to pursue contemplative vocations there, as members of and mothers of Catholic families.

To make her point, she positively insisted that they should not join any religious congregation, but in order to continually remind themselves that, like Mary their mother, they should pursue contemplation as their ultimate spiritual destiny, she said they should wear a small brown scapula. Large scapulars were traditionally worn by members of religious orders, as a sign, that their spirituality was primarily directed toward the supreme form of prayer that Our Lady practised throughout her life.

Where Christianity was first born
The place where this vocation had to be pursued was in the world, but more precisely in the families to which they belonged, and in the families they would bring to birth. For this was the place in which Christianity was first born, and where it grew and flourished 300 years before St Antony founded a monastic community in the Egyptian desert. It was also a thousand years or more before the Franciscans, Dominicans and Augustinian friars were founded and the Carmelite Simon Stock was given the brown scapular by Our Lady. In the first years of Christianity, the glorious and most spiritually productive years in its history, it was the family that was the wellspring and source of authentic Catholic spirituality that transformed the world. Apostolic religious orders would come later, but they were primarily trying to perform a rear guard action. They were trying to retrieve and bring back the vital



family-based faith that was once, and still could be now, the heart and soul of the sublime faith that Jesus Christ introduced into the early Church.

A family-based faith
In ancient times, family was the place where children learnt of and were inspired by their illustrious ancestors. In the evenings the fireside or the hearth was the place where their parents, their elders and even professional story tellers would relate tales of their origins, and the great heroes in the past. It was here that great books like the Iliad, the Odyssey and the Bible were first heard, endlessly and lovingly retold. Unaffected by phenomena like the mass media, memories were extremely sharp and retentive. Volumes would be in the memory to inspire those who lived in the present and be retained to inspire those who were to be born in the future. This is how, and where, Our Lady would have learnt and then handed on ancient traditions to her own family and to the son who would become the source of a new and far more dramatic tradition, which would in its turn be handed on to others. Mary, our Mother, was above and beyond all others the living embodiment of that new tradition that she endlessly pondered and reflected upon. It was a tradition that began even before her son Jesus was born and continued even after his death and Resurrection.

It was to her, more than to any other, that all would turn to hear this new tradition that so perfectly fulfilled the older tradition with its prophecies and promises, all of which found their ultimate completion in her son, the fruit of her womb.

A new tradition
She was not only the inspiration for the Gospels, when much of this tradition was written down, but even before they were written. This would in its turn lead to a deep and personal embodiment of this new tradition in people’s hearts and minds. Here, as Mary did herself, others would be taught to ponder over all that she and the other Apostles had taught them. After they practised the daily prayer they inherited from their Jewish ancestors, albeit Christianised to reflect their new presence in Christ’s mystical body, they would practise meditation. For this new means of prayer called meditation, they had their Mother Mary to thank, perhaps more than any other.

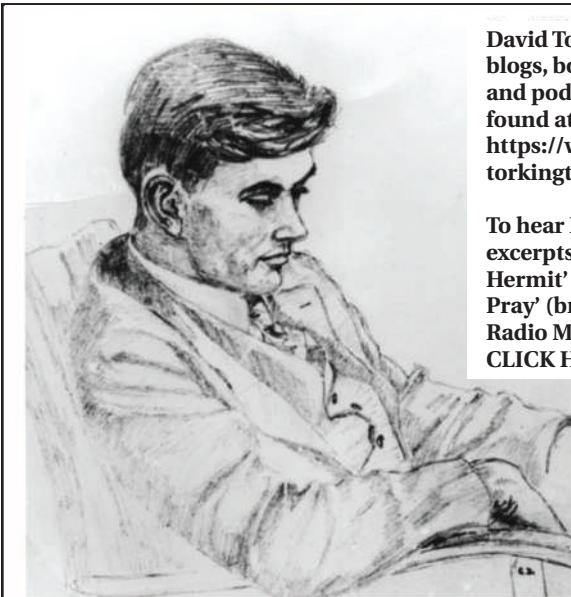
An immaculate heart
Although Mary did continue to ponder over the events of her life and her love for Jesus her son, her prayer was at first different to all others. Now that she had been swept up into her son’s mystical body, she not only prayed with him, but in, with and through him, in a remarkably sublime way. In this prayer her own sacred and

immaculate heart was suffused with his, to be united in a profound act of love. In this transcendent act of divine loving, her heart and his sacred heart were suffused together as one, in contemplating the infinite glory of God. Here, with her son, Mary would experience what St Paul called the height and depth the length and breadth of the love that surpasses all understanding. She would be drawn for a time, even in this world, into the ecstatic bliss that would for a brief time enable her to experience what she would experience for all time when she was assumed into

heaven and enthroned as Queen of Heaven and Mother to all.

The Love that grows through daily meditation
What mother, after experiencing such supernatural bliss, would not want to share what she has experienced with her children. Knowing that love would enable them to enjoy the mystical contemplation that she had experienced, she encouraged and inspired all to come to know and love her son, firstly, as she had known and loved him on earth. That is why she relentlessly persuaded everyone to pursue daily meditation on the life of the most mature, perfect and lovable person who has ever walked on the face of this world. She knew that as this love grew through daily meditation, the love that was generated would begin to desire to be united with the one who was loved. Although you can come to know and love someone who is dead, you cannot be united with them, as you might wish. That is why at this point in the spiritual journey, for those who have persevered in meditation the Holy Spirit leads us into a new form of prayer called purifying contemplation where we will be prepared and purified to be united with her son. Because Mary was Immaculately conceived, the supreme prayer of contemplation was as natural to her as giving birth to the son of God, thanks to the Holy Spirit. But for those who would follow her it means listening more carefully to her message and putting it into practice in our daily lives.

David Torkington’s blogs, books, lectures and podcasts can be found at <https://www.davidtorkington.com/>



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To hear David read excerpts from *The Hermit* and *How to Pray* (broadcast on Radio Maria England), [CLICK HERE](#)

Service thanks law community – and Suffolk’s selfless volunteers

Bishop Peter Collins joined a service at St Edmundsbury Cathedral in Bury St Edmunds to celebrate the work of His Majesty’s Courts of Justice.

The service, on Sunday, 26th March, marked the end of the year in office of Suffolk’s High Sheriff, Jamie Lowther-Pinkerton.

The service was attended by representatives of the legal and criminal justice system, to pray and give thanks for all involved in the legal system in the county. The event took place within the traditional Cathedral service of Choral Evensong at 3.30 pm.

The speaker was Major General James Cowan CBE DSO, the CEO of The HALO Trust which, for more than 30 years, has been clearing landmines and other hazards of war, in order to help countries recover after conflict.

The office of High Sheriff stretches back more than a thousand years, as the figurehead of the county’s legal system. It has traditionally provided support for the administration of justice in the county, but the modern role extends into a close relationship with the fast-growing voluntary sector in Suffolk.

The High Sheriff of Suffolk, Jamie Lowther-Pinkerton, said: “We owe a great debt of gratitude to the judiciary, the police, the probation and prison services and all others in our county who are committed to the upholding of law and order, the foundation stone of society.



“I would also like to pay tribute to thousands upon thousands of ordinary people across Suffolk who spend the greater part of their waking lives helping others – whether as part of formed charities, in wider public service, as volunteers, or as lone actors who take it upon themselves to care and look out for others. It is this self-effacing majority that glues our society together and whose

Above, from left, the Venerable David Jenkins, Archdeacon of Sudbury; The Very Rev Joe Hawes, Dean of St Edmundsbury Cathedral; The Right Rev Peter Collins, Bishop of East Anglia, Jamie Lowther-Pinkerton, former High Sherriff of Suffolk; The Right Rev Martin Seeley, Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich; The Rev Canon Philip Banks, Precentor at St Edmundsbury Cathedral; The Venerable Jeannette Gosney, Archdeacon of Suffolk at the Suffolk Justice service.

goodness percolates throughout our great county and defines us as Suffolk people.”

Canon Philip Banks said: “One of the hallmarks of our British way of life is that the rule of law, to ensure

justice for all, is maintained by a judiciary independent of government. We live in challenging times, and this principle is more important than ever.

“At the annual service for HM

Courts of Justice we pray for and affirm all involved in the criminal justice system and give thanks for their expertise and commitment to fairness and protection for all citizens.”

Ignite event transforms young group’s view of faith

Sophie Pereira from the Ignite Team was among participants at the Transform for Holy Week event which took place recently at Clare Priory, and said it was an experience the group of 16-35-year-olds will never forget.

“For myself it was an evening of prayer ministry and close encounter with the Eucharist that was one of the highlights of the weekend,” Sophie said. “It was a very moving and transformative service for many, and an experience not previously had by the young adults.

“The chance to witness different styles of prayer, often not offered in their normal parish, is something that the Transform retreat aims to offer young people. It provides an opportunity for young adults to delve deeper into their faith and



discover new aspects of Catholicism that they may not have known existed or had a chance to experience.”

The evening was made even better by an informal music gig by the band ‘Revelation’ with some snacks

and a time for the retreatants to socialise, have fun and discuss the events of the day.

Another highlight of the event was a thought-provoking talk delivered by Bishop Peter Collins on the events of Holy Week. Participants were tasked by the bishop to imagine themselves in situations occurring during Holy Week, whether anonymous among the crowds or as one of Jesus’ closest followers; allowing themselves to understand and try to relate to the events happening.

In addition to the activities of the retreat, the young adults had the opportunity to explore the beautiful surroundings of Clare Priory. It is the oldest Augustinian Priory in England, dating back to the 1200s and it’s not a surprise that people

continue to use the Priory as a place of quiet prayer and retreat. The beautiful surroundings and abundance of wildlife make it a perfect place for retreat from the daily stresses of life.

The retreatants also had the opportunity to join in the daily life of the friars, including morning and evening prayer and meals.

“The Transform retreat aimed to expose our young adults to many different aspects of our faith,” Sophie said, “from the daily life of Friars to an evening of prayer ministry. Our retreatants left with a changed attitude towards many parts of their faith, and a changed attitude towards opportunities for young adults within the Diocese. They left the Transform event transformed.”

St Benedict's pupils are ready to take the West End stage by storm

Pupils at a Derby school have won a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to sing on the same stage as West End stars, in front of a 2,000 strong audience at a European theatre festival.

Thirty-eight St. Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy students will perform a song from *Frozen* at Music Theatre International's Junior Theatre festival, Europe's biggest celebration of musical theatre for young performers.

Hundreds of youth groups and schools from across the country submitted applications to be in with a chance to perform at the festival and take part in workshops with West End professionals, as part of a programme backed by Disney.

News of the St. Benedict students' success was shared on social media and prompted a kind-hearted donation of costumes for the performance, all the way from America.

Anna West, Director of Performing and Creative Arts at St. Benedict, said she burst into tears when she found out her students would be performing at the festival.

Producer Ryan Macauley in the centre of the the photo, pictured with St Benedict students.



She said: "I couldn't speak, I was so choked. I was just thinking about how this will mean so much for our children and it will enable them to see what opportunities there are for them in the arts, and what can happen if you believe you can do something."

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime event

for them. How often will they get to perform on the same stage as West End performers in front of 2,000 people?

"I tweeted a video of the students' reaction when I told them the news. A few days later, I got an email from a lady in America whose theatre group had already performed

Frozen. She has all the costumes and has offered to ship and lend them to us for free, which is wonderful."

The festival takes place at the ICC in Birmingham on Saturday, 29th April and St. Benedict students will take to the stage in the afternoon, followed by two performances from West End stars.

Mrs West said: "We are taking students from Years 7 to 12. In the morning, they will do some work with other youth groups at the festival. In the afternoon, they will take part in dance, drama and music workshops with West End professionals. Then they will do some tech on the main stage, followed by their performance."

Students will sing the song 'Fixer Upper' on stage, from the best-selling *Frozen* soundtrack.

Ryan Macauley, producer and director of the MIT Junior Theatre Festival, paid a visit to St. Benedict to help students prepare for their performance.

"St. Benedict was chosen because the application from the staff there was exemplary and the children are all ages and from all backgrounds and they are doing it together," he said. "We really saw that in the application and they deserved the chance to perform."

• **The students will be performing *Frozen* as their school show from 1st to 5th July 2023.**

www.saintbenedictderby.srscmat.co.uk for details.



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

**Brentwood Ursuline
Convent High School**

Queen's Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4EX
Tel: 01277 227156 www.brentwoodursuline.co.uk

Assistant Headteacher, Head of Religious Education

Required for September 2023

Pay Scale: L12 - L16 (Fringe): Full Time

Governors are seeking to appoint, for September 2023, a suitably experienced and qualified person to join the Senior Leadership Team of our thriving Catholic school as the Head of Religious Education. This appointment includes working with the Chaplain to develop the spirituality of our students and the liturgical life of the school. Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School is a Catholic School and seeks to appoint a practising Catholic to this post.

Set within the vibrant town of Brentwood is our popular and successful oversubscribed girls' Catholic School with a co-educational Sixth Form. As a top-performing comprehensive we have a motivated and friendly staff community. There will be many opportunities for the successful candidate to develop their career by joining a high-performing and friendly Senior Team, from whom they will receive all the support they need to develop their leadership skills, combined with supportive line management and CPD.

The successful applicant will be Head of Religious Education and there will be other areas of responsibility within SLT for the successful candidate.

BUCHS is committed to the protection and safety of its students and the successful candidate will be subject to an enhanced DBS check.



Closing Date: 27th April 2023

Interviews: as soon as can be arranged

Application forms available from and should be returned to:

Mrs M Freeman, PA to Headteacher

Tel: 01277 238005 E-mail: mfreeman@buchs.co.uk

Or access the link on the school website: www.brentwoodursuline.co.uk



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AROUND THE PARISHES & EDUCATION

The Universe Catholic Weekly's guide to Catholic life in your neighbourhood



CMA's busy North Wales retreat is chance to welcome new members

Fr Gaston Forbah, one of the Bamenda Priests serving in the English Martyrs parish in Reading, is also one of the chaplains to the UK Branch of the Catholic Men's Association. Here he shares news of the association's recent retreat to North Wales.

Old and new members of the Catholic Men's Association, UK Branch, together with their two chaplains, Fr. Anthony Chiatii and Fr. Gaston Afah, held a retreat in the Bridgettine Convent in North Wales from Friday 17th to Sunday 19th March.

The participants at the end of their stay attested that it was indeed a time of connection with God. The weekend was spent in prayer, including the divine office, in formation talks on the life of St. Joseph given by the Bridgettine Sisters and celebrating Holy Mass. The group also made a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Winifred, a Welsh virgin martyr from the 7th century (known as 'the Lourdes of Wales' due to a healing spring that was once the traditional location of her decapitation and restoration).

Eight new members were elected to aspirancy during the final Mass on Sunday in preparation for dedication later in the year. This group included individuals from Cameroon, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe. After only two years, God has



blessed CMA UK with the addition of over 20 new members.

Founded in 1970 by Rev. Fr. John Kolkman, RIP, a Mill Hill Missionary, CMA is a group that was established in the Diocese of Kumbo-Bamenda in Cameroon. One of the primary lay apostolate associations is now fully operating in all the dioceses in Cameroon and in the USA, Germany etc. The CMA is a lay apostolate organisation for Catholic men, with

the following objectives:

- To play a crucial part in the expansion of the Church by making disciples in all nations.
- To emulate the life of St Joseph as evidenced in his obedience to God, loyalty and service to the Holy Family of Nazareth and commitment to his work.
- To assist all men in coming back to Christ, his Church, and the Sacraments.

• To foster a sense of camaraderie among members, regardless of their racial or ethnic heritage, social status, language, cultural background, or political leanings.

• To advance the ecumenical movement by moral and Christian life that penetrates society.

The CMA's new members go through a 12-month formation process before being dedicated and officially acknowledged as CMA

members. All branches of the CMA, whether domestic or international, adhere to a uniform framework for this formation.

A variety of resource people, including clergy, religious, and laypeople, are asked to offer formation speeches on the predetermined formation topics. May St Joseph intercede for us.

Amen.

Brentwwod ready to celebrate role of migrants

The Dioceses and Ethnic Chaplaincies of Brentwood, Southwark and Westminster are celebrating the annual Mass for Migrants on Monday 1st May 2023, the Feast of St Joseph the Worker, at 12pm.

The Mass will be hosted by the Diocese of Brentwood at St Antony of Padua Church, Forest Gate, with Bishop Alan Williams as celebrant and Fr Dominic Howarth preaching.

Parishioners from across all three dioceses are warmly invited and there will be a banner procession by the ethnic chaplaincies, organised by Citizens UK ahead of the Mass. Combined choirs from St Antony's Primary School, St Angela's



Ursuline School and St Bonaventure's Secondary School will sing during the service and there will be a reflection on the Living Wage campaign by TELCO/Citizens UK.

MP Stephen Timms is to attend the Mass along with charity delegates from Aid to the Church in Need, Calais Light, Justice & Peace and CSAN. The heads of other faith denominations have also been invited.

The Migrants Mass has been celebrated since 2006, when it was initiated by Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, then Archbishop of Westminster, at the suggestion of London Citizens. The cardinal called for a more just treatment of

migrant workers at that first Mass, an important act of witness. That call was rooted in Catholic social teaching, inspired by London Citizens' 'Strangers into Citizens' initiative.

Each year since then the event has reminded London of the invaluable contributions of so many migrants to the city's society and economy. It offers a profound witness to the Church's insistence that the dignity of the human person is God given and never withdrawn. It also reminds us of the very deep resonance with refugee and asylum concerns.

Today, at a time when the plight of refugees and migrants is becoming ever more desperate, the cardinal's words seem

particularly prophetic.

The Mass is held annually, hosted in turn by one of the three Dioceses of Brentwood, Southwark and Westminster for the feast of St Joseph the Worker as a celebration of the valuable contributions made by so many migrants to the life and economy of London and the surrounding counties. The Mass is also a sign of the Catholic community's solidarity with refugees and asylum seekers.

It was first held in Forest Gate in 2017 before both the pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine.

In 2022 it was again held in person in Westminster Cathedral, where one of the speakers was Fr Andriy Tsyaputa from the Ukrainian community.



Dance pro puts pupils through their paces

Aspiring dancers from St. Paul's Catholic High School in Wythenshawe had a chance to learn from a pro when professional dancer Holly Rush from the Lowry Theatre in Manchester ran a dance master class.

Holly's visit was part of the Lowry's Centre for Advanced Training (CAT) scheme, which offers pupils the chance to take part in a contemporary dance experience and access high quality dance training.

The scheme helps identify, and assist, young people with exceptional potential, regardless of their personal circumstances, to benefit from world-class specialist training as part of a broad and balanced education. The Lowry CAT taster

dance workshops provide an insight into the world of contemporary dance.

Working with Holly, the pupils explored a variety of contemporary dance.

Saint Paul's head of performing arts, Kathryn Slater, said: "This was a fantastic opportunity for our pupils to learn more about contemporary dance and to take part and experiment in a very supportive environment. Holly engaged well with the pupils who really enjoyed taking part in such a fun and energetic workshop."

"We were absolutely delighted that five of our students, who displayed excellent dance skills, were selected to be part of their programme for free! We are very pleased and proud of them."

Holly Rush said her mission "is to create an inclusive space for the participants to feel comfortable, but challenged in order to try new things and to leave the session with a new-found confidence," she said.

Deputy Headteacher Mike Whiteside said: "This was a great experience for all the students."

"The session was extremely energetic, upbeat and inspiring. Involvement in workshops like this provide a very valuable experience for our students and enhance the learning curriculum."

Tell your school's story to readers of the Universe Catholic Weekly!

The Universe Catholic Weekly loves celebrating the achievements of our faith's schools and college.

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Andy Drozdziak at

News@universecatholicweekly.co.uk



Little spots of love on the streets

Neighbourhoods in Coventry have been adorned with hundreds of artistic expressions of love thanks to a creative project by a Catholic primary school, honouring mums in the city.

Pupils at St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, part of the Romero Catholic Academy, distributed more than 200 pebble art creations throughout parks and green spaces in the area for locals to find and help spread the love.

Pupils in all year groups were given a pebble to decorate with felt tips or paint around the theme of 'spreading joy for others' in honour of any maternal figures in their lives inspired by Mother's Day, before sealing them with varnish to protect them against the outdoors.

Parents were also invited to get involved to help pupils or create their own pebble art.

Megan Scullion, Associate Principal at St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, said the project aims to reach 'the wider community.'

"It was brilliant to bring together so many parents and pupils at our craft session on Friday, and great to see some of the creations that our pupils made," she said.

"While Mother's Day is an important opportunity to show gratitude to mothers, grandmothers and other family members and carers, our pebble art project is designed to extend this out into the wider community over a longer period of time."

"We hope that people will spot the creations, and that they bring a moment of joy or reflection when they are walking their dog or are simply out and about."



DIocese of BRENTWOOD

Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School

Queen's Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4EX
Tel: 01277 227156 www.brentwoodursuline.co.uk

Head of Religious Education

Required for September 2023
MPS/UPS + TLR1B (Fringe): Full Time

The governors wish to appoint a Head of Religious Education to teach across the age and ability range from September 2023. We are looking to appoint an enthusiastic and well-qualified graduate teacher who will lead a strong team of dedicated teachers.

As Head of Department we would expect the candidate to be able to teach at GCSE and A level, and Core Religious Education in the 6th Form.

This appointment has a wider school responsibility in working with the Chaplain to develop the spirituality of our students and the liturgical life of the school. Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School is a Catholic School and seeks to appoint a practising Catholic to this post.

Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School is a successful and over-subscribed school which enjoys support from the Catholic and wider communities. Opportunities for excellent Continued Professional Development and staff well-being are at the forefront of our commitment to all staff at Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School.

Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and this position is subject to satisfactory enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service. We are an equal opportunities employer.

Closing Date: **27th April 2023**

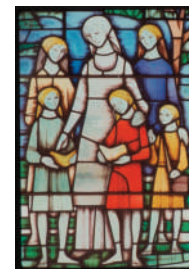
Interviews: **As soon as can be arranged**

Application forms available from and should be returned to:

Mrs M Freeman, PA to Headteacher

Tel: 01277 238005 E-mail: mfreeman@buchs.co.uk

Or access the link on the school website: www.brentwoodursuline.co.uk





GARDENING

Making more plants by propagating your garden

Making more plants through simple propagation techniques is one of the most fun, productive and inexpensive ways to grow your garden and expand your knowledge.

Propagating plants is a simple process; however, the mystique behind the practice prevents many gardeners from trying to do it themselves.

Here, plant propagation expert, Brie Arthur shares some of her tips for successfully making more plants from your very own garden.

Brie's extensive experience as a horticulturist and professional plant propagator has given her a wealth of experience and knowledge.

Making more plants with rooting cuttings

Rooting cuttings is what's known as asexual propagation and is one of the easiest and most effective ways to propagate additional plants. When it comes to actually taking the cuttings, there are some specific methods to follow.

You always want to use a sharp knife to take cuttings, and remove flowers and flower buds to allow the energy to be focused on root and shoot production.

Take your cutting from new growth at the tip of the plant, and cut just below a node, where a leaf comes off the stem.

After taking the cutting and before planting, you can use rooting hormones to speed things along, but they aren't always necessary. With woody stems



especially, they can help promote rooting and increase the number of roots while ensuring uniform and quicker rooting.

Once you've successfully taken a cutting and placed it in the growing media, keep them in a shady location, and don't let the soil dry out. Be patient at this stage. Watch for roots to appear at

the bottom of the pot. That's when you know that the plant is established enough to pot up into a larger container.

Growing media

Cuttings should be planted in a well-drained, sterile, soil-less media. Brie's preference is three parts ground pine

bark to 1 part perlite.

In general, the rooting medium should be low in fertility, drain well enough to provide oxygen, but retain enough moisture to prevent saturation.

Moisten the media before you insert the cuttings, and keep it evenly moist while cuttings are rooting and forming



Simply put, plant propagation is the process of making more houseplants, vegetables, and flowers from those plants you already have and love.

new shoots.

Rooting hormones

Though not necessary for successful propagation, rooting hormones can help speed things along. You will find a wide selection of rooting hormones in garden centres and online.

Brie uses a powder hormone for rooting spring softwood cuttings. She prefers a diluted liquid formula for summer semi-hardwood cuttings and a gel formula for hardwood conifer cuttings.

Simply put, plant propagation is the process of making more houseplants, vegetables, and flowers from those plants you already have and love.

Plant propagation fascinates just about every plant lover, but the process can seem difficult to master at first. Understanding the basics will equip any backyard gardener with the skills they need to confidently take on the rewarding activity of making more plants for free.



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HEALTH

Amanda Avery

Celebrities have popularised all sorts of outlandish diet trends over the years. One of the latest trends among celebrities is the 'one meal a day' diet (popularly known as 'Omad').

Fans of Omad include Bruce Springsteen and Coldplay frontman Chris Martin. Many proponents of Omad claim it helps them better manage their weight and keep fit.

Omad is essentially a more extreme version of other types of fasting diets, such as intermittent fasting and time-restricted eating. The main difference is that instead of only fasting certain days or only eating your meals during a specific time window, people following Omad eat all their day's calories in one single, large meal.

But while supporters of Omad say that following the diet improves many aspects of health, we actually know very little about what effect eating just one meal a day has on the body — let alone if it's safe.

Fasting and health

Evidence supporting the use of Omad is limited. Very few studies have actually looked at Omad itself — and most of those that have were conducted in animals.

As such, most of the claims that Omad works are anecdotal. Or they are based on the assumption that if other forms of fasting can benefit health, then Omad will too.

Research into fasting diets is still emerging. Some evidence indicates that one form of intermittent fasting known as the '5:2 diet' (where a person eats normally five days a week, then 800 calories or less two days a week) may help people better manage their weight. However, it's no better than other diet approaches.

Research has also found that time-restricted eating (where you eat all your day's calories within a specific window of time) can help people better manage their weight. And it has other health benefits such as lowering blood pressure.

One review study also found that many different types of fasting (including intermittent fasting and fasting every other day) can improve several aspects of metabolism. These include improving blood sugar and cholesterol levels, reducing inflammation levels and helping people better regulate their appetite. This, in turn, may help reduce a person's risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Just one meal

One study so far has looked at the effect of Omad in humans. In this study, participants were given the same number of calories to eat each day for the study's duration. For half of the study, participants ate these calories in a single meal, before switching and eating their daily calories split into three meals per day.



Celebrities' popular OMAD diet may do more harm than good

Each meal pattern was only followed for an 11-day period — not very long at all. The one meal was taken between 5pm and 7pm. Only 11 participants completed the study.

When participants ate just one meal per day, they saw a greater reduction in their body weight and fat mass. However, participants also had greater reductions in lean mass and bone density when eating just one meal a day. This could lead to reduced muscle function and greater risk of bone fractures if the diet was to be followed for a longer period.

Animal studies looking at the effects of Omad have shown conflicting results, with research showing mice who ate one large meal a day actually gained more weight compared to those who ate

multiple meals.

While these results may indicate that Omad could have benefits for some aspects of health, there's still a lot we don't know about it. It will be important for future studies to investigate the effect of Omad in a larger number of participants and in other groups of people (as this study only included lean, young adults).

It will also be important for studies to look at the effect of Omad over a longer period of time, and to conduct these trials in a real-life setting.

It will also be interesting to know whether the timing of the meal can further improve the results and if the nutritional profile of the meal makes a difference.

Other downsides

If someone is just having one meal a day then it's going to be quite difficult for them to meet all their nutritional requirements, especially for energy, protein, fibre and the key vitamins and minerals. Not getting enough of these important nutrients could lead to loss of muscle mass, risk of constipation and poor gut health.

Someone following Omad will need to ensure they get a good serving of protein and plenty of vegetables, nuts, seeds and some fruit and wholegrains during their single daily meal to meet these nutritional requirements. They will also need a good serving of dairy to make sure that they meet their calcium and

iodine requirements — or a supplement or alternative if they're plant-based.

This is not a diet that we would recommend for children, anyone who is pregnant, hoping to become pregnant or breastfeeding and definitely not for a person who may be at risk of an eating disorder.

It's also important to note that while this diet might work for celebrities, they also have access to nutritionists, high-quality diets and supplements where needed. For most of us, this kind of diet could be unsustainable — and potentially harmful in the long run.

Amanda Avery is a Lecturer in Nutrition, University of Nottingham



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FOOD

Calzone: the pizza that thinks it's a pasty

FLORENTINE CHICKEN CALZONE

Calzone is like a cross between a pizza and a pasty. It looks like a pasty but uses pizza dough instead.

The filling for this recipe uses spinach and chicken with peppers and cheese, but can also include any other suitable ingredients such as mushrooms and tomato, to give a really flavoursome meal or snack.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pack pizza base mix, about 280g
- 350g frozen spinach, thawed in a sieve
- 200g ricotta cheese
- 50g Parmesan, freshly grated

- 2 red peppers in brine, drained and chopped
- 6 spring onions, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp shredded fresh basil leaves
- freshly grated nutmeg, to taste
- 200g skinless, boneless roast chicken, finely shredded
- 1 egg, beaten

METHOD

1. Make up the pizza dough and then knead briefly on a floured surface until smooth. Place in a covered bowl for about 15 minutes to rise. It should double in size.



2. Preheat the oven to 220°C.

3. Squeeze any excess water from the spinach and place in a bowl. Mix in the ricotta, Parmesan, peppers, spring onions and basil. Season to taste with nutmeg, salt and pepper.

4. Cut the dough into four equal pieces and roll each out on to a floured surface to a 20cm round.

5. Place a quarter of the spinach mixture over one half of each dough round, leaving space at the edge, and then pile a

quarter of the chicken on top.

6. Brush the edge of each dough round with beaten egg, then fold over to make a half-moon shape. Crimp the edges to seal tightly. Place on a lightly oiled large

baking sheet. Brush with beaten egg and bake for about 15 minutes until puffed and golden brown.

7. Serve immediately.

“The filling uses spinach and chicken with peppers and cheese, but can also include any other suitable ingredients such as mushrooms and tomato, to give a really flavoursome meal or snack.”

Cheap – and tasty: A great way to make leftover meals extra special

PEPPER AND FETA FRITTATA

Frittata is a great way of creating a simple but tasty meal from eggs and a selection of vegetables, particularly leftovers. This Greek version is delicious – cut into wedges and served with salad or fresh bread.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 onions, sliced
- 3 red peppers, seeded and thinly sliced
- 2 sprigs of fresh thyme or ½ tsp dried
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 50g stoned black olives, chopped
- 200g feta cheese, roughly chopped
- 3 large eggs, lightly beaten
- freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C.
2. Grease and line the base of a 20cm sandwich tin.
3. Heat the oil in a deep heavy-based frying pan. Gently cook the onions for 5 minutes until transparent, before adding the peppers and thyme. Add the garlic and cook for 20 minutes over a medium heat, stirring occasionally.
4. Add the olives and cheese to the vegetables, remove the thyme sprigs, if using fresh, and take the pan off the heat.

5. Season the beaten eggs with black pepper, then stir into the vegetables and mix well. Pour into the tin and bake for 35 minutes until golden and firm to the touch.

6. Remove frittata from the oven and let it rest for 3 minutes. Turn it out onto a large plate, then flip it back onto a plate so it is right side up.

7. Cut into wedges and serve either warm or cold.

“A great way of creating a simple but tasty meal from eggs and a selection of vegetables, particularly leftovers...”



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LIFESTYLE

4 ways to work out with your dog – with Venus!

Finding motivation on a Monday can be tough. However, there's no greater motivator to get up and moving like having your canine companion by your side to help you take on Monday and every day of the week like a pro.

Active dogs and their humans take challenges head-on, and when you consider the ways in which you'll both benefit from being active together, and getting the fine-tuned nutrition necessary to help keep active dogs strong and energized, there's no limit to what you can accomplish together.

Tennis pro Venus Williams knows prioritising her dog's health through exercise is important to his longevity.

"My dog Harry is such a huge part of my life. My dream is for him to have the longest life possible," said Williams. "When I go to practice, he goes to practice. If I go to the gym, Harry goes to the gym."

To help pet parents get outside and move with their four-legged friends, Williams has teamed up with Purina Pro Plan Sport to take Monday motivation to a whole new level with the "Monday Like a Pro" Challenge.

Every Monday until 21st May, Venus and a group of content creators and award-winning athlete pros will issue weekly challenges for pet parents to log active minutes with their dogs. If you want to join the

challenge but don't know where to start, check out these four, fun ways to get moving with your dog.

1. Take a hike

Hiking is a great way to challenge yourself and your dog. Hikes can be more challenging than your typical walk around the block because of the varying terrain, especially if a hiking path has rolling hills. A new environment allows your dog to experience new smells, sights and sounds, which aids in their mental stimulation.

2. Go to the beach

If you live near the sea, take your dog to the beach. The beach is a veritable playground of enriching experiences for both dogs and pet owners alike. You can jog along the shore together, play fetch in shallow water or go for a swim. Even if you don't live near the sea, you can do these same activities at a lake or river.

3. Play sports

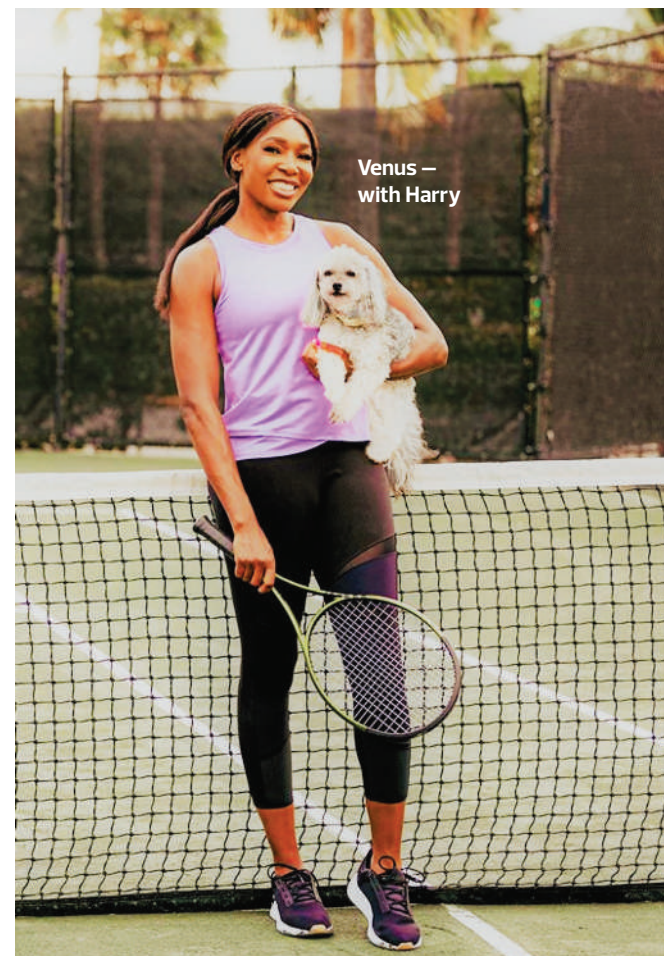
If you play sport, or want to get back into playing a sport, your pup can help you train. Take them to the tennis court, work on your serve and have your pooch fetch and return the ball to you. If you have a football, try to keep it from your dog or put them up in goal and try to score.

4. Work on agility

Find an agility course at a local dog park or take an agility training course. Your dog will learn how to weave through obstacles, run through tunnels and jump over bars, teaching them new tricks and obedience. Meanwhile, you'll get a workout running alongside them on the course and issuing commands along the way.

Once you add regular exercise to your routine, ensure that both of you get the proper nutrition to fuel your workouts. "Fuelling my body with optimal nutrition is one of the most important things that I focus on, not just before my matches, but also on a daily basis," said Williams. "That's something I want for my dog Harry as well. With Pro Plan Sport, I know he's getting the nutrition he needs so he can stick by me on all our adventures."

To help fuel your highly active, athletic dog, join the *Monday Like a Pro* Challenge. Every Monday until 21st May, check out the weekly challenge and log your active minutes. One winner per week will be randomly selected to win a year's supply of Pro Plan dry dog food to experience



Venus –
with Harry

firsthand the advanced nutrition of Pro Plan Sport offering the strength and stamina to conquer any adventure.

To learn more and join the challenge, visit mondaylikeaprochallenge.com

CINEMA

Beau's not the only one who should be afraid

Mrs. Portnoy step aside, there's a new Jewish-mother-from-hell in town. And she's the reason *Beau Is Afraid* (A24).

Billed as a dark comedy, writer-director Ari Aster's deep dive into paranoia is instead a nightmarish, three-hour-long odyssey through mental misery. While Aster's obvious artistic intent creates a sufficient context to prevent his film from being entirely unacceptable, moreover, it's nonetheless chock-a-block with challenging content.

Viewers unwise enough to patronise the movie will find themselves trapped in the disturbed mind of timid loner Beau Wassermann (Joaquin Phoenix). Beau's tortured relationship with his mum, Mona (Patti LuPone), inspires and overshadows a series of what are presented as bizarre adventures for him but some of which, at least, are really hallucinations.

Though Mona is a super-successful CEO, Beau inexplicably lives in an exaggeratedly dystopian urban neighbourhood where a naked madman randomly stabs passers by and the body of a suicidal roof jumper is left to rot where it fell. Beau himself eventually becomes a victim of this environment when, shot at by a rogue cop, he runs into the street

and is hit by a van.

He wakes up in the home of a duo of strangers: avuncular, indefatigably cheerful surgeon Roger (Nathan Lane) and his breezy wife, Grace (Amy Ryan). They initially nurture Beau as he recuperates. But, after a weird incident involving the couple's daughter, Toni (Kylie Rogers), Grace turns on Beau.

Roger and Grace also have given shelter to Jeeves (Denis Ménochet), a mentally ill veteran who was a comrade of their fallen son and now lives in an RV on their property. Grace tells Jeeves to kill Beau, forcing the latter to flee into a nearby wood.

There, a play staged by a group of wandering actors and an animated sequence in which Beau is the protagonist explore possible alternative lives he might have pursued. All these interludes, from the road accident onward, however, are unwanted detours thwarting Beau's effort to travel back to his childhood home—where Mona may be awaiting him or may be lying dead.

Erotic inhibition is one of the script's major themes. We're shown flashbacks to teen Beau's (Armen Nahapetian) one shot at romance with fellow cruise passenger Elaine (Julia Antonelli). But Mona

Joaquin Phoenix stars
in a *Beau Is Afraid*.



has told Beau that his father died in the act of conceiving him and that Beau suffers from the same heart complaint that did Dad in, thus making his own desires a source of terror.

Beau eventually experiences a barrier-breaking encounter in this respect. While the treatment of this event is certainly explicit, it registers as more pathetic than exploitative. And, as with everything else in the movie, it's uncertain whether we're dealing with reality or merely Beau's warped imagination.

Aster's work is undoubtedly original and, for better or worse, entirely unfettered. Yet what his movie ultimately means is anyone's guess. The upshot, despite a dedicated performance from Phoenix, is an emotionally burdensome, intellectually

frustrating enigma.

Phoenix took a fairly original approach to the role, as he strove to 'let go of everything.' "I just started screaming, just the most intense guttural pain scream that I could before we were shooting, sitting there, because I had to just fully humiliate myself," Phoenix told variety.com. "And then just go like, okay, well once that's happened, you can't look any more stupid than you do now. And it just let go of everything, right? I don't know why, but I just was overcome with this need to do that."

Aster flet the scream affected the 'energy in the room.' "It was shocking in a way that was exciting, I think, because it did jar everybody. And I felt like it was good because the energy in the room did suddenly become both alert and disturbed," he said.

When England had a Spanish king and what this says about Queen Camilla's title

FAITH IN HISTORY

Gonzalo Velasco Berenguer

As the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla approaches, interest in the new Queen's title has grown – especially after the coronation invitations dropped the word “consort”, traditionally used to identify the spouse of a ruler.

Her title had already been widely discussed when the now King and Queen married in 2005 (when Camilla chose to be known as Duchess of Cornwall instead of Princess of Wales). And it was also reported then that once Charles ascended the throne, she would be known as ‘Princess Consort’.

What does the word ‘consort’ mean in this case? The best way to answer that is to consider the case of England's forgotten Spanish king, Philip, who reigned from 1554 to 1558 as husband to Queen Mary I.

Philip II of Spain is usually associated, in the English-speaking world, with the defeat of the Armada in 1588 and the religious and military conflict between Elizabeth

I's Protestant England and Philip's Catholic Spain. It is easy to forget that the man who sent his ships against Elizabeth – his former sister-in-law – had once been the king of England himself.

In lists of English kings and queens, he is usually omitted. The reason for this being that Philip is usually remembered and portrayed, both in popular imagery as well as in academic works, as a ‘King Consort’ and not a ‘King regnant’.

This view stems, partly, from a series of stratagems devised to curtail Philip's power. The marriage treaty published in January 1554 presented some restrictions, even if it conferred the title of King on Philip. He could not dispose of offices of the realm freely and he could not bestow them on those who were not ‘natives’.

If the marriage remained childless, he would have to relinquish his kingly title when Mary died. After the marriage in Winchester on 25th July 1554, Philip appeared in public events at the left side of Mary – the place traditionally reserved for the King's Queen Consort – and he was made to sit on a lower chair. Also, it quickly became clear that parliament would not acquiesce to the king having a coronation.

However, none of this meant that he was a ‘King Consort’. The early modern world was ruled according to strong patriarchal frameworks, and even though women could wield power in several European kingdoms, this was relatively rare and often considered undesirable.

Queens regnant (queens who exercise power in their own right) were proclaimed, therefore, when there were no viable male heirs. In fact, Mary was England's first queen regnant and her father, Henry VIII, had gone to great lengths to prevent her from ever becoming so (unsuccessfully, as it turned out).

In the early modern world, therefore, the mere concept of a ‘King consort’ did not exist – it was unthinkable. So it is not helpful to apply it to Philip.

When he married Mary, Philip was already a king – of Naples – and he ascended the Spanish throne in 1556 but he also acted as a full king of England. He appeared on coinage alongside Mary, he had a say on diplomatic appointments, he brokered England's reconciliation with Catholicism, and he created a new advisory board: the select council. In November 1554, he had even given the opening address to parliament and from then on always



King Philip of Spain – and of England

appeared on the right side of Mary.

Queen Camilla

The noun ‘consort’ in this context means ‘a wife or husband, especially of a ruler’. In that respect, Camilla is a consort to King Charles as much as he is to her. When the word is appended to the noun ‘king’ or ‘queen’, however, what it highlights is that he or she bears the title only through the right of their spouse.

Yet, under common law, upon the accession of a king, his wife automatically becomes the queen.

The fact that the previous monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, was a Queen regnant whose husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, was known as ‘Prince Consort’, created some confusion, which explains why Camilla has been officially referred to as the Queen Consort since Charles's accession.

This was also the expressed wish of the late Queen Elizabeth in her Accession Day message of February 2022. This was in line with both tradition and legality and it heralded the beginning of a transitional period designed to familiarise the public with Camilla's status as queen once King Charles ascended the throne.

That the new Queen will now be formally addressed as Queen Camilla does not mean that she will be gaining a new or different title, only that the potential confusion of the preceding months no longer holds. Although the word ‘consort’ in the title is no longer deemed necessary, she will still be the Queen Consort of the UK.

King Philip's case is different because his marriage was conceived as a shared rulership. Philip is often considered a forgotten monarch but he behaved fully as King of England and in the gallery of royal portraits in the House of Lords, commissioned in the 1850s, he stands in the place that recognises him as such, between Mary I and Elizabeth I.

Gonzalo Velasco Berenguer is a lecturer in history at the University of Bristol



King Charles and Queen Camilla

Mgr Vlad Felzmann continues his look back through history at the development of sport, and how it has come to form such a centrepiece of many peoples' lives

Some historians – most notably Bernard Lewis – claim that team sports as we know them today are primarily an invention of Western culture. British Prime Minister John Major was more explicit in 1995. He said: “We invented the majority of the world's great sports.... 19th century Britain was the cradle of a leisure revolution every bit as significant as the agricultural and industrial revolutions we launched in the century before.”

The Industrial Revolution and mass production brought increased leisure which allowed more time to engage in playing or observing (and gambling upon) spectator sports, as well as less elitism in and greater accessibility of sports of many kinds.

With the advent of mass media and global communication, professionalism became prevalent in sports, and this furthered sports popularity in general.

With the increasing values placed on those who won also came the increased desire to cheat. Some of the most common ways of cheating today involve the use of performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids. The use of these drugs has always been frowned on but in recent history there have also been agencies set up to monitor professional athletes and ensure fair play in the sport.

To reduce fighting among pupils with too much surplus energies, a number of the public schools such as Winchester and Eton, introduced variants of football and other sports for their pupils. These were described at the time as ‘innocent and lawful’, certainly in comparison with the rougher rural games.

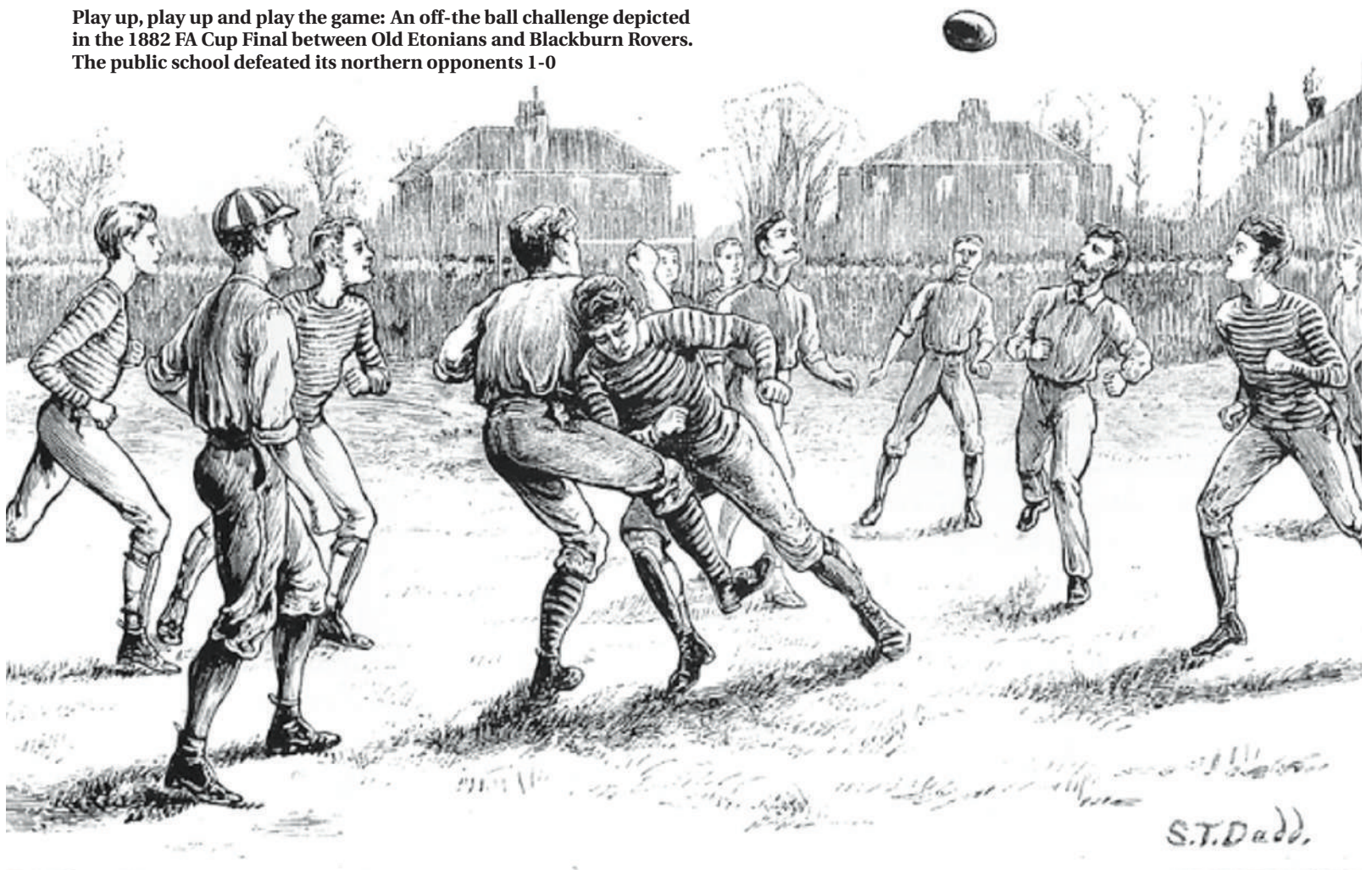
With urbanisation in the 19th century, the rural games moved to the new urban centres and came under the influence of the middle and upper classes. The rules and regulations devised at English institutions began to be applied to the wider game, with governing bodies in England being set up for a number of sports by the end of the 19th century.

The industrial revolution also brought with it increasing mobility, and created the opportunity for universities in Britain and elsewhere to compete with one another. This sparked increasing attempts to unify and reconcile various games in England, leading to the establishment of the Football Association in London, the first official governing body in football.

For sports to become professionalised, coaching had to come first. It gradually professionalised in the Victorian era, and the role was well established by 1914. In the First World War, military units sought out the coaches to supervise physical conditioning and develop morale-building teams. Sport became an important part of military life for British servicemen serving around the world.

Worldwide, the British influence includes many different football codes, lawn bowls, lawn tennis and other sports. The major impetus for

Play up, play up and play the game: An off-the ball challenge depicted in the 1882 FA Cup Final between Old Etonians and Blackburn Rovers. The public school defeated its northern opponents 1-0



Schools' plans to stop the boys from fighting spawned a host of global sports

this was the patenting of the world's first lawn mower in 1830. This allowed for the preparation of modern ovals, playing fields, pitches, grass courts, etc.

Women's competition in sports has been frowned upon by many societies in the past. The English public school background of organised sport in the 19th and early 20th century led to a paternalism that tended to discourage women's involvement in sports, with, for example, no women officially

competing in the 1896 Olympic Games.

The 20th century saw major advances in the participation of women in sports due to a growing women's sports movement in Europe and North America. This led to the initiation of the Women's Olympiad (held in the 1920s, with one hosted by London) and the Women's World Games (held four times (1922, 1926, 1930 and 1934).

The advent of such competitions increased girls' and women's

participation in sport, though another strong influence was the growth of the women's rights and feminist movements of the 19th and 20th centuries, respectively. The fight for the right to vote also included the right to play sport!

In the United States, female students' participation in sports was significantly boosted by the Title IX Act in 1972, which forbade gender discrimination in all aspects of any educational environment that uses federal financial aid, leading to increased funding and support to develop female athletes.

Pressure from sports funding bodies has also improved gender equality in sports. For example, the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) and the Leander Club (for rowing) in England had both been male-only establishments since their founding in 1787 and 1818, respectively.

However, both opened their doors to female members at the end of the 20th century at least partially due to

the requirements of the United Kingdom Lottery Sports Fund.

The 21st century has seen women's participation in sport at its all-time highest. At the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, women competed in 27 sports over 137 events, compared to 28 men's sports in 175 events. Several national women's professional sports leagues are in competition, and women's international sporting events such as the Women's World Cup for football, rugby and cricket continue to grow.

To round up these pieces on sport history, it is clear that what is now the United Kingdom, gave the world soccer – the way we play it today, rugby – whose rules are rooted in those of soccer – as well as a host of others, including tennis, cricket, golf, hockey and table tennis.

Britain may no longer be great at all these sports, but it can lay claim to have helped to unite the world through sport.



It is clear that what is now the UK gave the world soccer – the way we play it today, rugby – whose rules are rooted in those of soccer – as well as a host of others, including tennis, cricket, golf, hockey and table tennis. Britain may no longer be great at it but it has helped to unite the world through sport.

A pictorial round-up of the past seven days...



Model Ellie Goldstein posing with Barbie's first Down's syndrome doll. The doll has been created following consultation with the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) and is now available to pre-order in the UK



Historian Kate Williams inside a pod of the lastminute.com London Eye which has been transformed into Westminster Abbey, complete with replica coronation chair and crown jewels, ahead of the coronation of King Charles III

Model maker Daniel Anderson from the Legoland Windsor Resort, places a Lego model of King Charles III onto the balcony of Buckingham Palace as part of a coronation miniland scene, ahead of the coronation of King Charles III.



Drivers are reminded of the Government's emergency alert test on Sunday, 23rd April. The test failed on one-in-five phones



Dr Neil Johnston, Head of Early and Modern Records at The National Archive looks at the Briefing Note for the Coronation of King Charles the II at the National Archives, in Kew, Richmond, London, ahead of the coronation of King Charles III on 6th May.



A visitor observes cherry blossom in full bloom in the Tudor gardens at The National Trust's Greys Court in Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire.



Members of the King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery, during an inspection for the Advanced Mounted Gunner Pass Out. Passing the course enables the soldiers to ride on ceremonial parades including the gun salute to celebrate the moment King Charles III is crowned.



NASA's InSight Mars lander's latest shots of the surface around it. The InSight mission's seismometer, though coated by several years of Martian dust, was able to capture recordings of seismic events from the far side of the planet.

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LITURGICAL CALENDARS

Ordinary Form

Sunday Year A, Weekday Cycle I
Sunday, 30th April: 4th Sunday of Easter Acts 2:14, 36–41; Ps. 23:1–6 r. 1; 1 Pet. 2:20–25; Jn. 10:1–10
Monday, 1st May: Weekday of Easter or St. Joseph the Worker, Acts 11:1–18; Ps. 42:2–3, 42:3–4; Jn. 10:11–18
Tuesday, 2nd May: St. Athanasius, Bishop, Doctor of the Church Acts 11:19–26; Ps. 87; Jn. 10:22–30

Wednesday, 3rd May: Ss Philip and James, Apostles, 1 Cor. 15:1–8; Ps. 19:2–5; Jn. 14:6–14
Thursday, 4th May: The English Martyrs (E) Weekday of Easter (W) Acts 7:55–60; Ps. 31:3–4, 6, 8, 17, 21; Mt. 10:17–20
Friday, 5th May: Weekday of Easter or St Asaph, Bishop (W) Acts 13:26–33; Ps. 2:6–11; Jn. 14:1–6
Saturday, 6th May: Weekday of Easter Acts 13:44–52; Ps. 98:1–4; Jn. 14:7–14

Extraordinary Form Calendar

according to the Roman Missal of 1962 (Tridentine Rite)

Sunday, 30th April: Third Sunday after Easter 1 Pet. 2:11–19; Jn. 16:16–22
Monday, 1st May: St Joseph the Worker Col. 3:14–17, 23–4; Mt. 13:54–58
Tuesday, 2nd May: St Athanasius, bishop, confessor and doctor 2 Cor. 4:5–14; Mt. 10:23–28
Wednesday, 3rd May: Feria, Readings of Sunday repeated

Thursday, 4th May: Holy English and Welsh Martyrs, Heb. 12:1–10; Jn. 10:23–30
Friday, 5th May: St. Pius V, pope and confessor, 1 Pet. 5:1–4, 10–11; Mt. 16, 13–19
Saturday, 6th May: Celebration of Our Lady, Eccl. 24:14–16; Jn. 19: 25–27

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**Clergy process into St George's Cathedral, Southwark, to mark the Solemnity of the patron saint of England
Photo: © Mazur/cbcew.org.uk**