

A reflection on
early days of
August - p23



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Youth told: Church is open to all

Everyone is welcome – from all backgrounds and sections of society – but it's up to the young to use it to build a peaceful future

Andy Drozdziak

Pope Francis told young people at World Youth Day in Lisbon that they must take away the message that the Church is open to all, from every background and society, and that together, they can “dream of a peaceful future.”

At the same time he criticised bishops who were still hiding from taking full responsibility for tackling clerical abuse, saying there can be no hiding place in the Church and they must adopt a “zero tolerance” policy to the crime.

Speaking before 1.5 million people at the closing Mass of the largest Catholic gathering since the pandemic, the pope said: “Allow me, as an older person, to share with you, young people, a dream that I carry within me – the dream of peace, the dream of young people praying for peace, living in peace and building a peaceful future.”

After attending the popular and lively youth event in Portugal – whose own Church recently came to terms with its own clerical sex abuse crisis – Pope Francis said the Catho-

lic Church must abandon its practice of covering up abuse and instead be “very open” about how it is confronting the crime.

The pope said bishops who have not adopted a “zero tolerance” policy toward abuse need to “take charge of that irresponsibility.”

“The Church used to follow the conduct that is followed in families and neighbourhoods: it covers up,” he said, adding that addressing abuse must take in those places, too.

In the Church, he said, “I urge that we be very open” about matters of abuse.

The pope spent a packed five days in Lisbon encouraging the youth of the world and addressing the theme of ‘Rise Up’. Even when tempted to “throw in the towel” or stop along the journey of life, the pope said, young people must pick themselves up and walk toward joy. “Joy is not hidden, it's not kept under key, we have to look for it,” he said, “and that is tiring.”

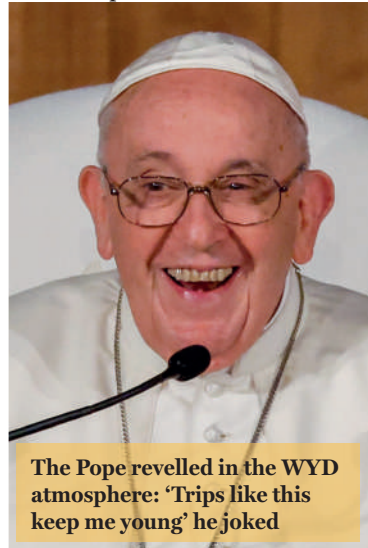
Yet, Pope Francis urged them to “rise up” when they fall along the path toward joy.

Many UK pilgrims attended World Youth Day, including a 57-strong group from the Diocese of East Anglia. Keith Morris from East Anglia told the *Universe* it had been a ‘fun, joyful and life-enriching time’ for the young people, who also visited Fatima.

English Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Vatican's Secretary for Relations with States, said that he thought WYD would inspire young people – and they could “sort out the mess” made by elders.

“There is nobody to give better witness than young people, because they come with fresh eyes,” he said.

“I think that they can sort out some of the mess that we, their elders, have created for them.”



The Pope revelled in the WYD atmosphere: ‘Trips like this keep me young’ he joked

WYD's wkd!

A young man in a wheelchair is lifted high above the crowd by his friends so he can watch Pope Francis celebrate the World Youth Day Mass.

• Special feature starts from page 14



Inside

Thank you, Liverpool

Archdiocese welcomes a visitor from Ukraine with a special message for the city - p4

The Synod needs deacons

The pope's autumn meeting needs more delegates with ‘relatable input’ - p21



Seven ways to beat weight gain
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Not our style: SPUC condemns star's gift to abortion groups

Andy Drozdziak

Pro-life group SPUC has criticised singer Harry Styles for donating tour funds to pro-abortion groups.

The former One Direction star recently donated \$6.5 million of his \$585 million tour proceeds to US charities which included pro-abortion Planned Parenthood and Physicians for Reproductive Rights.

A SPUC spokesperson said: "One wonders how much this musician knows about the pro-abortion groups he donates to, including their racist origins and the harm they still do to the black community in the United States."

The spokesperson added that Styles' donation will serve to "help pro-abortion ideologues...advance its anti-child, anti-family agenda."

Last year, Harry Styles showed his support for abortion during his



US tour. "No one can tell you what to do with your own body, it's yours... it is your choice. Stick together and fight together," he said.

Styles was speaking at the time of the Supreme Court making a landmark decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* in Washington in June 2022.

"I don't really know where that ends. Someone needs an operation and someone can decide that they

can't have it? It makes no sense to me," he commented. "It's quite scary to see how far backwards we're going in a lot of ways."

US pro-abortion group Planned Parenthood, was founded by eugenics supporter Margaret Sanger in 1921, but even the organisation has admitted that "the biggest concern with Margaret Sanger is her public support for the eugenics medical philosophy, which was rooted in racism, ableism and classism", and has moved to distance itself from her legacy.

SPUC's Antonia Tully criticised the group's activities and policies. "Organisations like Planned Parenthood are not improving the lives of women. Aided and abetted by governments and policy makers, they are controlling who deserves to be born and who doesn't," she said.

Bishops back CU campaign to scrap the cap for faith schools

Several Catholic bishops in England have added their support to the Catholic Union's campaign to scrap the cap on faith-based admissions to new free schools.

The Catholic Union, which launched the campaign earlier this summer, is encouraging people to add their names to an open letter calling for the cap to be lifted.

Almost 600 people have already signed the letter to the Education Secretary, Gillian Keegan MP.

As reported in last week's *Universe*, Bishop of Leeds Marcus Stock, who is Chairman of the Catholic Education Service, said he was "pleased to support the new campaign launched by Catholic Union to lift the 50 percent admissions cap on new free schools with a religious designation."

Now other bishops have backed the campaign, including Archbishop of Birmingham Bernard Longley, Bishop of East Anglia Peter Collins, and the Bishop of Lancaster Paul Swarbrick.

The 50 per cent cap on faith-based admissions applies to oversubscribed free schools with a religious character in England. Introduced by the Coalition Government in 2010, the cap has made it impossible for Catholic Bishops to sanction new Catholic free schools as it would lead to pupils being turned away on the basis of their Catholic faith.



Archbishop Bernard Longley

The Catholic Union, along with the Catholic Education Service and others, has been calling for the policy to be reversed since it was first introduced.

The 2017 Conservative manifesto committed to lifting the cap, but this was never achieved.

As well as making Catholic education more widely available, the letter to the Education Secretary says that lifting the cap "would help boost morale" in a sector that has struggled with pay and conditions and the pressure of inspections.

Rt Rev Marcus Stock, Chairman of the Catholic Education Service, said: "The Catholic community has long been a valued partner to successive governments, and since the 19th century has become the second-largest education provider in the country.

"We seek to maintain parental

choice and ensure that, particularly where schools are oversubscribed, Catholic parents can provide a Catholic education for their children in a Catholic school.

"The Catholic Education Service, the Catholic Union, and all those who benefit from the diversity provided by our Catholic school sector, regard it as vital that the admissions cap is lifted."

Professor John Lydon, Chairman of the Catholic Union's Education Committee, said: "This letter is a very important initiative from the Catholic Union.

"There is a bright future for Catholic schools in this country, but we need to be honest about the challenges we face.

"One of those challenges is the cap on faith-based admissions. It has without doubt restricted access to Catholic education in England and prevented the Church from realising the benefits of the academisation programme currently underway.

"The letter to the Secretary of State is a timely intervention and I encourage people to add their names in support."

The open letter to the Education Secretary can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/65a6ff6e>

• **My struggle to find a Catholic education for my family:**
Caroline Farrow, pg 8

Priest and JRS lead criticism as the first asylum-seekers moved to Portland barge

Andy Drozdziak

Catholic justice groups have responded with outrage as the first asylum seekers have been moved to the controversial *Bibby Stockholm* barge – with JRS UK blasting the accommodation as ‘wholly inappropriate’.

The *Bibby Stockholm*, which is moored at Portland in Dorset, has been refurbished to accommodate up to 500 asylum seekers. The first 15 were taken on board on Monday.

JRS said: “We are outraged that people seeking asylum have been moved onto the barge. As it will now operate, it is quasi-detention.”

Bibby Stockholm is one of a number of locations intended to house migrants while their asylum applications are being considered, but JRS UK has rejected the scheme. “It is wholly inappropriate for those seeking sanctuary. It represents a move to cut those seeking asylum off from our communities, and to dehumanise them.”

Newcastle priest Fr Marc Lyden-Smith called the scheme ‘sickening’. “Shameful. Inhumane. Sickening. Cruel. Just a few of the many words I could use to describe this



The first asylum-seekers make their way on to the *Bibby Stockholm*. Just 15 are believed to be on board, but the barge’s capacity suggests it could accommodate as many as 500

man dignity of all citizens, migrants, and refugees,” it said. “We must ensure that all migrants receive dignified treatment irrespective of the legal status they are assigned.”

Meanwhile, Conservative Party deputy chairman Lee Anderson caused further controversy when he said that asylum seekers complaining about the *Bibby Stockholm* barge should go ‘back to France’ and using a swear word to do so.

“These people come across the Channel in small boats... if they don’t like the conditions they are housed in here then they should go back to France, or better not come at all,” Lee Anderson said.

Natasha Tsangarides, associate director for Freedom from Torture, a refugee charity, said the MP’s “dehumanising and inflammatory” language puts people seeking sanctuary in the UK at “real risk”.

Labour Mayor of London Sadiq Khan accused the Government of stoking “division and hate”, but Justice Secretary Alex Chalk defended Lee Anderson’s comments as expressing “the righteous indignation of the British people.”

government, this decision, this policy,” he tweeted, adding “I am utterly ashamed of how this country is treating people seeking safety and protection.”

Serious concerns were raised last week about fire safety and the risk of the outbreak of disease in such close quarters, leading JRS UK to

call for “safe alternative accommodation.”

“We call for those placed on the barge to be urgently provided with safe alternative accommodation in British communities; for plans to use the *Bibby Stockholm* as asylum accommodation to be halted; and for the Government to abandon all

plans to accommodate asylum seekers on barges and in other quasi-detention settings,” JRS UK said.

CSAN, the official Catholic agency tackling poverty and injustice in England and Wales, said “dignified treatment” of migrants was required. “Catholic social teaching places an emphasis on the equal

WYD made its mark!



Andy Drozdziak

A prominent youth leader has celebrated World Youth Day by recording a show for BBC Radio 4. Greg Finn from popular UK charity Mark 10 mission is delighted to ‘share with the mainstream media the joy of what we were witnessing in Lisbon.’

“What a wonderful World Youth Day week I spent in Lisbon,” Greg Finn told the Universe. “One of the highlights of the week was the chance to welcome the team from

BBC Radio 4 to our stand. My friend Fr Columba CFR recorded the music and I was invited to present the Sunday Worship programme. It was a great blessing to be able to share with the mainstream media the joy of what we were witnessing in Lisbon.” The show will air this coming Sunday, 13th August.

• More on WYD - see pg 14 PLUS we will round up WYD parish stories next week



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IN BRIEF

'Crazy' rent rises revealed

Renters are now spending nearly four times as much of their income on housing as homeowners, *The Independent* has said. The average private renter is currently handing over more than a third of their wages to a landlord, showing "the scale of the growing emergency gripping the UK".

Call handlers working for the housing charity Shelter said that they were now dealing with people facing "crazy" rent rises.

Baton rounds controversy

A Freedom of Information request has found that the only events for which Metropolitan Police chiefs authorised the potential use of baton rounds in the past six years were black-led gatherings.

The weapons, which have never been fired during public order incidents on the British mainland, were cleared for use at Notting Hill carnival and the Black Lives Matter protests.

The Met told *The Guardian* that it is "inaccurate and irresponsible" to imply the "ethnicity of those likely to be involved in an event or protest influences the tactics considered".

'Postcode lottery' for better sleep

The UK has a 'postcode lottery' when it comes to sleep, a major study has found, with those living in deprived areas of the UK having poorer sleep quality than those in affluent areas.

The research, published in the journal *Clocks & Sleep*, found that both social deprivation and ethnicity affected the quality of sleep, irrespective of age, sex, personal wealth, employment and education. "The consequences are huge in terms of inequalities", said Prof John Groeger.

Ukrainian bishop drops by to say 'thank you' to Liverpool

Bishop Hryhoriy (Gregory) Komar, the auxiliary bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy (diocese) of Sambir-Drohobych, Ukraine, has paid a visit to the Archdiocese of Liverpool to express his heartfelt gratitude to all those who participated in the *#Liverpool4Ukraine* appeal.

The *#Liverpool4Ukraine* appeal was set up by the archdiocese in February 2022, with the aim of providing support to the people of Ukraine who are enduring challenging circumstances due to the Russian invasion.

Partnering with Bishop Gregory's diocese, representatives from the archdiocese has since made five trips to the Ukraine border, carrying essential aid to those in need, which the *Universe* has previously reported.

The aid delivered included crucial supplies like medical items, thermal clothing for the harsh winter months, toiletries, sleeping bags, and building materials.

Bishop Gregory's visit to the archdiocesan office was a touching gesture to personally extend his thanks to all those who contributed to the *#Liverpool4Ukraine* appeal. The occasion was marked by a short liturgy led by Canon Aidan Prescott, Vicar General, where prayers were offered for peace in Ukraine.

"I came here to thank the people



of Liverpool who have helped so much", Bishop Gregory said during his visit.

"Life in Ukraine has changed – many people have lost relatives, lost jobs, lost homes, and many have had to leave Ukraine. If we didn't get the help we've received, we don't know where we'd be – it would certainly be much worse."

The collaboration between Liver-

pool and Bishop Gregory's diocese has been a resounding success. Since the appeal's launch in March, over 1,000 boxes of donated goods have been delivered to Bishop Gregory to be distributed among his community, making a tangible difference in the lives of those struggling in Ukraine.

Other support from the people of Liverpool has also been remarkable,

with donations to the appeal reaching an impressive £136,000.

The visit was not just a charitable endeavour but also held a profound spiritual significance. The Liturgy of the Word for Peace with Justice in Ukraine, presided by Very Rev Canon Aidan Prescott, was a testament to the shared prayers and concerns for the wellbeing of the Ukrainian people.

Bishop Gregory commented on the impact of the Catholic Church in Ukraine. "The Church has always been important in Ukrainian society, but her role has now increased, as people are now coming to the Church not only for spiritual help but also material help," he said.

Bishop Gregory's pastoral visit to Liverpool served as a moment of thanksgiving and acknowledgment for the unwavering support and kindness extended to his diocese and the people of Ukraine through the *#Liverpool4Ukraine* appeal.

It was a heartening reminder of the positive impact that communities can have when they unite for a common cause, transcending borders and offering hope and solace to those facing adversity.

Want to help?

Donations to the appeal are still welcome. Details can be found by clicking [HERE](#):

Porsche accused of whitewashing faith after Christ dropped from ad

Luxury car maker Porsche has been criticised after it removed a statue of Jesus from an advert.

On the ad, when a Porsche drives by the Cristo Rei landmark in Lisbon, a prominent Catholic monument, an empty plinth is shown instead of the figure of Christ. Cristo Rei depicts Christ

with his arms outstretched in a blessing towards Lisbon.

The decision to edit the statue was met with anger on Twitter. One Twitter user commented: 'Wow and that's a beautiful statue to see in person. I drove on that bridge and it's truly amazing. I'm marking Porsche off my list of

future purchases. They should be ashamed!'

Porsche were accused by one user of being 'woke,' with a third commentator saying it was 'ridiculous to remove an iconic statue from a commercial.'

Another user stated: "They did not have to film this location... yet

they decided to include the statue/base so they could erase the most important part of it."

Following the backlash on social media, Porsche replaced the original advert with a new version, complete with the Cristo Rei statue, admitting that removing it was a "mistake".

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CARE urges Scotland to act over rise in prostitution

Christian justice charity CARE is pleading with the Scottish Government to 'criminalise the purchase of sex without delay' after the latest Police in Scotland quarterly report showed human trafficking and exploitation cases at their highest.

According to the report, Albanian and Vietnamese nationals are among the most trafficked.

The National Referral Mechanism – a UK-wide framework to identify potential victims of human trafficking and exploitation – showed that Albanian nationals make up 22 per cent of victims, Vietnamese make up 19 per cent, and UK nationals make up 11 per cent. These numbers are at their highest since records began.

In response, Michael Veitch, parliamentary officer at CARE for Scotland, said: "The murky links between human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation are well known.

"For as long as it remains legal for men to pay for sex, we are failing to tackle one of the principal drivers of trafficking at source. For the sake of the women who continue to be harmed in this way, the Scottish Government must move to criminalise the purchase of sex without delay."

In May this year, it was discovered that the number of potential

victims across the UK has drastically increased: 4,746 victims were referred to the Home Office from January to March, up from 3,773 in the same period in 2022.

Last year, four people were imprisoned for trafficking young women into Scotland from Thailand and China. They promised legitimate employment but, in reality, confiscated passports and forced young women to work in brothels across Glasgow.

Mr Veitch said: "The UK Government's new Illegal Migration Act will make matters worse and be hugely detrimental to genuine victims of modern slavery in Scotland, as it reduced modern slavery protections.

"It is deeply sad that ministers failed to listen to the expert organisations urging them to rethink this law. We fear the consequences of the modern slavery provisions will be realised in broken lives."

Police Scotland included in its report that 'Albanian nationals are the fastest growing nationality reported in the NRM in Scotland, with most Albanian nationals encountered being adult males in immigration removal centres or the prison estate.

"The increase on reporting has been heavily influenced by socio-political events including the UK leaving the EU, Covid-19 restrictions, migration from conflict areas, and the large increase in clandestine entry by small boats and other irregular migration matters."

Speaking on how to tackle this growing problem, the Police in Scotland highlighted the upcoming interfaith National Human Trafficking Conference held in conjunction with the Catholic Church's Santa Maria Anti-Trafficking Group.

This event will bring together political and faith leaders, with the UK Police Forces Strategic leads in this area to discuss "more effective law enforcement".



Prison costs rule scrapped

The Government says it is scrapping a highly contentious rule that saw living costs deducted from the compensation paid to people who had been wrongly imprisoned.

Ministers announced the change after widespread outrage over the case of Andrew Malkinson, who spent 17 years in jail for a rape he did not commit.

His release from prison was "quickly soured" when he was ordered to pay back living costs for his time in jail and told that there would be a deduction from any compensation for his board and lodging while behind bars, said *The Observer*.



Parishioner's pop-up food bank applauded

Andy Drozdziak
A parishioner from Bermondsey has been praised after opening a pop-up food bank for people struggling to make ends meet.

Henrietta Onyema, 63, created the foodbank in her at home after the foodbank at St Peter & the Guardian Angels was forced to close after members found parking costs too excessive.

"There are lots of people struggling right now," she said. "Things are hard. I don't ask any questions – anyone can come and take whatever they like."

Comboni Missionary Father

Tesfamichael Negusse, from St Peter & the Guardian Angels church, congratulated Henrietta. "She has her heart in the need of people. She's always concerned with the neighbourhood," he said.

The parish mission statement at St Peter & the Guardian Angels church, in the archdiocese of Southwark, states: "We are a Catholic community where Christ's love and forgiveness is at the centre of all that we say and do. We rejoice in the great diversity of our community and the richness that diversity brings to our Church life."

This is not the first time Henrietta has shown public spirit. She came to the assistance of people queuing to see the Queen's body when it lay in state last September by opening her toilet to the public for three days; Dame Kelly Holmes was among those who used the facilities. She also offered free coffee, tea and biscuits to people in the queue.

She said afterwards: "I don't know where the energy came from – it's God who did it. I was just bouncing at the age of 63. "You wouldn't think I had problems with my legs!"

Picture: Southwark News

OUR LADY, QUEEN OF PEACE PILGRIMAGE TO WALSINGHAM

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Parish Priest of St James, Medjugorje

Monday, 28th August 2023

Itinerary:

- 1.15pm Gathering, Rosary & Litany of Our Lady followed by: Talk by Fr Zvonimir. Break (Sacrament of Reconciliation).
- 3.45pm Holy Mass, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction.
- 5.30pm Depart.



"Dear children! I am calling all of you to be carriers of the peace and joy of the risen Jesus for all those who are far from prayer; that the love of Jesus, through your lives, may transform them to a new life of conversion and holiness. Thank you for having responded to my call."
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COMMENT**New thinking could deliver better results for patients – and the NHS**

Few would disagree with the statement that the NHS is in crisis. That nearly 7.5 million people are on waiting lists, the highest figure since records began in 2007, and that there have been almost 100,000 more deaths of people with cardiovascular disease than expected since 2020, are but two of the most worrying statistics.

But we may now be seeing the first tentative signs that the Government is at long last coming up with creative ideas to reform healthcare. Ministers have announced that private sector healthcare providers will be brought on board to provide over 400,000 diagnostic scans, checks and tests each year.

We need to go back to when Tony Blair was prime minister to last see such an expansion for the role of the private sector in the NHS.

All governments of whatever party live in fear of discussing social insurance models for funding the health service, such as those successfully operating in France, Germany and the Netherlands. So long as it remains taboo to consider any alternative to an NHS funded through general taxation, the only way forward is to bring competition into the provision of healthcare.

Former Prime Minister Tony Blair, in a speech marking the 75th Anniversary of the NHS last month, put it well when he called for a massive increase in private provision within the NHS. What is needed, he argued, are “new providers and new partnerships ... where the incentives of funding and accountability are designed to encourage innovation...”

Such diverse provision is standard in European countries where they enjoy better healthcare outcomes than the UK.

Who is carrying out treatment, provided it is timely, efficient, of a high standard and free at the point of delivery, should surely be foremost in people's thinking. Few people live in fear of having their routine scan or operation in a Bupa hospital, rather than the local NHS behemoth.

Only a focused Government strategy can end housing crisis

POLITICS

Jo Richardson**Homelessness in England has reached record levels – here's why, and how to fix it**

Record numbers of people are living in temporary accommodation in England, according to the UK Government's latest reported figures. Statistics on statutory homelessness show that in March 2023, 104,510 households – including over 131,000 children – were living in hotels, hostels, B&Bs and the like.

These figures are the result of multiple crises. There is an insufficient supply of available and affordable housing in the UK, with more than 1.2 million households on social housing waiting lists in England alone. At the same time, there has been a sustained fall in social housing homes being built (39,562 in 2010 compared with 7,644 in 2022).

Government data also shows that the private rented sector has nearly doubled in size since 2020. It is now the second biggest tenure after owner occupation. This means that what happens in the private rented sector is affecting proportionally more and more of the population – and hits younger people particularly hard.

In March 2020, in a bid to stop the spread of Covid-19, the Government funded interventions to get people sleeping rough off the streets. This public health intervention, dubbed the Everyone In campaign, prompted a drop of 37 per cent in the 2020 homelessness figures and a further nine per cent was recorded in 2021.

This confirms what my research has long shown: with the necessary funding and political support, local authorities and social housing providers can dramatically improve the lives of people experiencing homelessness.

The English housing lottery

According to a recent analysis by the BBC, competition in the private rented sector has left 20 people vying for each tenancy. This represents a tripling of demand since 2019.

In May 2023, prospective tenants interviewed by the *Evening Standard* testified to the extent to which demand has outstripped supply in London. They spoke about properties in mouldy

condition, others going for £150 or £200 above the asking rental price, others still with six-month break clauses. They described how looking for a place to rent – and facing discrimination in the process – was affecting their mental health. As one man put it: “You feel powerless because landlords know that if you don't take it, they'll find someone who'll offer more.”

The local housing allowance – the rate used to calculate housing benefit available to people – has been frozen since 2020. As a result, the amount of state support people are able to get does not track market rates, which have risen by 20 per cent in that same period.

In July 2023, the Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove, announced that his department would prioritise “urban regeneration and new inner-city renaissance” as a means for getting more homes built. This suggests Gove is seeking to further tweak the planning system by focusing on investment urban areas.

Instead of widening potential land use, Gove wants to regenerate cities. But this will compound the housing issues facing those living in rural areas – tourism and the second home boom is affecting rural and coastal property markets, making housing even more unaffordable for local people and driving hidden homelessness – homelessness not accounted for in official statistics.

At the same time, Gove has not addressed the need to boost building for social rentals in order to meet the needs of the millions of people on the waiting list.

Housing precarity among young people

Where there is a lack of affordable housing and a lack of rental housing, there will be more homelessness. With the Everyone In campaign's success in 2021, the Government demonstrated that it had the means to actually tackle this problem.

However, in 2022, the numbers spiked again. Relative to the 2021 figures, there was a 26 per cent increase in people sleeping rough.

A House of Commons library briefing in March 2023 highlighted that, if the Government wants to meet its stated target of eradicating rough sleeping by 2024, research has long shown what needs to be put in place: a long-term strategy, thorough cross-party working and long-term funding. The briefing also pointed out that the Government's own figures suggest that without such bold action, it will miss its own target.

Youth homelessness is of particular concern. Data collated by charities, including Homeless Link and the New Horizon Youth Centre, in 2022 showed that 129,000 young people had sought help with housing from their local authority.

“*At national level, the single most vital ingredient is the political will to actually deliver properly affordable housing. This requires the state to have a long-term strategic approach.*”

The search for a new home to rent or buy is becoming increasingly difficult, particularly for young people

Much of this is hidden from public gaze. These young people often stay with friends for short periods or live in precarious conditions. Their vulnerability is only heightened by societal assumptions that they are ‘adult enough’ to manage on their own, but not ‘grown-up enough’ to expect to have their own place.

These assumptions are made clear in the fact that benefits are capped at a ‘shared accommodation’ rate unless there are specific circumstances, for example, proven experience of domestic violence.

Those who no longer fall in the 18-24 age bracket, but are part of ‘Generation rent’, have already been campaigning on the impact of inequality in housing and the issues faced in the private rented sector.

In 2022, I researched what had worked in how the Everyone In campaign was implemented. I found that where local authorities, social housing providers, healthcare, charities and the private sector were funded and supported, they could work nimbly, effectively sharing information and collaborating to achieve outcomes quickly.

At national level, however, the single most vital ingredient is the political will to actually deliver properly affordable housing. This requires the state to provide sustained funding and to have a long-term strategic approach.

Failing this, the lessons learned since the start of the pandemic, on the importance to society of a place to call home, will be lost.

Jo Richardson is a Professor of Housing and Social Inclusion, De Montfort University



Stop UK Government funding China's genocidal regime

The Chinese Government is imposing forced abortion, sterilisation and infanticide on the Uyghur population.

As the cost of living rises, the UK Government is giving millions in aid to China's brutal regime.

- **Over £60 million** was sent to China between 2020-2021 (according to the Chief Commissioner of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact).

China is the world's second largest economy and its treatment of women and babies is shocking.

£60 million of UK taxpayers' money should be put to better use.

Send a message to the Prime Minister today – sign this petition and help us build a world where abortion is unthinkable.

End the UK Government's complicity with coerced abortion in China



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Society for the **Protection**
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Food aid in crisis

Sir John Battle



Russia is again blockading the export of Ukrainian grain after tearing up the UN agreement brokered in July 2022 to allow its safe passage through the Black Sea.

This is hitting some of the poorest and most vulnerable in the world hardest, in countries currently in deadly conflicts of their own, such as Yemen, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and lately, Kenya. Up to this July Ukraine supplied 80 per cent of the UN World Food Programme wheat, which is used specifically as emergency humanitarian food aid to stave off famine. In South Sudan alone, 27,000 children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition. Russia has now declared it will run its own food support programme for six favoured African countries.

This can be no substitute and what's more, by blocking Ukrainian wheat from the world grain markets, wholesale prices have simply been driven up. The UN, therefore, has to pay more to distribute less.

Meanwhile the UK aid budget has been drastically cut back in recent years after breaking the agreed legal commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income introduced by the last Labour Government, and endorsed by the Conservative Liberal coalition even despite the economic austerity programmes. The latest assessment of the impact of that cut shows the UK's emergency crisis reserve has been hammered, which means that we are not in a position to assist as famine begins to take over East Africa.

It is notable that a third of the UK aid budget has been used by the Home Office to pay for accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees.

CAFOD is among those aid charities pressing for the cuts to be restored and for the G20 countries to press Russia to reinstate the Ukraine grain supplies, without which millions again will be condemned to death.

As Russia bombs food warehouses and farms (not to mention indiscriminate attacks on civilians), the situation fast deteriorates. Nearer home the emergency food aid budget effectively pays for the asylum seeker barge accommodation in Portland, Dorset.

As theologian Walter Brueggeman said, the Biblical story is not the "myth of scarcity" peddled by powers but a good news story of God's plenty. The problem remains distribution.

My tale highlights how the education system is failing Catholic families

CATHOLIC COMMENT

Caroline Farrow



Regular *Catholic Universe Weekly* readers will know something of my struggle to secure my children an appropriate education.

For those who don't; a recap. None of my five children have been able to attend state Catholic schools and over the past eight years, I've been forced to shell out a small fortune in school fees – which amounts to almost every single penny of my income in order that they can receive a Catholic education, leaving us with very little in the way of disposable income, let alone the ability to make any kind of pension provision.

Admittedly our situation is unusual and has been the subject of raised eyebrows locally, not because of our choice, but because of the lack thereof. It has seemed incredible to our community that the local parish priest hasn't been able to send his children to the local parish schools, but this is one of the anomalies of the admissions system; there is, perhaps rightly, no scope for any special preference to be given to anyone. The Catholic Church is not set up for the situation of married clergy, therefore there is absolutely no provision or leeway within the system.

Since the ability of Catholic schools to interview potential families was scrapped on the grounds of it being potentially discriminatory, the only requirement to prove Catholicity is the ability to produce a baptism certificate, meaning that families who attend Mass on a regular basis and volunteer in the parish frequently miss out on school places in favour of families who, once their child has been baptised, never return save for weddings, baptisms and funerals or the odd Christmas Eve crib service.

When my husband was approaching priestly ordination eight years ago, as Christmas approached, we were informed that he would be sent to his current parish, in a different county, with just under four weeks notice. Our eldest child was in Year 6, the next one was in Reception. The parish did not have a local primary school

attached and there was not a single Catholic school in the area which could accommodate all our children. We had also missed all of the deadlines both for secondary school for my eldest daughter and primary school for our third daughter, then in nursery and due to start school later in the year.

A local private Catholic primary school took pity on us and found spaces for them, offering us a significant bursary. Sadly, over the years, the school came under new management and the bursary was gradually chipped away, so what began as heavily subsidised and at one point free places, meant that by the time the children left, we were effectively trapped and paying over 70% in fees. Being financially beholden to the school also left us feeling disempowered, meaning that we were unable to challenge the school's decision to ditch my husband from the governing body as a result of my opinions on transgenderism and their appalling treatment of my daughter diagnosed with autism; they prohibited her attending the Wintershall production of the Life of Christ, as a punishment for an autistic meltdown and sewed up her coat pockets without our consent, so that she didn't spoil the look of an assembly during a visit by the inspectorate.

As our children gradually left primary school, we were therefore looking forward to being relieved of the burden of school fees. However, because they had not attended the local Catholic state primary schools, officially listed as a feeder school on the admissions criteria, they were therefore unable to get

How the *Universe* reported on the story last week.

The cap is denying too many Catholic parents the chance to send their children to the faith school of their choice

places at the local state Catholic school, leaving us with another painful decision about school fees and having to go through the humiliating and complicated process of regular bursary assessments.

Our two youngest children, who are both diagnosed with autism, are in a rather precarious situation. Our daughter is attempting to reintegrate into primary school, having spent the last year, traumatised from her previous school experience, at home, and my son is currently without a school place and caught up in the bureaucracy of attempting to secure an Educational Health and Care plan, in order for his needs to be met within school. Every single local Catholic school we have visited has told us straight, that without it, they will be unable to meet his needs and attempted to deter us from applying. They suggested that instead we apply to

a local specialist independent school for SEND pupils which has a Catholic foundation.

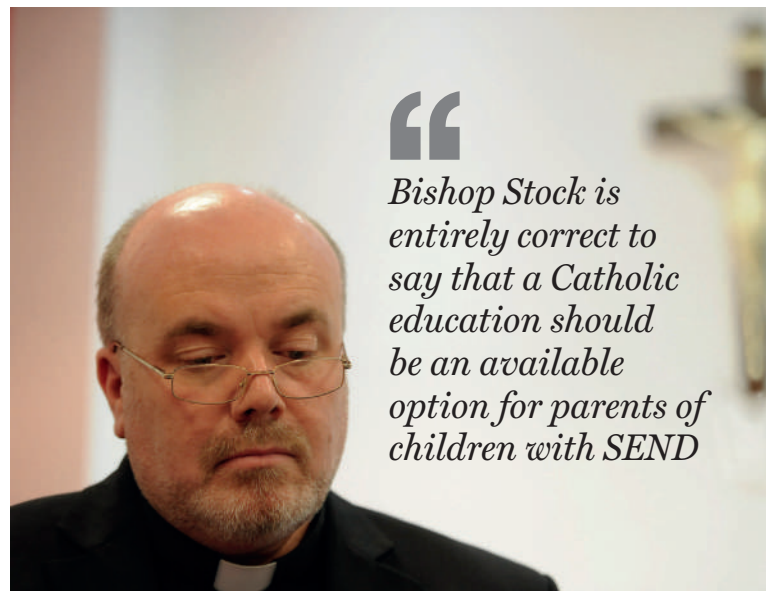
We did, they assessed our son, said that he would flourish, they could provide the therapy he needs and that they would love to help him, but sadly, they were not in a position to offer any financial assistance and we simply can't afford the fees, without causing significant trauma to our daughters and pulling them out of Catholic education.

So later this month we are faced with the unenviable task of sitting down with a glass of wine and deciding which local school is going to fail our son the least, is the most appropriate and sympathetic school. It will be non-Catholic, a decision that is breaking my husband's heart.

All of which are reasons why I heartily applaud and support the head of the Catholic Education Service, Bishop Marcus Stock's call on the Government to lift the 50% cap on faith-based admissions and also allow for new Catholic free schools, some of which could specialise in SEND.

Bishop Stock is entirely correct to note that a Catholic education should be an available option for parents of children with SEND. No Catholic parent should be forced to make enormous financial sacrifices either by sending their child into the independent sector, or for a parent to give up work and home education, in order to access the education that is their birthright.

As I said, I don't expect any special privilege, but when the children of Catholic clergy cannot access places in their local Catholic schools, you know that something is very wrong with the system.



“
Bishop Stock is entirely correct to say that a Catholic education should be an available option for parents of children with SEND

Families welcome plans to open inquest into Troubles murders

Fresh inquests have been ordered into the deaths of five Catholic men killed by Loyalist paramilitary group the UVF in Co Tyrone more than 30 years ago.

Northern Ireland's Attorney General Brenda King has directed that inquests be held into the deaths of Phelim McNally, 28, in Coagh in 1988, Thomas Casey, 57, in Cookstown in 1990, Sean Anderson, 32, in Pomeroy in 1991 and teenager Dwayne O'Donnell, 17, and Thomas Armstrong, 52, in Cappagh in 1991.

A solicitor for the families of the men said the cases are linked through suspects, geography, and ballistics, and said he believes the cases involve collusion with state forces.

The decision to grant new inquests was taken on the basis of deficiencies in the original investigation and inquest as well as new information coming to light.

Solicitor Gavin Booth of Phoenix Law, who acts for the families of the men welcomed the ordering of fresh inquests. "For too long these families have sought answers as to what



Michael Armstrong holding an image of his brother Thomas Armstrong, Pauline McNally holding an image of her husband Phelim McNally, Conor Casey holding an image of his parents Kathleen and Tommy Casey, Briege O'Donnell holding an image of her son Dwayne O'Donnell, and Peter Anderson holding an image of his brother Sean Anderson, outside Belfast High Court. Photo: Liam McBurney/PA Wire

happened to their loved ones," he said. "New evidence which has come to light raises serious questions, not only about the involvement of the 8th Battalion of the UDR in all

these killings, but also as regards the failure of the RUC to prosecute these individuals."

The move comes as the Government's controversial Legacy Bill is

expected to get Royal Assent later this year. It is set to give immunity from prosecution for Troubles-related offences to people who co-operated with the Independent Com-

mission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR), and will prevent future civil cases and inquests.

All inquests linked to the Troubles must reach a conclusion by May of next year. After May, cases are then passed to the ICRIR.

Mr Booth said his clients "are steadfast in their commitment to seeing these inquests completed".

Seana Quinn, sister of Mr O'Donnell, said her family has been fighting for decades for answers.

"Our families are fighting for truth and justice, it's not up for debate," she said. "We deserve this inquest."

Davina Bolton, daughter of Phelim McNally, said her father was an innocent man. "This is an important day for us because we're finally moving forward and getting closer to the truth. We've been waiting for a long time for this, 35 years, we just need truth and justice," she said.

Sinn Féin vice president Michelle O'Neill described the development as a "positive step for truth and justice".

Own goal for Irish clubs as they sign up with betting firms

CARE has blasted three Northern Irish football clubs for being "out of touch with the public" after they confirmed betting firms would sponsor their shirts this season, despite public concern about gambling advertising in football.

Cliftonville, Crusaders and Glentoran will display Sean Graham Bookmakers, Boyle Sports and BetMcLean respectively.

Tim Cairns, a gambling policy expert at Christian charity CARE for Northern Ireland, said: "NIFL clubs that continue to take money from gambling companies are out-of-touch with the public."

"Northern Ireland has the highest rate of gambling harm in the UK. A person here is four times more likely to find themselves harmed by gambling than a person in England or the Republic of Ireland. Yet, Cliftonville, Crusaders and Glentoran will once again start the season with betting companies emblazoned across their match-day shirts."

The issue has come to the fore recently after Scottish 'Old Firm' clubs Celtic and Rangers were criticised for displaying betting logos on their shirts. Earlier this year, English Premier League clubs collectively agreed to withdraw gambling sponsorship from the front of matchday



Glentoran's shirt for 2023-24

shirts, from the 2025-26 season.

Mr Cairns complained that no such conversation is taking place in Northern Ireland.

"In the rest of the UK, debate is already taking place about the relationship between gambling and football. Football in Northern Ireland is deafeningly silent on the scourge of gambling harm," he said.

"Given we have the highest rate of gambling harm, professional football in NI needs to start the conversation and ask if it is right that loyal fans struggling with addiction are bombarded with gambling promotion at a match?"

"Do we really want beloved sports teams linked to a product that harms so many families?"

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IN BRIEF

Is cost of living crisis ‘ending’?

Economists said that average pay is about to start rising faster than inflation for the first time in more than a year. New inflation figures, due next week, are expected to show a fall in the consumer price index from 7.9 per cent in June to about 6.8 per cent last month. Average earnings data, also due next week, is likely to show a rise in wages of slightly more than 7 per cent. “Based on this measure”, Ashley Webb, UK economist for Capital Economics told *The Times*, “the cost of living crisis appears to be coming to an end”.

Hospitalisations for Covid

Covid hospital admissions have risen, with a rate of 1.97 per 100,000, up from the previous week when the hospital admission rate was 1.47 per 100,000. Those aged over 85 were the highest affected age group. The new Omicron variant, named Eris after the Greek goddess of strife and discord, now accounts for as many as one in seven cases after it was first recorded in the UK last month. Meanwhile, said *The Telegraph*, Covid boosters will be axed for adults under 65 this winter as the health service attempts to “go back to normal”.

Rain slows down clothing sales

Wet weather in July caused a slowdown in UK retail sales. Overall retail sales grew 1.5 per cent in July, down from 2.3 per cent the year before, said the British Retail Consortium. Demand for clothing fell as people “felt less need to restock their summer wardrobes”, said the BBC. Britain’s “hard-pressed” retailers are being “forced to slash their prices to drum up business”, said *The Guardian*, with promotional offers to “woo consumers reluctant to part with their cash”, it added.

Sunak under boiler pressure

Senior Tories are urging the prime minister to scrap a net zero ban on new oil boilers. Householders are being encouraged to switch to heat pumps under proposals to help cut heating emissions, but George Eustice, a former environment secretary, is calling for the ban to be dropped – describing the policy as “a Ulez for rural communities”. More than 30 Tory MPs have said the plan disproportionately affects rural Conservative communities.

Controlling the weather: A job for man, or to be left to God?

ENVIRONMENT

**Aaron Tang &
Jack Miller**

Right now, people in coastal China are fleeing successive typhoons amid devastating flooding. Parts of the Philippines are awash.

Pacific area typhoons are intense circular storms, which Australians know as tropical cyclones and Americans call hurricanes. Damage from cyclones has increased sevenfold since the 1980s, even as death tolls fell dramatically. In the 2010s, tropical cyclones did A\$872 billion worth of damage globally.

Why? Our world has more heat in the oceans and atmosphere, which can supercharge cyclones. A cyclone is a heat engine, transferring heat from warm ocean water up into colder layers of the atmosphere. More heat in the system means more intense heat engines.

No wonder there’s been renewed interest in Cold War era experiments in weather control. While early efforts had little success, our new research evaluates other methods of weakening these storms by pumping up cold water from the depths or spreading particles in the lower atmosphere to reduce incoming heat and encourage early rainfall.

But these techniques could have unexpected – or even dangerous – side effects.

Because of that you have to ask, why are researchers even looking into this?

Tropical cyclones are lethal. In 1970, an enormous cyclone struck Bangladesh (then East Pakistan). Meteorologists knew it was coming, but they had no way to communicate to people in its path. The storm killed up to 500,000 people.

Since then, we’ve invested in far better early warning systems. As a result deaths have fallen substantially now that people have time to evacuate.

But in developing countries in particular, deaths still happen. And then there’s the damage to farms, houses, roads and livestock. You may well survive the storm only to be forced into poverty.

Scientists are exploring ways of preventing natural disasters, from bushfires to floods to hailstorms. So why not cyclones?

Can we really turn a cyclone into a normal storm?

It is certainly possible. But it’s not easy.

In the 1960s, the United States explored the use of cloud seeding to



stop hurricanes from forming. During Project STORMFURY, planes flew high above cyclones out at sea and sprayed them with silver iodide, a chemical which could encourage water droplets to clump together and fall as rain. This, the theory ran, would disrupt the hurricane from forming.

While some seedings seemed to correlate with weaker hurricanes, the link was never adequately found and the project was eventually abandoned.

Instead, researchers are exploring two new options.

Cyclones need hot sea surfaces to form. If we could cool the surface – such as by piping chilled water from depths below 200 metres – we could prevent the cyclone from ever forming.

The problem is it’s expensive. Norwegian cyclone-busting start-up OceanTherm estimates it would cost about A\$750 million to develop the technology, and another \$105 million every year to keep it going.

And worse, cooling one area of the sea does nothing to stop cyclones from forming elsewhere. Models suggest ocean cooling will, at best, have only a limited dampening effect on cyclones.

There’s a more likely option – aerosol injection. Scientists already know that dust blown from the Sahara into the Atlantic reduces cyclone formation. We could use planes or drones to inject hygroscopic (water-attracting) particles into the lower atmosphere, where they would reflect and scatter sunlight and trigger rainfall and energy release.

This method has a stronger scientific pedigree, given it already occurs naturally. But we don’t know what side-effects it would have and

we still aren’t sure what happens to energy redistributed by the intervention.

Other research has found aerosols could reduce cyclone intensity while boosting rainfall on the rotating outer edges of cyclones. More intense rain could still cause substantial damage.

As you’d expect, it’s easier and more effective to intervene early in a cyclone’s life, before too much energy builds up. Making the call to try to stop a cyclone means taking decisions early. That’s a challenge, because cyclones can become stronger faster in a hotter world.

Difficult politics, difficult policy

Cyclone control missions might conjure up the image of Hollywood action heroes off to save the world. Unfortunately, it’s more complicated than that.

Let’s say the Philippine Government spots an extremely dangerous cyclone forming and decides to disrupt it. But the heat doesn’t magically go away. It just moves. Suddenly, another storm reappears, heading straight for China, a country you have a testy relationship with, and who may blame you for weather manipulation.

Far-fetched? Not at all. When Cuban dictator Fidel Castro heard of Project STORMFURY, he feared it was an attempt by the USA to turn the weather into a weapon against his nation.

Only three years ago, China’s neighbours sounded the alarm about Beijing’s plans to reroute an atmospheric ‘sky river’ to water its dry northern regions. This, according to nations like India, could take water away from their rivers.

So who would decide how or when to snuff out a cyclone? How would they decide? Should private companies be allowed to run their own field tests or should these large-scale interventions be government-only? Who would be responsible for any side-effects?

There are more thorny questions. If cyclone control is perfected, what would stop a country trying to redirect cyclones towards a rival? Could cyclone technologies be misused, following similar fears with large-scale geoengineering? Most importantly, are these technological risks worth the potentially reduced risks of cyclones?

What’s next?

We’ll need to find answers for questions like these. As cyclones get stronger, we will urgently need new institutions to help tackle scientific uncertainties, develop monitoring capabilities and find ways of making collaborative decisions at speed. That won’t be easy – most international agreements move slowly, and most don’t meet their intended goals.

Technologies like particle injection are promising, but not ready for deployment. As the technology matures, so should our institutions. It’s why we’re researching the science and policy of these interventions. We must hash out how and when to use technologies like these – before we need to respond urgently.

Aaron Tang is a PhD Scholar in Climate Governance, Australian National University
Jack W. Miller is a research assistant, Australian National University

Pilgrim Way to deepen faith while visiting local shrines

Andy Drozdziak

A new collection of walking pilgrimage routes in England and Wales has been posted online so Catholics can deepen their faith and experience their own pilgrimage within a Catholic setting.

Pilgrim Ways is the brainchild of Phil McCarthy and is a digital resource that provides walking routes to key pilgrimage sites in each diocese.

He told the CBCEW 'At the Foot of the Cross' podcast how the project came about: "My idea was to create a 'pilgrim way' in each Catholic diocese – from the cathedral of that diocese to one or more shrines within the same diocese.

"The website has all the routes on, and gradually I'm walking them and adding the directions so people can follow them easily."

The podcast spoke to Phil as he set off from St David's Cathedral in Cardiff, heading north towards two

Marian shrines, the first at Penrhys and the second at Abercynon.

"The shrines are very interesting in different ways because the one at Penrhys is actually ancient. There was a holy well there and people visited it in the medieval period, right up until the Reformation, when the shrine was destroyed and closed down. The statue itself was taken to London and burned," he said.

The combination of ancient and modern ways are mini versions of the long and arduous journeys across Europe which mediaeval and, more recently, celebrity pilgrims have trodden.

The Ways start at each of the 22 Catholic cathedrals in England and Wales and strike out through town and countryside to one or more the local shrines.

Despite suffering from sciatica, Phil has so far walked seven of the Ways and plans to complete the rest over the next two years.



"I hope the Ways might be useful to Catholic charities for fundraising walks, but you don't have to be formally religious or be walking as a part of a big group to follow these Ways.

"Walking allows us all to pay attention, to notice small things and to enjoy ordinary places," he said.

A website listing the new routes has been launched and can be found at pilgrimways.org.uk, providing walking guides, GPX files, prayers and other resources, including a downloadable 'Pilgrim Passport', and a certificate for the end of each walk, similar to the 'testimonium' made available to pilgrims who complete the Camino di Santiago de Compostela and the Via Francigena.

Dr Phil shared his hopes for the project, which was inspired by Pope Francis.

"I hope these are routes, not just for Catholics to deepen their faith, but for everyone to experience pilgrimage within a Catholic setting," he said.

"Really the title for the project, which is 'Hearts in Search of God', comes from a quotation from Pope Francis where he reminds us that pilgrims, whether old or young, sick or in good health, or just casual tourists, in all of us beats a heart in search of God – whether we're aware of the spiritual journey we're on or not," he said.

Find out more at
<https://www.pilgrimways.org.uk>

GP appointment data criticised

One-in-six GPs are still failing to give patients face-to-face appointments, *The Telegraph* has found. Despite repeated NHS commitments, the survey found that many family doctors do not provide in-person appointments to all who seek them, saying that they know best about whether a meeting is necessary.

Patients' groups said the situation was "totally unacceptable", pointing out that prior to the Covid pandemic, around 80 per cent of GP appointments across England were held in person.

'Catholic schools need you' as call goes out for people to volunteer as governors

Andy Drozdziak

Catholic schools and universities are calling on lay Catholics 'from all walks of life' to get involved in their development by becoming foundation governors.

The Catholic Education Service pointed out that, since the pandemic, many Catholic educational institutions have vacancies for foundation governors, and more are now needed to sustain their Catholic ethos and leadership.

Director Paul Barber said: "Catholics must be prepared to support, promote and defend Catholic education. Practising Catholics make excellent foundation governors, or might know someone who would be interested, so please find out about getting involved by contacting your diocese."

Educational institutions are generally governed by a body made up of different types of representatives, such as parent governors and teacher governors. Catholic schools and universities also include foundation governors, who volunteer to ensure the Catholic vision and character of the school is upheld.

Education Sunday takes place on Sunday, 10th September, when Catholics across England and Wales give thanks for Catholic schools, colleges and universities, and all those who have found their vocation in Catholic education.

Foundation governors come from all walks of life, bringing a mix of skills, knowledge and experience. As Catholic schools are often ethnically diverse, it is good for their governing bodies to reflect this.

The governing body's main role is at a strategic level, holding leadership to account; overseeing financial performance; setting budgets; managing admissions; and helping recruit to the most senior roles.

Being a foundation governor involves attending on average three full governing body meetings a year as well as serving on a committee focusing on issues such as staff pay, or admissions. Free training is provided by the diocese.

• Those interested in becoming a foundation governor should contact their diocese by clicking [HERE](#):

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Public
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Brentwood church used by top dance act granted listed status

A Catholic church in the Diocese of Brentwood, Our Lady of Fatima in Harlow, which was used by techno dance act the Chemical Brothers for an album cover, has been upgraded to Grade II* status by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Music fans will recognise the church of Our Lady of Fatima from the album cover for The Chemical Brothers' 1998 album, *Brothers Gonna Work It Out*.

Originally listed at Grade II in December 2000, the church has been upgraded to a Grade II* listing on the advice of Historic England, to reflect its historic and architectural significance.

The Bishop of Brentwood, Alan Williams, said: "I am delighted Our Lady of Fatima Church in Harlow has been upgraded to Grade II* listing. It is an important church architecturally, not just in the diocese but nationally. It was one of the first of its kind and unique for its stained glass."

The church was designed in 1953-

1954 by Gerard Goalen (1918-1999), one of the most important British architects of the Catholic modernist movement, in his first ecclesiastical commission.

Goalen studied at the Liverpool School of Architecture and briefly worked for Francis Xavier Velarde (1897-1960), a major Catholic church architect of the inter-war and post-war periods.

His passion for modern church architecture was shared by Francis Burgess, parish priest of Harlow New Town. Our Lady of Fatima was one of the earliest liturgically inspired churches in England.

The design brief, highly innovative for 1953, was for a church capable of holding up to 500 people, with a freestanding altar in the middle of the congregation, clearly visible to all. Goalen's church provided the Catholic community with a space that connected their new modern social and physical environment with their religious lives.

The church was opened and

blessed by the Bishop of Brentwood on 26th March 1960.

By the time work had commenced on Our Lady of Fatima, Goalen had joined Frederick Gibberd's practice and, in 1959, submitted an entry to design Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral. The competition was won by Gibberd himself - despite his lack of church building experience or strong religious convictions. His last-minute entry is said to have been influenced by attending Our Lady of Fatima's opening Mass.

Goalen subsequently established his own practice, designing churches such as St Gregory the Great, South Ruislip (1965-67), St Thomas More, Swiss Cottage (1968), both listed at Grade II, and the Catholic Chaplaincy in Cambridge (1977).

Duncan Wilson, Historic England Chief Executive, said the 'stunning church' is 'an inspiration in contemporary church design.'

Clare Price, Head of Casework at C20 Society described the interior as being of 'jewel-like quality.'



Top, the Chemical Brothers' album cover in 1998.

Above, the church today, which has been granted listed status



Dr. Daniel is pictured with academic dignitaries of UWTSO, including Professor Medwin Hughes, Vice-Chancellor, and Professor Elwen Evans, Pro-Vice Chancellor. Also pictured is Dr. Elin Haf Gruffydd Jones, Director of CAWCS. Photo: Aled Llywelyn

Honorary Doctorate reward for Daniel's historic opus

Former advisor to the Vatican and Aberystwyth parishioner, Dr Daniel Huws, was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Literature Degree on July 7th in recognition of his 'magnum opus' entitled *A Repertory of Welsh Manuscripts and Scribes c.800-c.1800*. The ceremony took place at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSO) campus, Lampeter.

Daniel, a former Keeper of the Manuscripts Department of the National Library of Wales, has long been recognised as a leading expert in his field. This publication is the culmination of 30 years of work following his retirement from the National Library.

The *Repertory* was published

and launched jointly in 2022 by the National Library of Wales (NLW) and the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies (CAWCS).

The First Minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford MS, was present at the official launch, which took place at the Welsh Manuscripts Conference. The Conference was supported by the Learned Society of Wales.

CAWCS Director Dr Elin Haf Gruffydd Jones described Daniel Huws as "one of our nation's greatest scholars and an international authority on manuscripts"... the *Repertory* is now "in libraries...all over the world".

Obituary: Brian Davies, stalwart of the NJPN

Ellen Teague

The death of Brian Davies as the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN) was holding its recent annual conference was poignant timing. He was a huge supporter of the Justice and Peace Movement and its predecessor, the National Justice and Peace National Liaison Committee.

When the news was announced, many around the room acknowledged the very significant contribution he had made to their personal formation and the growth of J&P workers in dioceses and at national level in the '80 and '90s.

Brian was the head of

development education at CAFOD for more than two decades. In a tribute, former CAFOD director Julian Filochowski described him as "inspirational," while current director Christine Allen remembered "a powerful force for justice and peace, always rooted in deep spirituality and Catholic Social Teaching."

NJPN expressed "great sadness" and thanked him for his mission to further the causes of justice and peace.

Brian went to CAFOD with a theological background. He was 12 years a Jesuit, leaving just before ordination, and doing his theology

at the Jesuit University in Lyon. He taught for a time at the theology department at St Paul's College.

In CAFOD, he played a key role in the selection and delivery of education campaigns in the 1980s, with a focus on training in use of the pastoral cycle process of Experience - Social Analysis - Theological Reflection - Action. Many who came through CAFOD training in the 1980s are still active, including myself. Brian never lost faith that the process of J&P was as important as the issues.

He was strong on ecumenical work through CAFOD, enthusiastically supporting One World Week, the

World Development Movement, and Christian Aid.

He was compassionate and affirming. Anne O'Connor, editor of the North West NJPN e-bulletin, described him as a "wonderfully gentle and empathetic person and a great support to me and many others."

He was invested as a Knight of St Gregory in 2017 by Bishop William Kenney, auxiliary in Birmingham. among us", and he also received an OBE in 1999 for Services to Development Education.

Many from the NJPN movement will be at his funeral, which is on Friday, 25th August.



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Todos: our Church is for everyone exclaims pope to WYD crowd

World Youth Day Lisbon, Portugal

Pope Francis asked the 1.5 million young people who attended World Youth Day to take “what God has sown into your hearts” back to their home countries and build a joyful Church that is open to all.

Young pilgrims hailed the Holy Father’s description of the Church as for “everyone, everyone, everyone” as he asked the jubilant flag-waving crowd to repeat that refrain with him in Lisbon’s Eduardo VII Park, amid shouts of “*todos, todos, todos*” – “everyone” in Spanish and Portuguese.

As he did often during the trip, the pope solicited engagement from the crowd, asking them to repeat after him or consider in silence a question he posed.

“Please, let us not convert the Church into a customs office where only the ‘just’, ‘good’, and ‘properly married’ can enter while leaving everyone else outside, he said. “No. The Church is not that,” he said. Rather it is a place for “righteous and sinners, good and bad, everyone, everyone, everyone.”

Pope Francis had earlier told reporters that “the Church is open to all,” in reference to women and gay people being excluded from some sacraments, but admitted that “there is legislation that regulates



life inside the Church.”

“This does not mean that (the Church) is closed. Each person encounters God by their own way, inside the Church, and the Church is mother and guides each one by their own path,” he responded.

Despite his age, Pope Francis showed no sign of slowing down on what was the 42nd international trip of his pontificate. He told journalists on the flight to Lisbon they trips “make me young again.”

The pope’s packed agenda had three to four official events per day, and he added private meetings with several groups and individuals at the Vatican nunciature in Lisbon where he was staying.

Among them was a group of abuse survivors who met with the pope for over an hour, during which they “dialogued about this plague” of abuse, the pope said.

The pope celebrated Mass with 1.5 million young people sprawled

across Lisbon’s riverside Tejo Park and told them not to be afraid of pursuing their great dreams to change the world.

In addition to listening the testimonies of young people and fielding questions from some of them during public events, Pope Francis had a chance for more direct interactions with several young people during the trip. He heard the confessions of three pilgrims and ate lunch with a group of 10 young people.

The pope arrives in Lisbon’s Eduardo VII Park. Above, hundreds of thousands of young people attended the Mass

The pope later shared that he spoke to one young man who had previously considered taking his own life and said youth suicide is a problem today, noting the challenge is especially prevalent in places where universities and the job market are very demanding.

After the closing Mass, the pope announced that Seoul, South Korea, would be the location for the next World Youth Day in 2027, drawing great applause from the South Korean delegations scattered throughout the crowd.

The previous morning, Pope Francis visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, where he again put aside his prepared remarks and spoke off the cuff, focusing on Mary and skipping over an expected prayer for peace in the world.

He later said that “I prayed to Our Lady, and I prayed for peace” before a statue of Our Lady of Fatima, but “I did not advertise.”

In the shrine’s Chapel of the Apparitions, marking the spot where the three Portuguese children claimed to see Mary in 1917, he said the open-air chapel “is like a beautiful image of the church, welcoming, without doors, so that all can enter.”

Lisbon comes alive as young Catholics bring the buzz to city

Joyful, singing crowds were walking through Lisbon long after the opening Mass of World Youth Day 2023 was over in an atmosphere that surprised even those that lived in the Portuguese capital.

“All those people are now on the streets, it’s really exhilarating! I don’t think it will happen in my lifetime again that so many pilgrims come to my city!” Concha Sousa, a Portuguese volunteer of WYD 2023, said.

Thousands of young people participated in the opening Mass of WYD in Lisbon. Cardinal Manuel Clemente, the patriarch of Lisbon, welcomed them at the Eduardo VII Parc in the city center. “Lisbon welcomes you wholeheartedly,” Cardinal Clemente told the youths.

In his homily, he described to them how the pilgrims were walking in the footsteps of the Blessed Mother. “Mary set out. A path that was difficult and without the means of transportation that we have available today. She was young like all of you, and had just conceived Jesus in a unique way, which the Gospel recounts,” Cardinal Clemente said. “All of you also set out. For many it was a difficult journey due to the distance, the connections, and the costs that the trip required. It was necessary to bring together resources,



organise activities to obtain them, and rely on solidarity which, thanks to God, was not lacking.”

“From near or far, you all set out. It is very important to set out. This is how we should face our own lives, as a journey to be traveled, making

each day a new segment,” Cardinal Clemente said.

There are 354,000 pilgrims registered for the event. The theme of WYD is ‘Mary arose and went with haste.’

“When I told Pope Francis that

this was precisely the motto of our World Youth Day, ‘Mary arose and went with haste...’ he immediately added that, ‘yes, with haste but not anxiously,’” Cardinal Clemente told the youth. “There is no need to be anxious when we go towards Christ.”

Pope Francis arrives to cheers from young pilgrims in Lisbon. Below, he found time to hear confession from a group of young Catholics. He told journalists that overseas trips like this one “keep me young”



WYD IN BRIEF

Students told to embrace crises –they make our lives taste better

Meeting in a makeshift ‘Sistine Chapel’ painted floor-to ceiling by students, Pope Francis, paintbrush in hand, left a mark on the hearts of young people by telling them not to shy away from the personal crises that come with a life of faith. “A life without crises is like distilled water, it doesn’t taste of anything,” he told students gathered at the centre of the Scholas Occurrentes educational initiative in Cascais, 20 miles from Lisbon.

The pope responded to questions posed by young people from different countries and faith backgrounds in an intimate setting with some 50 people, including Paolo, a 24-year-old Brazilian evangelical who asked the pope for advice on navigating life’s hardships.

“I don’t want to be a catechist,” the pope joked in response before explaining the Bible’s creation story, which he said showed how God created the cosmos from chaos. “That’s the journey of each person,” he said, “a life that stays in the chaotic fails, and the life that never felt chaos is distilled – everything is perfect – and distilled lives don’t give life.”



Tears as Ukrainians tell their stories

Fifteen World Youth Day pilgrims from Ukraine, most of whom had lost a father or other close relative in the war, had a private meeting with Pope Francis during his visit to Portugal.

After listening to their touching stories, the pope gave the young people a few words, demonstrating his ‘painful and prayerful’ closeness to their situation, the Vatican said.

Ukrainian Archbishop Borys Gudziak said the young people told Pope Francis about “what their families have experienced, what the country has experienced” since Russia launched its large-scale attack on Ukraine in February 2022.

“It left the Holy Father to tears,” said the archbishop.

One of the young women, accompanied by two of her daughters, was the wife of an Eastern Catholic priest whose parish church was heavily damaged by Russian bombing.

IN BRIEF

Love is getting your hands dirty with the poor

Pope Francis told representatives of Portuguese charities to make their love “concrete” and leave a mark on the world with their lives. He said, with a smile, “there is no abstract love, it doesn’t exist. Concrete love is that which gets its hands dirty.”

Pope Francis urged the charity workers to ask themselves, “The love that I feel, is it concrete or abstract?” and posed another question while vigorously rubbing his hand against his cassock: “When I shake the hand of someone in need, a sick person, a marginalised person, do I do this right after, so they don’t infect me? Am I disgusted by poverty?”

The pope heard from representatives of Portuguese charities, including an association that cares for the families of children with cancer and another that works with at-risk youth.

“You can’t talk about World Youth Day without having this reality in mind,” Pope Francis told the charity workers. All who dedicate themselves to charity, he said, stay young, because by “getting your hands dirty by touching the reality of others, you are creating an inspiration, you are generating life.”

“Don’t be discouraged,” the pope told them. “And if you get discouraged, drink a glass of water and keep moving forward,” he said to laughs from the crowd.

Defend life against abortion, euthanasia

Over lunch with young people, Pope Francis cracked jokes and talked football but also addressed the tough topics that young Catholics are grappling with today, including abortion and euthanasia.

10 young people joined Pope Francis for lunch where they discussed, among other issues, “the things that are difficult to talk about – euthanasia, abortion,” Clara Yacolca Farfan, 24 from Peru. In response, she said, the pope told them to “defend life.”

“The pope invited us care for life, because it is sacred and to do it from wherever we are,” she said. “We don’t have to do big things; simply, if you work in politics, defend life in politics, in whatever job you have defend life in whatever your position is.”

Luis Cruz Duarte, 31, from Colombia said that the pope also encouraged them “not to leave grandparents on their own,” and compared life’s challenges to football: “he told us to be goalkeepers in life, and to prevent the bad things in life from scoring goals,” he said.

Youth told to waken the ‘weary’ Church by becoming ‘restless’

A Catholic Church that has grown weary in countries shaken by the clerical sexual abuse crisis and cultural trends toward secularism must look anew to Jesus to revive their “restless” enthusiasm for sharing the Gospel, Pope Francis said.

“Now is the God-given time of grace to sail boldly into the sea of evangelisation and of mission,” the pope told Portuguese bishops, priests, religious and pastoral workers after praying vespers at the Jeronimos Monastery in Lisbon.

The pope entered the 16th-century monastery to great applause, and the cheers that erupted when he stood resembled those echoing from the pop concert taking place across the street for World Youth Day.

In his homily, the pope reflected on the passage from St. Luke’s Gospel in which Jesus gets into the disciples’ fishing boat and invites them to let their nets down in deep water for a catch.

Just as those fishermen didn’t catch anything before Jesus’ arrival, “there are moments in our ecclesial journey when we can feel a similar weariness when we seem to be holding only empty nets,” he said, noting how such a situation is common in countries with a long-standing Christian tradition but are now experiencing a “growing detachment



A young pilgrim takes a selfie against the backdrop of the giant crowd for WYD Mass

from the practice of the faith.”

Often, he added, the reality of waning Church participation in those countries is accentuated by the disappointment and anger people feel toward the Church due to “our poor witness and the scandals that have marred her face and call us to a humble and ongoing purification, starting with the anguished cry of the victims, who must always be accepted and listened to.”

After vespers Pope Francis met with 13 victims of abuse by mem-

bers of the clergy, accompanied by some representatives of Portuguese church institutions in charge of the protection of minors.

The pope in his homily urged Portugal’s Catholic community to “bring those struggles and tears to the Lord, in order then to respond to pastoral and spiritual needs, together, with open hearts.”

Pope Francis said the first step is to develop a strong faith – and that cannot be done by reciting certain words, “just saying lah, blah, blah,”

or taking a nap in the sacristy, he said jokingly. He recommended partaking in silent adoration to “truly rediscover our taste and passion for evangelisation” that is “without ideologies or forms of worldliness.”

Pope Francis urged Church workers in Portugal to continue lowering their nets and being a light in a world that has “lost a sense of enthusiasm, the courage to dream, the strength to confront challenges and to be confident about the future.”

Atmosphere ‘best ever’

The atmosphere at World Youth Day has been described as “the best ever” by the young people in attendance.

Mixing faith with fun, many spent the evening with Pope Francis in solemn Eucharistic adoration and listening to his message during the outdoor vigil, before turning their attention to dancing the night away in Lisbon’s Tejo Park. A push notification sent at 1 am from the official World Youth Day app politely encouraged pilgrims to ‘rest and avoid noise. Take time for yourself.’

Tens of thousands of young people then also politely swiped away the notification as they continued to dance and sing underneath the cloudless night sky.

The mid-70s temperatures were welcomed after record high 100-degree heat scorched the region.

Tejo Park was estimated to have accommodated 1.5 million pilgrims.



South Korea to host WYD 2027

World Youth Day is returning to Asia in 2027 and will be hosted in Seoul, South Korea. Pope Francis announced the location to some 1.5 million pilgrims who attended the closing Mass of World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon. “The next World Youth Day will take place in Asia. It will be in South Korea, in Seoul,” he said to cheers from the estimated 1,000 South Korean pilgrims, many of them proudly waving their country’s flag. Pope Francis prefaced his announcement by urging young people to travel to Rome in 2025 to participate in youth celebrations during the jubilee year, when Vatican officials expect more than 30 million pilgrims to flock to the Eternal City.



The pope greets a young nun

Pope Francis waves to pilgrims before beginning his celebration of the closing Mass for World Youth Day at Tejo Park in Lisbon, Portugal,



The pope prays before Our Lady before celebrating Mass at Fatima



Pope remembers Our Lady in a hurry as he celebrates Fatima Mass

Before 200,000 pilgrims at Fátima, many of them with tears in their eyes, Pope Francis called for a new Marian devotional title – “Our Lady in a Hurry” – to describe how Mary hastens to care for all her children.

“There are many Marian invocations,” he told the crowd at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fátima on 5th August, but one that is not common and should be comes from the biblical account of the visitation when Mary sets off to see her cousin who also is pregnant.

“It’s a loose translation, but where the Gospel says she set out ‘in haste,’ we would say she went out running,” he said; “she went out running with that eagerness to be present.”

“Our Lady in a Hurry; do you like that?” Pope Francis asked his fellow pilgrims. “Let’s all say it together: ‘Our Lady in a Hurry.’ She hurries to be close to us. She hurries because she is a mother.”

“Every time there is a problem, every time we invoke her, she doesn’t delay, she hurries,” the pope told the crowd.

Pope Francis’ morning in Fátima, about 75 miles north of Lisbon, marked his second visit to the Marian shrine. In 2017, he celebrated Mass there to mark the 100th anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fátima to three Portuguese children.

Fátima also has been connected to Pope Francis’ public prayer appeals for an end the war in Ukraine. In March 2022, just over one month after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the pope consecrated both countries to Mary’s immaculate heart, praying before a statue of Our Lady of Fátima in St. Peter’s Basilica.

Sister Lúcia dos Santos, one of the three Fátima visionaries, had said Mary requested that Russia be con-

secrated to her immaculate heart by a reigning pope to bring peace to the world. Previous popes had consecrated Russia to Mary’s immaculate heart in various forms but had never mentioned the country by name as Pope Francis did in 2022.

In Fátima, however, Pope Francis made no mention of war or peace in Ukraine or elsewhere, instead putting aside a prepared text to tell hundreds of thousands of pilgrims to invite Mary into their heart.

But Bishop José Ornelas Carvalho of Leiria-Fátima welcomed the pope and introduced the event by turning people’s attention to “the war in Ukraine and so many other hotbeds of conflict in the world, which weigh dramatically on the lives and futures especially of children and young people.”

Those joining the pope in prayer, he said, were mindful of “the maternal concern of the mother of Jesus,

revealed here to three children, simple and poor shepherd children, during a bloody war,” in a reference to World War I.

Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, said that when the pope prayed in front of the statue of Our Lady of Fátima “he prayed in silence and with pain for peace.” Bruni also noted that the fourth mystery of the rosary at the event was a prayer for peace.

The pope had been expected to

offer a special prayer to Mary for peace after his remarks at Fátima, but instead the Vatican posted an abbreviated version of it on the pope’s Twitter account.

“To you, we consecrate the church and the world, especially those countries at war. Obtain peace for us,” the Tweet said. “You, virgin of the way, open paths where it seems that none exist. You who untie knots, loosen the tangle of self-centeredness and the snares of power.”

Pope wraps up Catholic Woodstock with call for young to dream big

To end “Catholic Woodstock” – as World Youth Day was dubbed by the Portuguese press – Pope Francis told 1.5 million weary-eyed and sleep-deprived young people in Lisbon not to let their “great dreams” of changing the world be “stopped by fear.”

In his homily for the closing Mass of World Youth Day, the pope asked for “a bit of silence” from the pilgrims who, after staying overnight in Lisbon’s Tejo Park following the previous night’s vigil, at 6 am were already dancing to techno music mixed

by a DJ priest before the pope’s arrival.

“Let’s all repeat this phrase in our hearts: ‘Don’t be afraid,’” he told the hushed crowd. “Jesus knows the hearts of each one of you, the successes and the failures, he knows your hearts,” Pope Francis said. “And today he tells you, here in Lisbon for this World Youth Day: ‘Don’t be afraid.’”

In remarks after Mass, the pope also recalled the suffering of Ukraine and asked young people if he, “an old man,” could share a

dream of his: “the dream of peace, the dream that young people may pray for peace, live in peace and build a peaceful future.”

Using the Portuguese word for thank you – ‘obrigado’ – the pope thanked the organizers of World Youth Day, the volunteers who made it possible and the city of Lisbon, which he prayed would “remain in the memory of these young people as a house of fraternity and a city of dreams.”

“And ‘obrigado’ to all of you, dear young people,” he said.



Argentina on the wishlist - while pope demands zero tolerance on abuse

Justin McLellan

While Pope Francis was visiting Portugal for World Youth Day, talk of future papal trips – including to Kosovo and Argentina – was making headlines.

“We are working on Kosovo, but it’s not definite,” he told the Spanish magazine *Vida Nueva*; he also confirmed that a trip to Argentina “is in the plans.”

The pope also spoke frankly about the synod and his condemnation of the so-called Doctrine of Discovery.

He praised US bishops for working on an initiative of reconciliation with indigenous groups, similar to a process undertaken by the Church in Canada.

On Ukraine, he said he hopes to send his envoy, Italian Cardinal Matteo Zuppi to Beijing next, since China and the United States “have the key to reduce the tension of the conflict.”

“I am thinking of designating a permanent representative to be a bridge between Russian and Ukrainian authorities,” he added.

Asked about the ongoing synod,

the pope said that he was recently talking with a religious sister over the phone who asked him whether the upcoming Synod of Bishops would change Catholic doctrine.

“Dear, who put that idea in your head?” the pope responded. “It’s about moving forward to recover that synodal dimension the Eastern Church has and that we lost.”

Yet he said there is no need for a Vatican Council III, as “Vatican II hasn’t been put into action,” in part due to a fear by “old Catholics” who even at the First Vatican Council called themselves the “depositories of the true faith.”

Speaking about trends toward traditionalism, the pope said young priests adopt rigid mindsets “because they are afraid of the time of insecurity that we are living in,” and underscored that they are “good people who want to serve the Lord.”

Pope Francis said he knows he is “a pebble in the shoe” of many people, especially those who want to exploit the poor, but he believes he is following the Gospel.

And, as he said repeatedly to



young people in Lisbon, he insisted in the interview that the Church must be open to everyone.

“If the Church closes itself, it’s not the Church,” he said.

“That’s why it doesn’t matter to me that some people throw it in my face when I receive transsexuals at the Wednesday general audiences,” Pope Francis said.

the Church must abandon its practice of covering up abuse and instead be “very open” about how it is confronting the crime.

He said bishops who have not adopted a “zero tolerance” policy toward abuse need to “take charge of that irresponsibility.”

“The Church used to follow the conduct that is followed in families and neighbourhoods: it covers up,” he said, adding that addressing abuse must take in those places, too.

Speaking directly with abuse survivors is “good for me, not because I like it but because it helps me take charge of that tragedy,” he said.

In the Church, he said, “I urge that we be very open” about matters of abuse.

After a taxing five days in Portugal with packed daily schedules, the pope said that he is in good health and is recovering normally from the abdominal surgery he underwent in June. He also said his eyesight was fine after he ditched a script during Mass in Lisbon, saying there was nothing to worry about – he just didn’t want to strain his eyesight.

Southwark’s Archbishop John revels in WYD ‘Night Fever’

Andy Drozdziak

English Catholic leaders played a prominent role at World Youth Day, with Archbishop John Wilson invited by the Emmanuel Community to speak at ‘Night Fever’ in Alameda Park in Lisbon on 3rd August.

During the event, hundreds of young people took part in praise, heard testimonies, attended Adoration and went to confession.

Archbishop Wilson underlined the importance of being called. “You are called to greatness in the Christian life,” he told the young pilgrims. “You are called not to live on the surface, but to go deep – deep into the heart of Jesus. To go deep into what it means to be a disciple. To go deep into living the Gospel as a witness to Christ.”

“You were not created to be nourished by little spoons, living on the surface, living superficially, without purpose, without meaning. In the words of the great English Cardinal and Saint, John Henry Newman, you were created for some definite purpose.”

“The Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, is calling you. And me is calling you to meet him, to know him and to love him.

The archbishop also encouraged the young people to examine the



journey of their lives through reflection, listening and taking part in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. “We believe in the power of mercy, we believe in the power of absolution, of sin, that all our sins are forgiven when we go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

“All of us here are witnesses to the power of mercy,” he said.

“Accept the Lord’s call to you tonight to repentance and conversion – no matter what your sins are, no matter how long ago

since you went to Confession. Come in humility, come in honesty. God wants to forgive you because He loves you.”

Archbishop Wilson also spoke about Eucharistic Adoration, explaining to those present about its power.

“The real, true and living presence of Christ means He is with us,” he said. “He is with us in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, in Eucharistic Adoration. Tonight, when the Body of Christ is placed before us, we really meet the Saviour of the world. We can speak to Him. You can speak to Him from your heart.”

During a busy time at World Youth Day, Southwark Pilgrims attended a ‘Rise Up’ encounter and Mass in Odivelas, as well as travelling to Fatima, where Our Lady appeared to three shepherd children in 1917.

Archbishop Wilson ended his talk at Night Fever by reminding the young pilgrims of their ‘mission.’

“You have a mission, you have a call, and it is unique to you,” he said.

“Faith takes us deeper into the meaning of our existence where our life makes sense with Christ, in relationship with Him. Why? Because he is sweetness for your soul in His love and in His mercy.”

Young will sort Church messes out - Gallagher

Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Vatican’s Secretary for Relations with States, shared his hopes for the future of the Church, as hundreds of thousands of young people gathered for World Youth Day in Lisbon.

The archbishop said that it is “wonderful for us to be here, and it is wonderful that so many young people have made the trip to Lisbon from all over the world.”

Pilgrims from over 143 countries attended the event, with most delegates from Spain, Italy, Portugal, France and the United States.

Commenting on the multitudes of young people, the Archbishop noted that WYD “fills us with great hope for the future. And this meeting with the Holy Father will be an encouragement for everybody.”

Archbishop Gallagher underlined the importance of ‘hope for the future’ as a key message. “In a moment where the world is going through many difficulties, we desperately need a message of hope for the future, and I think that is what we’re all going to take away from Lisbon,” he said.

Asked what his own hopes are for the future, the Archbishop said: “I think our hope for the future as a Church, is renewed commitment to



our faith, to living the Gospel and to giving a witness to the world.”

This year’s WYD Motto, ‘Mary arose and went with haste’ (Lk 1:39), chosen by Pope Francis, encouraged youth from all over the world to “arise” and be missionaries of the Church.

Archbishop Gallagher highlighted the importance of young people bearing witness to their Christian faith.

“There is nobody to give better witness than young people, because they come with fresh eyes,” he said.

In conclusion, Archbishop Gallagher entrusted the future of the Church to young people.

“I think that they can sort out some of the mess that we, their elders, have created for them.”

Slovakia needs prayers and aid says Caritas after record flooding

Catholics in Slovenia are rallying emergency aid and turning to prayer as record floods have ravaged that nation, killing at least six and leaving hundreds homeless.

Heavy rains and flash floods over the past several days have inflicted “the worst national disaster in Slovenia’s (recent) history,” affecting “two-thirds of the country,” said Prime Minister Robert Golob.

Slovenia’s Catholic bishops said the entire nation “is experiencing hardship due to flooded fields, destroyed crops, growing torrential rains. The damage will cost hundreds of millions.”

Slovenia’s weather service reported downpours totalling a month’s worth of rain in less than a day.

Along with the floods, “numerous landslides” are also impacting residents, said Caritas Slovenia.

The storms have “calmed down,” but “the devastation left by the water remains,” said Peter Tomalac, its secretary general.

Golob estimated the property damage, which includes roads, bridges and energy infrastructure, at some \$550 million.

NATO and the European Union began sending aid on 7th August.



The Slovenian bishops said that “the call for prayer and consolation resonates” throughout the nation, as many “are still trembling for the lives of their loved ones and for their own survival.”

They expressed their “closeness to those affected” and promised both “prayers and material support.”

“We especially encourage priests to revive devotions in their commu-

nities that raise before God our requests for the grace of averting the dire hour,” they said, recommending the inclusion of prayers during Mass “to avert the storm” as well as the recitation of litanies for that purpose.

The bishops also asked the faithful “to show (their) solidarity” by supporting Slovenska Karitas.

The agency said along with the

floods, “numerous landslides” are also impacting residents, adding that “the weather forecasts are still not favourable and may affect an even greater number of households in other parts of Slovenia as well.”

Slovenska Karitas staffer Terezija Vivod, located in the village of Prevalje, said she and her team were sheltering flood evacuees in the local parish gym.

“(Slovenska Karitas) volunteers and colleagues provided them with clothes, food, and water,” she told the agency. “We will also prepare a hot meal for them. People’s gratitude is immeasurable.”

“We are invited to stand together, connect in solidarity, stand up concretely for all the vulnerable and for all those who are in fear due to physical dangers,” said the bishops. “Above all, let’s rekindle faith and trust in God’s closeness and help.”

Tomalac said more than 430 Slovenska Karitas volunteers have helped provide water, food, clothes and accommodation to almost 5,400 affected individuals.

The volunteers, including some 250 youth and young adults, have also been rolling up their sleeves to clean flood-damaged residences.

Hiroshima marks nuclear anniversary

The Hiroshima mayor has described nuclear deterrence a “folly” on the 78th anniversary of the US atomic bombing of the city.

“Leaders around the world must confront the reality that nuclear threats now being voiced by certain policymakers reveal the folly of nuclear deterrence theory,” said Kazumi Matsui.

A “moment of silence” was observed at 8:15am, said the *Japan Times*, the exact time when the bomb was dropped by the US bomber *Enola Gay* and detonated over the city.

Tehran ‘biggest threat to UK’

Iran is now the biggest threat to Britain’s national security, the Home Secretary has said.

Suella Braverman fears that the nation’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is stepping up its activities, following intelligence reports that Tehran’s spies are trying to recruit members of organised crime gangs to target regime opponents.

“The Iranian threat is the one that worries us the most at the moment”, a source close to Braverman told *The Sunday Times*.

Portugal latest to be hit by fires

More than 1,000 firefighters are battling a series of wildfires in Portugal after it and neighbouring Spain experienced several days of extreme summer heat, with temperatures rising above 40C. Three major fires were raging in Portugal, with the worst in the southwest near the town of Odemira, where about 1,400 people were evacuated from

villages and a campsite as a precaution.

The National Civil Protection Service said about 1,000 firefighters, 320 vehicles and nine aircraft were deployed at that fire, which has scorched around 17,300 acres.

The recent spate of wildfires came as temperatures have spiked.



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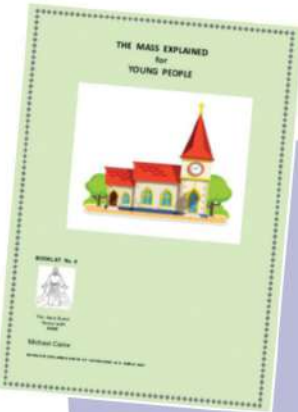
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HEART OF THE MATTER

FR PATRICK BRISCOE

St Maximilian Kolbe's dark cell at Auschwitz gave me a lesson in light



As I stood at the bars of the chilling confines of St. Maximilian Kolbe's cell within the walls of Auschwitz, I couldn't help but be overwhelmed by an inexplicable mix of emotions.

The gravity of the place and the memory it held were inescapable. And yet, at the same time, a profound sense of mission awakened in my soul as a newly ordained priest. As I knelt down to pray, the weight of history and the unmistakable presence of God converged in a way that words can scarcely describe.

Auschwitz, a name that carries the burden of suffering, genocide and unimaginable cruelty, stands as a stark reminder of the darkest moments in human history. In this sea of despair, St. Maximilian Kolbe's heroic sacrifice shines like a beacon of light amidst the shadows of evil. A Franciscan friar who offered his life to save another prisoner during World War II, his legacy still combats the horrors of this infamous place.

Praying in St. Maximilian Kolbe's cell brought forth a powerful realisation of the endurance of faith in the face of adversity. His unwavering commitment to the Gospel, even amid the brutalities of Auschwitz, served as a profound inspiration for me, a newly ordained priest just entering into ministry. I wondered: Would I be able to imitate his courage were I to ever face such evil?

The light of Christ

In the darkness of Auschwitz, I realised in a profound way that prayer is not merely an individual experience but a connection to the communion of saints. As I prayed in Kolbe's cell, I felt solidarity with all those who had suffered within those walls. Surrounded by their memory, I was able to sense their current intercession, urging me to remember their stories, to honor their legacy, and to draw strength from their resilience.

When he first joined the Franciscan novitiate, St. Maximilian received his habit and the name by which he is now known. He was also handed a lighted candle. During the ceremony, the provincial who vested him said, "Receive my dear brother, the light of Christ as a token of your immortality, so that dead to the world you may live henceforth for God."

Years prior, at his baptism, a candle had been lit, signifying the light of Christ which had come into his heart. And there, in that cell, he



himself had become a light of Christ, with the gifts of faith, hope and charity shining brightly from his heart for all to see.

How fitting then, that Pope St. John Paul II brought a paschal candle to the cell during his visit in 1979. The pope kissed the cell's concrete floor, and placed the candle, which remains there to this day. That Easter candle – the sign of Christ's victory – stands in the very place where the Virgin Mary's beloved servant, St. Maximilian, faced the shadow of death.

The words of the Gospel echoed in my ears: 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it' (Jn 1:5). Pope Benedict too, left a paschal candle in the cell when he visited.



Auschwitz's walls are an enduring testament that the world is still marred by suffering and cruelty ...

Making the shadows flee

In a letter before his arrest, St. Maximilian wrote, 'Faced with suffering and humiliation, human nature is frightened, but in the light of faith, they should be welcomed with gratitude for the purification of our soul!'

Confident that the light of faith would transform whatever he faced, the saint's heart was being prepared for his coming deeds of heroism.

I left Auschwitz having learned an unforgettable lesson. Those walls are an enduring testament that the world is still marred by suffering and cruelty, but it is our sacred duty to combat these evils with love and mercy illuminated by the light of faith.

In the darkest chapters of history, we find the brightest examples of men and women who have been transformed by the light of faith. That light doesn't explain suffering. It doesn't demonstrate how human beings could inflict such cruelty on one another.

But it makes the shadows flee. And for me, that is enough.

• Kolbe's Feast Day is 14th August

A Holocaust memoir and account of the human soul

Book Review: *Night* by Elie Wiesel

In the early spring of 1945, as the end of World War II in Europe was approaching, 16-year-old Elie Wiesel was forced to march from Auschwitz to Buchenwald, his final destination in the war. As Wiesel recounted in his classic memoir, *Night*, 'the last night in Auschwitz was yet, one more, the last night.' He listed the previous ones: 'the last night at home, the last night in the ghetto, the last night in the cattle car.' Each of these 'last nights' all occurring within the span of fewer than 12 months, made permanent impressions on the teenager. From those impressions, Wiesel has given us not just the diary of a year in the hands of the Nazis, but an agonising glimpse into the appalling horror of the Holocaust.

But he is also unsparing in his own self-reflection. Without ever

diminishing the evil inflicted upon him and his fellow Jews, Wiesel is painstakingly honest about the deep conflicts and failure even in his own thoughts and deeds while suffering under the oppression of the Nazis.

This makes *Night*, perhaps unique of all World War II memoirs. It's not only a description of the particularity of the suffering of Jewish people in the war, but also an account of the human soul.

While he was on the train to Buchenwald, Wiesel recounted that he and his fellow Jewish prisoners were 'nothing but frozen bodies. Our eyes closed, we merely waited for the next stop, to unload our dead...'

'The days resembled the nights, and the nights left in our souls the dregs of their darkness.'

Let us never forget those dregs of darkness.

VATICAN LETTER

DEACON GREG KANDRA

The Synod on Synodality needs the perspectives of 'relatable clergy'

One of the most anticipated events in modern Church history – arguably, the most important gathering since Vatican II, the Synod on Synodality – is about to unfold this autumn. After years of planning and preparation, with local meetings held and national reports issued, in just a few weeks the Synod on Synodality will begin. The Vatican recently named more than 300 delegates who will be taking part – lay men and women, cardinals and priests, bishops and religious, drawn from all corners of the globe.

Again and again after reviewing this list, one of the refrains I've been hearing from friends and fellow clergy around the country is: 'What? No deacons?'

It's true. The initial list contained not one participant who is clearly identified as a deacon.

At first, it seemed a shocking oversight. The diaconate, after all, has shown explosive growth over the last five decades; this third level of Holy Orders now numbers close to 49,000 members worldwide.

And as the numbers have grown, the vocation has shown astonishing diversity. Yes, deacons are husbands and fathers, grandfathers and retired single men. But we are also judges, lawyers and doctors. We serve as parish administrators, diocesan chancellors and as university professors. You even find deacons who are – ahem – journalists.

The initial news that there would be no deacons at the synod seemed just plain wrong. It was later reported that there would in fact be at least two deacons in attendance. Just two.

I've been a deacon for 16 years and I have to say: even with two deacons added (out of more than 300 participants), this still seems like a glaring omission that needs to be corrected.

The breadth and depth of diaconate ministry in the UK and around the world – but particularly in the USA, Canada, the southern Americas and Western Europe – cannot be underestimated. Some observers have quite accurately described deacons as embodying a 'vocation of the threshold,' living as a bridge between the clergy and the laity – standing metaphorical watch at the doorway of the church, to lend a hand or extend a welcome or make a connection to the faithful who hunger for help, or hope or some small act of grace.

The deacon's charism is service, so we deacons serve at shelters, soup kitchens and within charities



of all kinds. But that's just the beginning. From my experience, many people in parishes see deacons not just as men at the threshold, but as men actually holding open the door. They see us as a way in. 'Deacon, can I talk to

you about something,' someone will ask. 'I have a problem and I don't really feel comfortable talking to a priest about it.'

We are out there in the world, and that's important; it helps people to see us as 'relatable clergy.'

And that gives deacons a most unique perspective within the Catholic Church. We are the only religious vocation (and the only clergy) called to live and work among the people – not in a convent or a cloister or a rectory. People see us as part of the neighbourhood, because that's what we are. We shop with them, bank with them, commute with them; we see parishioners at football practices and during school governor and PTA meetings, at bus stops and train stations.

A bishop in the US who was an enthusiastic early supporter of deacons, Bishop Frank Caggiano of Bridgeport in New York, once told a convocation of deacons that he believes the great gift of the diaconate is "the gift of presence."

"You are there with the people in a unique, visible way," he told them. And he also offered this confession: "I'm a better priest," he admitted, "because of the work I did with deacons."

Pope Francis has repeatedly called for a "listening" Church. Isn't it time for this Church to listen to those members of the clergy who spend so much of their lives

listening to (and hearing, and responding to) the daily, human concerns of the Body of Christ?

Isn't it time to listen to what deacons might have to say?

I think so.

And there is this: if one of the items on the synod agenda is a discussion about the possibility of ordaining *women* deacons, it might be prudent to hear what *male* deacons themselves have to say on the subject. The Vatican might want to give some attention to how the diaconate is lived around the world, especially in the West where it is becoming a powerful and upholding force in so many parishes and communities.

If the Church chooses, the upcoming synod can be an historic moment that will be remembered for the voices it included, not the ones it forgot about.

It can be remembered for bringing the 'gift of presence' to the table – and listening to what all the members of the Body of Christ have to say.

Deacon Greg Kandra is an award-winning author and journalist, and creator of the blog, *The Deacon's Bench*.



Left, Deacon Greg Kandra: 'We are out there in the world, and that's important; it helps people to see us as relatable clergy. And that gives deacons a most unique perspective within the Catholic Church. We are the only religious vocation (and the only clergy) called to live and work among the people – not in a convent or a cloister or a rectory.'

POETRY

Morecambe-based Catholic poet Karen McKoy shares her story of how poetry is a gift which allows her to take part in God’s creativity.

Poetry is a form of prayer, inspired by Christ

Poetry, for me, is a form of prayer which overpowers and writes me. We have no knowledge for ourselves; it is never ours – it is gifted to us by others, their books and ideas, and by God himself. Only the response belongs to us. So we can hardly take the credit for any creative gift we possess, but I believe that artists, crafts people, lovers of beauty, etc, whether consciously or not, channel the Holy Spirit and allow it to transform them because they take part in God’s creativity. Between the potter’s wheel and a piano concerto, an amateur watercolour and a marble piete, we can all create, restore some of God’s beauty to our world and to ourselves – and come to God without even knowing it.

I have tried to capture this transformation of the material world in *White Yew* (see panel) which was inspired by the destruction in Storm Arwen of an old yew tree in the grounds of my local church. Trees become friends and it left a desolate space behind and an enormous sense of loss. But the more I pondered it, the more the tree and its fate seemed to parallel Christ and his Passion, especially as I became aware that the poem was written at Easter. The tree has offered itself up to Christ and become Christ, a model



‘Trees become friends and it left a desolate space behind and an enormous sense of loss. But the more I pondered it, the more the tree and its fate seemed to parallel Christ and his Passion.’

for all of us. It is transformed into a white flame, a resurrected tree whose beauty God preserves because no beauty of God’s is ever lost.

The next poem in the panel, *Girl Dead in the Snow at Auschwitz*, was a response to a photograph of a woman in Auschwitz Death Camp – naked in the snow, who appears to have been raped and murdered; she looks almost alive, staring upwards, her eyes no longer reflecting the sky. There is a huge barn behind her with a hellish black gap where the doors are ajar. Once seen such an image is hard to

unsee. God sees all – so how does he deal with it? If we had God’s ability to see into every heart, the suffering would be infinite and immeasurable.

The bridal and wedding banquet imagery of the Psalms and the Old Testament came to mind as soon as I looked at the photograph – an innocent soul has gone to God, her beauty unmarred, frozen in the snow, but preserved in God’s love forever. But the horror of such a crime remains, the lamentation for her youth and beauty and humanity. To destroy it is a desecration, a crime against the Holy Spirit.

The bridal imagery of the Old Testament – the Prophets, Psalms, the Song of Solomon, etc, the portrayal of Israel as God’s bride – is so beautiful it is hard not to be moved by it.

In *Chosen* I try to celebrate God’s relationship with the Jewish people through the wonderful images of the Old Testament and the Hebrew language. And yet, it is strange and ironic that they are waiting for their messiah and Christ is waiting and longing for them. Surely, despite the New Testament, God will honour his covenant with his Chosen Ones?



It is a disturbing question, yet one instinctively knows that God, with his new and eternal covenant, will remain with them, as Christ has risen for all people, in all times and places. And St Paul confirms this in Romans 11: ‘God never takes back his gifts or revokes his choice’. God has longed for his bride Israel and will wait for her forever.

‘Praying always’ is not easy, and I fail miserably most of the time, but I try my best to be open to God’s presence through Christ’s beauty and suffering, through the gift of the Eucharist, and out in the world; and sometimes I am dead to it and sometimes it forces through and grips me unexpectedly.

Christ, as many have discovered, is a compulsion, a force we often resist but, if we let him, God can transform us as he has the yew tree, the dead girl and his people. Art, for me, is a gift, one way of preserving what beauty we possess and of raising it in the image of God. It gives us a glimpse of the new heaven and the new earth, here where we are now, so that God’s grace can make us anew.

It is a daily struggle to see with the heart, ‘with the eyes of the Dove’.¹ If we are patient, God’s grace will quicken within us, and reward us with a few slim hymns to his glory, so that we may praise him in the presence of the angels.

Chosen

You Chosen ones,
The Lord’s first love –
He waits for you
And waiting, waits unto Eternity.

You wait for Him, you Chosen,
And yet He waits –
Messiah waits for you –
The Suffering Servant suffers still
And lights the way from exile with
his wounds.

Still waiting –

Down the watches of the night –
Through Exodus - the Sea of Reeds -
Behind barbed wire - pogroms and
deceitful showers -
He watches, waits for you.

He bleeds for you,
The Lord’s Beloved,
The Lamb bled white
And bleeding still – lamenting
What was precious in His sight.

O precious dove
He longs for thee

And longing for thee calls His Bride
Unto bedecken – all adorned –
In byssus silk and shod with gold,
His Kallah* – clothed in love.

He yearns for thee,
Sweet Bride of youth,
The Bridegroom garners gifts –
Betrothed eternally,
A Crib, a Cross, the everlasting
Covenant –
He rises for thee.

* Bride

Girl Dead in the Snow at Auschwitz

Another bride, Lord, for your bed,
Chaste sheets and snow pillow for her
head.
She sleeps in billowed down,
Knees steeped in the snow,
Still plump, not shy
and one breast showing,
Whiter than the ice sheets that round
her lie.

Oh, Lord, she sleeps so sound –
Snow-Whitish, glacial and profound,
The damp wreaths of her hair
unwinding,
Lifting in the honeycomb of hip and
ground,
Unwithering yet in winter air –
And smiles straight up, the blue gaze
blank,
Thawing, unthawing skyless stare.

Lord, will you let your bride decay
Or leave her sleeping here for us to
say,
‘How did she die – so white, so dead??’
And yet already black hands grope
Her frozen neck like greedy crows.
The barn door yawning black behind

Who was it froze – this soft white
rose?

White Yew (Storm Arwen, St Mary’s, Morecambe)

O, Lord, I guard your gate and
wall
In sun and rain and solitude,
For a hundred springs stood
sentinel.
Black candle, crowned with
thorn
And flames of shadow bled
Into the blue above my head –
For you we burn.

Storm-scourged and mangled
– and mighty
Ghost hands tearing me apart –
Bone from bark –
And branches bruised, all
broken –
Black earth and root ball –
My burning heart ripped open.

See, Lord, your gate and wall
destroyed,
All breached, forsaken.

They dig my grave,
Tear out my roots, ring bells for
me –
A scorched spear piercing
Mary’s blue.
Black flames – we burnt for you.

My girder towered into noon,
My roots reached night,
Your sweet span severed
‘Twixt earth and glory –
What hurteth you, hurts me.
Red sap rising, all ablaze –
I bleed with thee.

Your evergreen was ever thine,
Steadfast in my love for thee.
See, gloried in light and air, I
grow
With white flames risen
joyfully.
The birds now sing eternally
For those who hear – for those
who see.

A VIEW FROM THE PEWS

MICHAEL CAINE
ST WINEFRIDE'S PARISH, LYMM, CHESHIRE

Never doubt the truth: it is all in the Bible

When I've had discussions with people about religion, many proposed that no one can prove that: God exists; Jesus actually lived; or the contents of the Bible are true.

The contents of the New Testament of the Bible were written from the year 40AD onwards by some of the apostles and St Paul. The apostles actually knew Jesus; what he said and did.

We know that the New Testament contains the truth because of the way that many of the disciples of Jesus died. Many of them, and every apostle, were martyred except John, and he was exiled on the isle of Patmos. They were all executed because they would not deny Jesus.

If they had any doubts about Jesus and that he was the Son of God, they would surely have said so, and not suffered terrible deaths, but they didn't. They preferred not to deny Jesus and die, knowing that their immortal spiritual soul would live with God in Heaven for all eternity. The question here is, why were they so sure about their beliefs?

The apostles were ordinary men



and as sceptical as any other human being. Jesus knew this and didn't go about shouting, "Hello, I'm the Son of God." If he had done, the reply he would have got would probably have been something like "Yes, and I'm Moses."

He went about his business telling people and showing them what they should do to save their immortal souls. To get people to listen, he performed true miracles,

such as walking on water, controlling the weather, healing all kinds of sicknesses.

These actions caused the people and his disciples to wonder who he was. From the miracles he worked and the way he preached; they knew that he was special.

Knowing how sceptical his apostles must be, he made one specific claim that would prove he was the Son of God. He said he

would be put to death, interred, but after three days he would rise from the dead.

If it happened, this would indeed prove he was the Son of God, because no ordinary human being can come back to life after dying, but they were still very sceptical, even when he did appear to them three days after his death.

The apostle Thomas was not present at this first appearance and told the ones who were, that for proof, he needed to see himself the holes in the hands and feet of Jesus caused by the nails during his crucifixion.

When Jesus did appear again Thomas was present. Jesus showed him the holes in his hands and feet and the hole in his side caused by a Roman soldier's spear thrust and told Thomas to put his fingers in them. Thomas saw the holes and replied by saying "My lord and my God".

All the disciples and Apostles now knew without any doubts, that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, because of the wounds made during his crucifixion. This is why they had no problem facing death

rather than deny him.

As for Jesus having lived, the Roman empire was built on conquest and slavery, so his teachings of love and compassion were anathema to their ideology. Christianity had to be obliterated. This is why the major historians of that time, who were always writing about Rome's conquests and achievements, hardly ever mention Jesus. Rome's attempts to destroy Christianity failed, but why?

It was because Christianity promised something far more precious than anything Rome could offer. It was eternal life for a person's eternal spiritual soul with God in Heaven after a person died. It took around 400 years, but Christianity did eventually become the religion of Rome.

The contents of the Bible are true, and you can find out for yourself that all major historians agree that Jesus did exist. These two facts are true, so logically there must be a God.

**Never doubt that God exists.
Never doubt that Jesus exists.
Never doubt the truth of the Bible.**

JOURNEY IN FAITH

CHRIS MCDONNELL



The early days of August

These early days of August include two dates, the 6th and the 9th. On the 6th we marked the Transfiguration of the Lord and, since 1945, coincidentally, remember the horrific spectacle of the use of a nuclear weapon on Hiroshima. As if this wasn't enough it was followed three days later with the attack on Nagasaki and the nuclear age was born.

The loss of life and the dawn of the availability of weapons of mass destruction were marked by those fateful August days. If you look back to the old Roman Missal and read the Introit for the Mass of the Transfiguration on August 6th you will find this text, taken from Psalm 76: 'All the world shone with thy lightning and the troubled earth shook.'

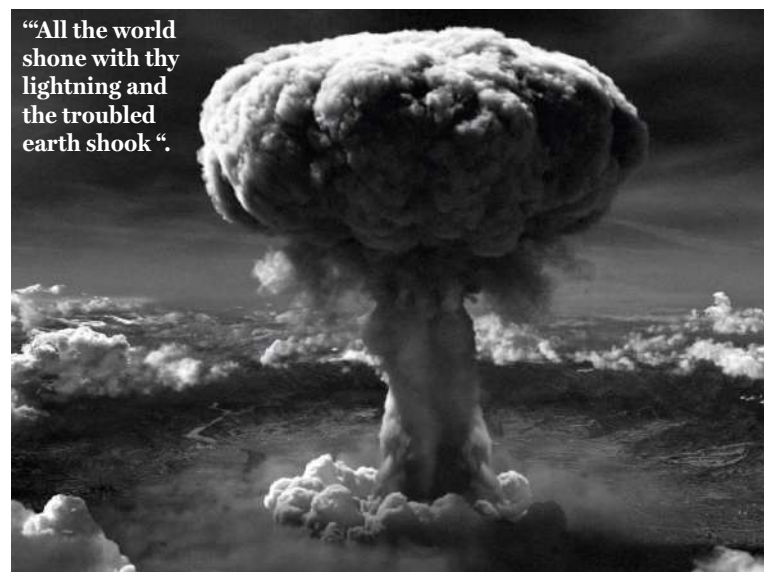
There is something disconcerting and prophetic in those few words. The argument that this action ultimately saved lives and brought the war to a rapid conclusion is challenged more and more.

There are times in all our lives when an event is transformative, when something happens that makes a difference; there is a step-change and the person we were before is radically different from the person we become. There is no going back.

It might be meeting someone by chance and experiencing a significant chain of events that follow. For a mother, the birth of her first child, for a child the loss of a parent, for adults, the break-up of a marriage with all the distrust involved. Or it might be the precious moment when we realised there is a vocation path that we must follow and the joy of becoming who we presently are. Each one of us could identify some such turning point, some significant occasion in our lives, and the older we are, the more times it might have happened.

Of all the events recorded in the Gospels, the account of Peter, James and John with the Lord on Mount Tabor, given to us by Matthew, stirs the imagination. There, on that rocky outcrop, the appearance of the man from Nazareth was transformed and momentarily his three companions were dazzled by the event and covered their faces. Something of the glory and radiance of God was revealed to them, however briefly. Did they understand its significance? I doubt it. Did it affect their lives and their perception of the nature of Jesus? Most certainly it did. That moment in time was linked with an

"All the world shone with thy lightning and the troubled earth shook".



event that was yet to happen, the Resurrection of the Lord after his crucifixion at Passover. "Don't tell anyone just yet", they were told, the significance of such an event would be lost on those who had yet to walk the journey that led to it.

Richard Rohr argues in his book *Falling Upward* that the consequences of the first part of our lives are only realised in the experience of the later years, that those years are, in a significant manner, a completion and an understanding of earlier times.

He writes: 'The of the first half of life and the language of the second language half of life are almost two different vocabularies, known only to those who have been in both of them.'

Just now and then, we too are transformed, transfigured even, and the dwelling of God in us is allowed to shine through. Others see it, and are grateful for our being alongside them. Others feel it, in the gentleness of our touch or the carefulness of our hug. Others value it when we truly listen to

their words of joy or pain and share times of great personal happiness or the darkness of desolation.

Creative artists show us vision, in the transformation of materials, whether it is paint on canvas, the chiselling of a block of marble or the exploration of a block of wood. In each form there is something to be found, some delight to give joy, something to make us think.

In 1961, Barbara Hepworth wrote 'I, the sculptor, am the landscape, I am the form and I am the hollow, the thrust and the contour.'

What, I wonder, was the block of stone like before her hands began their imaginative transformation of the material?

So in recognising the enormity of that occasion on the hill of Tabor and its significance in the lives of three followers of Jesus, in faith, may we follow their example.

A Touching Place is a beautiful hymn written by John Bell, a member of the Iona Community in Glasgow. It has this refrain after each verse: "To the lost Christ shows his face; to the unloved He gives His embrace; to those who cry in pain or disgrace, Christ, makes, with His friends, a touching place"

Let's leave it there.

What is the kingdom of Heaven?

The kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom of God are two phrases used in the Gospels to describe the same thing: the fulfilment of God's will on Earth.

The phrase 'kingdom of God' occurs 68 times in 10 New Testament books. The 'kingdom of Heaven' occurs 32 times, and only in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus, however, uses both phrases interchangeably when speaking to the rich young man (Matthew 19: 23), making no distinction between them.

Jesus offers several parables dealing with different aspects of the kingdom of Heaven on Earth. He offers images of pearls and hidden treasures to stress the importance of his kingdom. In the parable of the fisherman's net, the catch of fish is not perfect, so we learn the lesson that his kingdom on Earth is a mixed bag, and that we all have to work to root out those things in our lives that hinder us from following his message.

The parable of the rich man dressed in "purple garments and fine linen" (Luke 16:19) points to the unimportance of wealth and possessions when it comes to loving God and our neighbour. This parable highlights the crucial importance of living an authentic life based on the love of God and our fellow man. Jesus talks about the sower of seeds in the ground when he wants to describe the effects of the Word of God in people's lives. He talks about the mustard seed and the yeast when he wants to illustrate the growth of his kingdom both in terms of numbers and quality.

These parables are stories, but they are stories about the reign of God in our lives. They are for people of good will who yearn for God's spiritual kingdom in their lives, and how to enter into it. They are for those who suddenly come



upon the kingdom, recognise it, and are welcomed into it. They are for those who have abandoned His kingdom through human weakness but, like the prodigal son, are welcomed back into it, and are forgiven unconditionally.

This kingdom, Jesus explains, is within you. It begins with an inner change of attitude by putting on the eight Beatitudes which backtrack to the condition of the human

heart. This kingdom also manifests itself openly in the things we do to help one another. The parable of the final judgement spells out in graphic detail the things we need to do to be part of his kingdom. We need to do unto others what we would wish them to do unto us, such as feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, taking care of the sick, providing shelter to the homeless, and clothing the naked.

These are all visible signs of the kingdom of Heaven among us.

Some of Jesus' parables about the kingdom are very brief, some are lengthy, and some are more complex. But all of them are about redeeming human nature, and entering into true and lasting relationships with our Father in Heaven and with one another. All of Jesus' parables are as immediate and touching as the evening news.

Not only does Jesus speak directly to us and make us part of the story. He demands that we provide the ending.

The ending is what really counts and it's up to each one of us to provide it. We do this when we take the message of each parable to heart and put it into practice. This is how the kingdom of Heaven comes down to Earth. This is how we fulfil God's will on Earth.

'He will baptise you in the Holy Spirit and in fire'

Some people might say that Christianity has failed but is that a fair criticism? I don't believe so. Christianity never fails whenever it is practised. It is primarily a way of life, not a theory. It offers new life, and is convincing, primarily, as witness. The evidence of Christianity is shown by the good example, the change-for-the-better which it is capable of producing in people's lives.

On this it either stands or falls. Faith must be shown to make sense even if it is a mystery.

Theologians can demonstrate that faith does not contain internal contradictions, that it does not flout scientific knowledge.

However, the proof of faith, the worthwhileness of faith, can only be demonstrated by showing the real and practical evidence of its value; the evidence of a new spirit (the Holy Spirit) in our lives.

In today's scripture we read about the new baptism of Jesus: A baptism 'in the Holy Spirit and in Fire.' Our Saviour began his public ministry by receiving John's Baptism of Repentance. He did not need repentance but he wished to identify himself with the rest of mankind who do need repentance.

He also wished to redeem, not only mankind but all of nature as well. With

the new baptism that Jesus has given us, the course of humankind and of life was altered for the better.

Jesus has changed the way we look at the world, the way we live, work or die. The Christian or follower of Christ regards his life in this world, not simply as a series of earthly happenings, but as being vitally related to God's providence. The Christian takes it for granted that there is a constant interplay between nature and grace, that there is something above and beyond the world of nature and events manifesting the presence of God.

What is a religious experience for one

may not be a religious experience for another. The starry heavens above, the shining splendour of the Milky Way, may be viewed as a distant amalgam of astronomic phenomena by a non-believer. To the Christian, however, these are not only exciting aesthetic wonders; these are images of the handiwork of God.

With Jesus, we are baptised into a new way of life. We are given a new spirit (the Holy Spirit) and a new way of looking at life and living it, in accord with the example of Christ.

May you come alive to the new life of Christ's Baptism within you.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC PRIESTS



Surviving life's storms by trusting in your judgement – and in Christ

13th August – 19th Sunday, (A)

1 Kings 19:9, 11-13

God's voice was like the gentle whisper of a breeze

At that place Elijah came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Responsorial: Psalm 84:9-14

R./: Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation.

I will hear what the Lord God has to say, a voice that speaks of peace. His help is near for those who fear him and his glory will dwell in our land. (R./)

Mercy and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have embraced. Faithfulness shall spring from the earth and justice look down from heaven. (R./)

The Lord will make us prosper and our earth shall yield its fruit. Justice shall march before him and peace shall follow his steps. (R./)

Romans 9:1-5

Paul grieves at the Jews' refusal to accept Jesus. He would do anything to win them for Christ

I am speaking the truth in Christ – I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit – I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship,



'And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea.'

and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Gospel: Matthew 14:23-33
When Peter begins to sink Jesus chides him for his lack of faith

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear.

Immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him,

saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

If the wind should die

1. Voyage: Life can be viewed as journey (Pilgrim's progress; Exodus; Odyssey), or still better as voyage (because driven by forces more powerful than ourselves, like wind and wave.) We sail upon a rippling surface of events, feeling the joy of movement, being alive and going somewhere. When things go well, we feel the contentment of those experienced sailors, the apostles on their way home across the quiet lake of Galilee.

2. Waves: A gale blew up, changing their mood. Danger and

fear of drowning. Our own life-voyage has its share of storms too, anxieties, problems and pressures of various kinds. How often a sudden turn of events can rob us of inner peace. Are we on a charted course, or just drifting along without any determined direction? Many find it hard enough to stay afloat, pressurised by the bewilderingly changing times, ill-at-ease in their relationships with others, discontented and insecure in themselves. That's exactly what the frightened apostles in the storm mean for us today: we are those sailors, tossing about in the waves.

3. Remedies: Many prescriptions are suggested, to ease the upsets of our voyage. Like different brands of medication for sea-sickness! A long quiet rest, a change of occupation, psychiatric help or counselling, a course of Yoga or Transcendental Meditation, Contemplative or Charismatic Prayer. Doubtless, every remedy has its own advantages, but what better support can be found in times of stress than an understanding friend? Today's gospel suggests that our first and most constant recourse should be to none other than, Christ himself.

4. Presence: God is present where we least expect him, although it is a hidden, unseen

presence, not always easy to discover. It takes faith nearer than the door." So the apostles were amazed to see Christ coming to them in the middle of the storm, for (at that stage) they were men of little faith. Elijah, that lonely refugee, faithful to his God despite cruel persecution by Jezebel, discovered the mysterious presence of God in the still, small voice of his own soul. Standing at the mouth of a cave, on the slopes of the holy mountain, he got strength and comfort from the Living God. Where God is, there is peace. But his presence is everywhere, for those who learn to discern it.

A fine expression of this belief in God's unseen presence is given in Francis Thompson's poem, *The Kingdom of God*:

*O world invisible, we view thee,
O world intangible, we touch thee,
O world unknowable, we know thee,*

*Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!
Does the fish soar to find the ocean,
The eagle plunge to find the air -
That we ask of the stars in motion*

*If they have rumour of thee there?
Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars!*

*The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.
The angels keep their ancient places;-
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!*

*'Tis ye, 'tis your estranged faces,
That miss the many-splendoured thing.*

*But when so sad thou canst not sadder
Cry; and upon thy so sore loss
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder*

*Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross.
Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,
Cry, clinging Heaven by the hems;
And lo, Christ walking on the water*

Not of Gennesareth, but Thames!

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See www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie



Our own life-voyage has its share of storms too, anxieties, problems and pressures of various kinds. How often a sudden turn of events can rob us of inner peace.

This issue we introduce a new columnist to answer faith-related questions, Jenna Marie Cooper. Jenna Marie will alternate each week with our regular columnist, Fr Doyle

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS...

JENNA MARIE COOPER



Is it a sin just because I became angry?

Q: A couple of weeks ago, I got into an argument with another parishioner. Shortly afterwards I received an email from our priest saying that rage was a sin and I needed to go to confession. When I went to confession, that priest said that getting angry was not a sin and that God and Jesus both got angry. Was my priest correct in sending me such an email?

A: It looks like your question has multiple layers. One level is the technical theological question of whether or in what circumstances anger might be a sin; another is a more pastoral question of whether this situation was handled well.

Theologically, we know that the Church considers sins to be either mortal or venial. A mortal sin is a spiritually deadly sin. For a sin to be mortal, it must be an act which is seriously wrong in and of itself (called 'grave matter'), and this act must be freely, deliberately and knowingly chosen. If a sin does not involve grave matter, or if it's committed in a less intentional way, then it is not a mortal sin but a 'venial' one.

Anger or synonyms such as wrath or rage are often included in the lists of sins. However, whether anger is mortal or venial sin – or even a sin at all – depends on the circumstances. For instance, having an emotion is morally neutral, so merely feeling angry is certainly not a sin. As your priest noted, we know from scripture that even Jesus had feelings of anger.

Still, our reactions do have the potential to be either sinful or virtuous. For instance, choosing to express our feelings of anger by physically harming another person would likely be a mortal sin; a cutting personal remark prompted by feelings of annoyance might be venially sinful. Yet again, context is important and it's difficult to make judgements about what responses to anger are or are not sinful in the abstract. Even in your example, getting into an argument might be sinful if the conversation demonstrated a lack of respect for the other or was filled with cruel accusations. But an argument that is more like a lively debate, or a difficult but necessary conversation, might not be sinful at all, even if there are feelings of anger involved.

Pastorally, there are some times where pastors have an obligation to correct a person exhibiting obvious sinful behaviour. If a Catholic is openly involved in promoting government policies which

'Our Catholic cultural emphasis on crucifixion imagery comes from Catholicism's focus on the saving power of Christ's passion.'



seriously contradict the Church's moral teaching, for instance, it would be very appropriate for that person's bishop to reach out and admonish them personally.

For the most part, our personal journeys to overcome sin and grow in virtue – including when and how often to approach the sacrament of penance – are something which the Church's law treats with respect and discretion. Catholics are required to make a sacramental confession at least once a year, and it might be helpful to ask advice about how frequently we should go, given our strengths and weaknesses. But the discernment of whether a person would need to go to confession after engaging in a heated argument is ultimately something which should be left between God and the individual's conscience.

Q: Since the Church teaches that God is a forgiving God, how could He banish a person to Hell? It is very difficult for me to believe that God would make that an eternal habitat for anyone.

A: According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, 'Hell's principal punishment consists of eternal separation from God in whom alone man can have the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs.' So Hell isn't so much of a place or 'habitat' as it is a state of freely chosen estrangement from God.

As Catholics, we believe that God created us with free will, meaning that we decide for ourselves to love God and follow his commandments;

or we can choose to reject or ignore God. If we freely choose to distance ourselves from God through sinful actions and a lack of repentance, God will respect our agency in making this choice and will not override our decision or force himself on us. If a person willingly persists in a state of unrepentant grave sin right up until the time of their death, they are essentially sending themselves to Hell.

But God does not actively want Hell for anyone. As the Catechism also tells us: 'God predestines no one to go to Hell; for this, a wilful turning away from God (a mortal sin) is necessary, and persistence in it until the end. The Church implores the mercy of God, who does not want 'any to perish, but all to come to repentance.'

Q: I know many Christians wear a cross necklace, but why do Catholics wear a crucifix? Displaying Jesus hanging from a cross, as jewellery, seems both cruel and a bit dark, even bizarre.

A: Our Catholic cultural emphasis on crucifixion imagery comes from its focus on the saving power of Christ's passion. Catholics are keenly aware that Jesus was not merely a wise moral teacher; he was the lamb of God who offered his life and was slain for the redemption of the world. Crucifixion imagery helps keep this central facet of our faith readily before our eyes.

Crucifixion imagery also reminds that Christ freely took on our human nature and had a human body that was subject to suffering

and death, just as we are. When we are in pain, a crucifix can help us remember that God himself knows and understands what we are going through. It can also remind us of the possibility of uniting our sufferings to Christ's, filling us with the hope that our suffering in this life might also bear fruit for the salvation of souls.

Yes, a crucifix can be a jarring image. If you look at the history of Christian art, it seems to have been a bit too much for the early Christians, which is why other kinds of imagery, such as Christ the Good Shepherd, were much more common in the Church's first few centuries. Even in the early Middle Ages, when crucifixes were more widely used, the crucified Christ was most often portrayed as a serene and victorious king rather than as a frankly suffering victim.

More "graphic" crucifixes did not become typical until the Counter Reformation era in the 16th century. This period of the Church's history was focused on correcting abuses and other forms of corruption, in addition to deepening the personal spirituality of the faithful. So perhaps during this era the more intense crucifixion imagery was intended to serve as a kind of spiritual "wake up call" to a church needing to rediscover its centuries-old foundation.

Q: It is common to hear "it's a miracle" for a sports comeback victory. Does the church actually have a definition of a miracle? When it comes to canonisation,

miracles are required, aren't they? Does a miracle happen in other domains except health and medicine?

A: A miracle is an extraordinary phenomenon that cannot be explained by any natural cause. In its glossary, the Catechism defines a miracle as 'a sign or wonder such as a healing, or control of nature, which can only be attributed to divine power.'

Calling something like an unlikely sports comeback a miracle is using quite a bit of poetic licence, since there is a readily discernible natural explanation for the victory – namely, the skill of the athletes, which they acquired through their own human efforts.

There also are situations where God truly may have intervened in answer to a prayer – for instance, a disease goes into an unexpected remission after a course of medical treatment, or a wayward loved one has a surprising conversion of heart – but which cannot be called miracles in a strict technical sense, as there can be a strong natural component to such blessings.

In instances such as these, we might understand God as working within the natural order he established, albeit perhaps in an especially active way; this is as opposed to 'breaking the rules' of nature, which is what happens in a true miracle.

Medical miracles seem to be the kind of miracle we hear about most often today, but not all miracles are health-related. While Jesus seemed especially fond of performing miraculous healings, the Gospels give us many wonderful examples of other kinds of miracles-consider Jesus turning water into wine at the wedding at Cana; the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, and Jesus calming a storm. In more recent times, there was the 'Miracle of the sun' at Fatima on 13th October 1917, when numerous witnesses saw the sun move and seemingly dance in a way that should have been impossible. There are also many Catholics who have experienced the healing power of Jesus today through physical healings.

Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist.

Unfortunately, this column cannot accept questions from readers

SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY

DAVID TORKINGTON



The coronation and its consequences

We tend to believe that when Our Lady was assumed into Heaven and crowned as its Queen, it was the final glorious consummation of the life of the most illustrious woman who has ever lived on this earth.

It was God's supreme gift to the woman who he first conceived as the mother of his only begotten son.

The truth, however, is far more profound and sublime. A coronation does not celebrate an end, but a new beginning. A monarch is invested with God-given power that will bring about an ongoing spiritual and physical development for the person themselves and for those over whom they reign. God's power and the power given to any Christian monarch is love.

The 'fons et origo', the source and fountainhead of this love, is to be found as an infinite vortex of supernatural life and loving binding the three persons of the Holy Trinity, the source and destiny of all other life both spiritual and material.

A new departure

When Our Lady was crowned in Heaven it was not just God's reward for a life perfectly lived in his name, but to mark a new departure in her vocation, her calling as his especially chosen mother for his son and for his Church.

It was to draw her ever more closely to himself, to receive in ever greater measure the love without measure that he wanted to continually bestow on her for herself, and through her onto countless others on earth for whom she was destined to be a mother to the end of time.

A homecoming

When all the praises have been given, all the blessings bestowed, when all the honours have been awarded to our Blessed Mother, she is still mortal like ourselves, in all things except sin. She is still finite in her origin and in her person, and so her journey like our journey into the infinite and inexhaustible love of the Three in One is eternally ongoing, evermore captivating, and forevermore enthralling.

As more and more of her children join her, in, with and through her beloved son in his glorified and transformed humanity, then they join her on her journey to ecstasy without ending. What a homecoming has Christ prepared for us, in him and with his Immaculate Mother and with St Joseph.

With her human family now at one again like never before, all other human families are invited to join them, as countless millions



Fresco of the
Coronation of the
Blessed Virgin in the
Basilica de la
Macarena, Seville.

of faithful followers in her wake. With her, and in her Son they journey onward towards the family of the three infinite and everlasting lovers bound together as one Family. It is they who are the source and destiny of all other families thanks to the perfect God-given Son who laid down his human life that supernatural life may be open to all.

Travelling to our destiny

Lest there is any misunderstanding, be sure we are not travelling to our destiny with Mary and Joseph in their beloved son, as some sort of disembodied spirits. We are not Gnostics but Christians who, like Christ on Mount Tabor, will experience the total regeneration of our whole personalities, body and blood, soul and humanity.

Nor therefore will our individual personalities be merged into some sort of disembodied pantheistic paradise where we lose our identity as we are merged into the Absolute.

The greater the love the more we become our true selves from the

self-centred selves who began the journey. It is not just our souls therefore, but our bodies too, our whole human being that is continually perfected as the infinite love without measure, never ceasing to permeate and penetrate every part of our personalities.

The beatific vision

Our own personal joy is multiplied by seeing those we loved on earth become their true selves, loving them even more than they ever thought possible, as everyone goes endlessly forward into the 'ecstatic' bliss of the beatific union where all families find their consummation. This family that expresses itself in the infinite love that bonds the three divine persons as one, is the uncreated family that is the origin and destiny of all other families.

Far from enjoying her own eternal destiny as it unfolds with ever more and all engrossing delights, our heavenly mother's thoughts are simultaneously with her children on earth. She burns with what is now a supernatural love to ensure that as many as possible join her in the utterly captivating thrill and joy of being possessed by love without measure.

While on earth, she became the perfect example to all the early Christians of what they should do to enter with her into her beloved son and into his relentless loving of his Father. Here with her, we will gradually enter more deeply into Christ's sublime contemplation of the Father. It is here while still on earth that we will receive the fruits of that divine contemplation without which the pagan world would never have been transformed from paganism into Christianity.

forewarn them of the hell-bent destination to which their self-bent actions are leading them.

Our immaculately conceived Mother

It would seem to be predominantly children to whom Mary has revealed herself, because the vast majority of adults in our contemporary world are all too preoccupied with ourselves to listen to and understand the pure, simple and uncomplicated words of our Immaculately Conceived mother. Even modern believers have managed to completely isolate ourselves from God's word because we have minimised to the nominal, what is a rather superficial prayer life.

Her gift to the Church

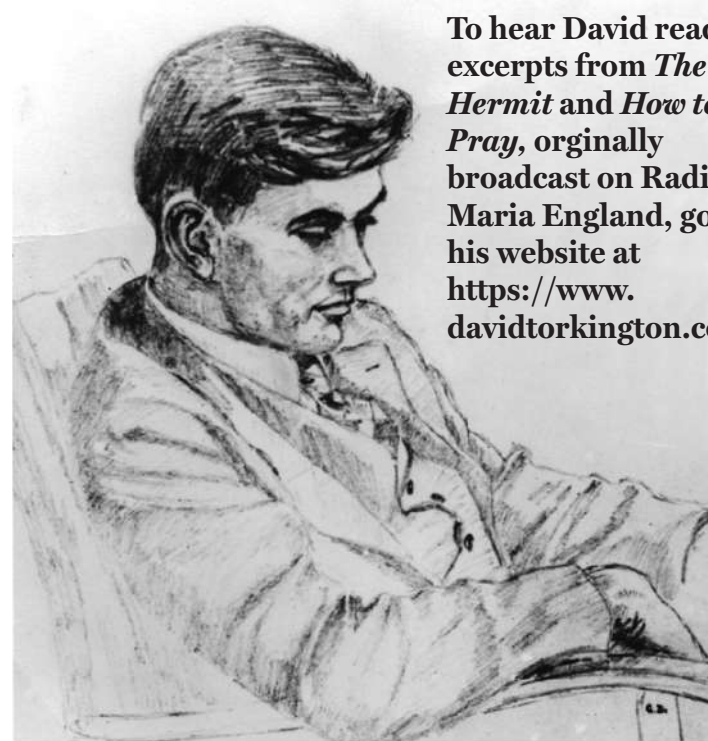
Our Lady promised the children at Fatima that in the 'final times' of this era that is approaching, her gift to the Church would be her Immaculate Heart, overflowing with love for all who are open to receive it.

It would seem then, that in these end times that are now all but upon us, the love that her sacred heart received from the sacred heart of her son can save us.

In these terrible times God has determined that it will be one of us, Mary Immaculate, raised by him to be our heavenly Queen, who will be the mediatrix of the only love that can save the world from damnation.

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

David Torkington reads from The Hermit



To hear David reading excerpts from *The Hermit and How to Pray*, originally broadcast on Radio Maria England, go to his website at
<https://www.davidtorkington.com>



Our Lady promised the children at Fatima that in the 'final times' of this era that is approaching, her gift to the Church would be her Immaculate Heart, overflowing with love for all who are open to receive it...



AROUND THE PARISHES & EDUCATION

The Universe Catholic Weekly's guide
to Catholic life in your neighbourhood



Lourdes weaves its wonders over Hexham and Newcastle pilgrims

The 2023 Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle Lourdes Pilgrimage took place from 28th July – 4th August. The pilgrims were accompanied to Lourdes by Bishop Stephen Wright, the diocesan pilgrimage director Fr Michael Humble and a team of dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers.

The opening day was a mosaic of emotions as pilgrims embarked on their transformative journey, encompassing leaving home, the pilgrimage itself, arrival in the hallowed town, and the pilgrimage opening Mass.

Under the azure skies of Lourdes, the journey commenced at the Church of St. Bernadette – Carmel side, as the clock struck 10.30am. Hearts brimming with devotion and hope, pilgrims gathered for the soul-stirring Mass, marking the beginning of their spiritual odyssey.

As the sun rose on the second day, the town witnessed another wave of euphoria. Sunday dawned with Mass in the left part of the Church of St Bernadette, offering a poignant contrast to the awe-inspiring grotto and basilica. Mixed showers and sun rays embraced the pilgrims, the weather reminiscent of home but with a touch of warmth. The outdoor Stations of the Cross gracefully shifted to the Underground Basilica due to gentle showers. Vivid images emerged of the illuminated Stations adorning the subterranean passages, reminding all of the profound journey they were on.

Yet it was the evening of the second day that etched memories in the hearts of all who were present. A torchlight procession, a reverent and exhilarating event, witnessed Hexham and Newcastle volunteers cradling and escorting Our Lady through the town. This year's procession was unique, with over 4,500 youths from across the world, bound to meet the Pope in Lisbon for World Youth Day, adding their exuberance to the already bustling event.

Colours, songs, chants, and dances merged into a harmonious tribute to Our Lady, making the evening truly unforgettable.

Monday arrived, enveloping the pilgrims in a sense of blessed serenity. Mass in the grotto resonated with a profound spiritual connection, followed by a group photo on the steps of the main



Basilica. Later, a blessed sacrament procession from the meadow opposite the grotto to the underground Basilica engaged the hearts and souls of all. The canopy bearers, privileged helpers, carried their symbolic burden with reverence and devotion.

Tuesday brought the main altar of the underground Basilica to life as the focal point of a celebratory Mass for the pilgrims. The choir's harmonious voices filled the sacred space, lifting spirits and strengthening connections. An afternoon garden party awaited the pilgrims, complete with unexpected entertainment by two members of ABBA, the timeless Frank Sinatra, and a delightful 'bunch of Geordies.'

Midway through the pilgrimage, Wednesday morning greeted the pilgrims with the tranquil beauty of the Esplanade Altar. Amid the splendour of the Basilica entrance, a choir group photo immortalised the shared journey of music and faith.

As the pilgrimage approached its closing, the final day painted a tableau of devotion and gratitude. The closing Mass in the rosary Basilica reverberated with blessings, encompassing the pilgrimage candle and honouring Dr Margaret McGee, a dedicated pilgrimage doctor. The poignant candle procession through the grotto marked the pilgrims' final steps of this remarkable journey, a continuation of prayers and hopes nurtured by the luminous spirit of Lourdes.

In this tapestry of faith, unity, and joy, Lourdes proved yet again to be a place of profound transformation and shared devotion. The town's cobblestone streets echoed with the



footprints of pilgrims who came seeking solace, leaving with hearts illuminated by the spirit of Lourdes.

Scenes from the pilgrimage by
Mike March, Pilgrim
Photography



Stonyhurst coach lands England rugby VIP award

Stonyhurst College's Director of Sport, Simon Charles, has won the England Rugby VIP Award, which is given to nominated coaches who have given a lengthy period of service to rugby. Simon was voted for by a panel that considered his length of service alongside the importance of his role.

England Rugby said: "Simon attended Cardiff and Loughborough Universities before spending two years at the University of Tennessee in the USA playing and coaching rugby. In 1990 he joined Stonyhurst College as Director of Sport and 1st XV Coach, the post he still holds today.

"For a school with approximately 800 pupils between the ages of 3 and 18, Stonyhurst has an extensive and enviable fixture list across the North of England. In addition, Stonyhurst has always fully supported and competed with impressive success at Lancashire County Cup Competitions at U14, U15, U16 and 1st XV.

"Similarly, Stonyhurst has always supported the Lancashire age-grade teams with numerous players progressing into the County sides.

"During this time, the list of individual honours is extensive, with many students gaining county, regional and international honours,



including Stonyhurst's first female England U18 international, Connie, in 2023.

"It is in fact in sevens that Simon and Stonyhurst have possibly had their greatest achievements. Simon coached the Rosslyn Park National winning teams in 1996 and 1999 and, for the last 30 years, he has organised the Stonyhurst Sevens.

"For more than 30 years, Simon has been a phenomenal servant to Stonyhurst rugby in particular and Lancashire in general; for this, he fully deserves this award."

Simon attended the Annual Awards Dinner with his wife Carolyn, where he celebrated his achievement.

Bishop Bewick rewarded for collaborative drive to succeed

A 'compelling drive' to improve education for communities in the North East has seen a Newcastle-based Catholic academies trust receive a prestigious award from Optimus Education.

The Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust took the award for Growth and Impact at a recent event held in London for multi-academy trust excellence.

"We are delighted that the work we have all undertaken since 2019 in bringing 39 of us together, has been recognised and celebrated," said Chief Executive Anita Bath "This award just underlines what a massive accomplishment establishing our new Trust has been, and is owned by everyone from across our community of schools. It is a validation of the way we have grown so rapidly together and how we approach supporting one another to provide the very best opportunities for children in the North East," she added.

The trust provides Catholic education in the north of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle and has schools from Blyth to Walbottle. It is based at the Sacred Heart Catholic High School in Fenham, Newcastle, and looks after almost

40 schools.

The winner's citation praised 'their commitment to social justice through educational excellence and a collaborative approach to school development.'

The trust instils the value of 'we have to be greater than the sum of our parts' to all its schools. "We are

no longer islands working individually for our own schools, staff and pupils. By harnessing the strengths we have collectively, we have so much more capacity to support and improve the education of all the children within the Bishop Bewick," its values statement says.



Staff members at the awards ceremony in London

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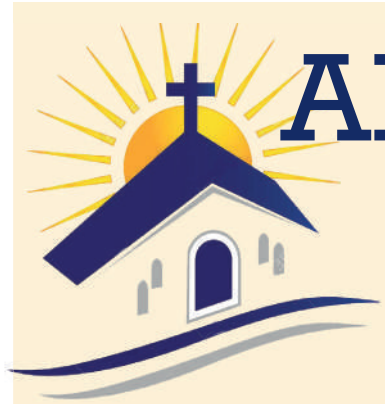
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AROUND THE PARISHES & EDUCATION

The Universe Catholic Weekly's guide
to Catholic life in your neighbourhood



We've got to think BIG for the Church

Ignite day primes parish to move from maintenance to mission

Eighty people involved in ministry at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Gateacre, took part in a day called Ignite.

The day was for those actively involved in the parish community as a way of putting the diocesan synod and parish vision into action.

Fr Stephen Pritchard explained: "The day's aim was centred around three words: Celebrate, inspire, equip."

"To celebrate the good news of our parish and all the people who serve, to be inspired to answer the call to share responsibility in leading through the next stage of the mission God has entrusted to us, and finally to be better equipped for the next stage of the journey of the parish."

Matt Regitz from Texas, who works in parish renewal and Jordan Kelly, from Brentwood, gave the main input. Both are from Divine



Renovation – a group that helps parishes unlock the potential that lies within them.

They also support parishes to reclaim their purpose and take the steps that can be made to move from 'maintenance' to 'mission'.

Parishioner Clare O'Brien said: "The input from Jordan and Matt made me realise how the Church can move forward and be spiritual and open to worship and prayer, but within a Catholic tradition and celebrating and connecting with

the Sacraments that we have."

For Shirley Green, it was the emphasis in the input of being a Church outside in that struck her. She said: "Jordan and Matt challenged us as a parish to change our focus and instead of trying to

bring people inside to Church. We should look at new ways to be a Church to people outside."

Bishop Tom Neylon spoke at the day, and shared about his own experience of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In this new time, he encouraged people to think big, that this is God's Church and God has a plan bigger than our own.

The afternoon workshops were led by parishioners from St John Stone's, Woodvale, and St Agnes and St Aidan, Huyton, as well as Our Lady's parishioners. They focused on a healthy parish that has shared leadership, excels on Sundays and evangelises.

Music and worship were wonderfully led by One Hope Project, a Catholic creative collective.

Helen Reynolds said: "The thing I am taking away is, the mission has never changed but the methodology does."

Finally, summing up her experience, Karen McCoy said: "Overall, the day has given me renewed hope that with the guidance of the Holy Spirit we as a parish are journeying together."

Aberystwyth Cathsoc past and present at ordination

Anne Uruska

The ordination to the priesthood of Gregory Beckett in Saint Joseph's Cathedral, Swansea on 15th July was an important occasion for the Diocese of Menevia and for Greg's family and his home parish of Haverfordwest. The Mass was presided over by Rev. Mark O'Toole, who fulfils the joint roles of Bishop of Menevia and Archbishop of Cardiff. This Ordination was also a particularly meaningful event for the parish of Aberystwyth where Greg spent his student days and discerned his calling to become a priest. He is pictured right with Aberystwyth CathSoc friends during the post-ordination celebration.

Parishioners were delighted to hear Bishop Mark announce that, following a short placement at Sacred Heart, Morriston, Fr Greg will then return to Aberystwyth to begin his assignment as Assistant Priest at Welsh Martyrs' church, where he will join the diocesan Director of Vocations, Fr Matthew Roche-Saunders.

Ad multos annos!



Pictured at the ordination are: Br. Illtud Williams (Cardiff Oratory), Oliver Patterson (Oscott), Fr Gregory Beckett (Menevia), Kevin McMulkin (SVP Chairman, Aberystwyth), Br. David Chadwick (York Oratory), James McMulkin (teacher at Saint David's Catholic Sixth-form College, Cardiff), and Luke Jarvis (Aberystwyth CathSoc Secretary 2022-23).

I answered God's call when I realised only He could make me truly happy

What happens when you hear that call to the priesthood? Fr Gavin Landers from the Diocese of Salford shares his vocation story.

When I was young growing up, I found it quite easy to believe in God. After all, we get told we've got an all-loving and caring God and that was easier to believe," he said.

But as I got from a teenage years, I struggled with that reality. I always believed that there was a God. I just didn't see how it was relevant in my own life. I recall at 13 asking myself the big question 'What do I want from life?'

At that age I wanted to be happy and the world was telling me in order to be happy, I had to be rich, I had to be successful. So, at 16, I left school and got a high-paid job in construction. And with the money came the nice clothes, nice car, the nice apartment.

"I started to live for the weekend and happiness ended up being a word that was just as empty as I was feeling."

"One week, while I was at church, the priest started to preach about happiness and my ears pricked up."

The priest went on to explain that God created each one of us for great happiness – but we don't always look for it in the right places.

He challenged us to remove the blocks that separate us from God and that happiness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

He explained confession in a really simple way. He said it's like being outside on a sunny day and we just bask in God's radiance, His love, His mercy. But when we start to sin, the clouds start to roll in. But when we go to confession, it's like the rain starts to fall, the clouds depart, and we have that loving relationship once again with God.

The following week, I went to confession and sat with the priest. I told him all the things I'd done wrong and how it had caused disruption with my family, my friends, my girlfriend. And the priest said something quite profound to me; he said that my life had been a life of searching for love.

I explained to the priest that I knew what love was, that he loved his family, his friends, his



'You know that feeling when you want to be with someone all the time and hang out with them and get to know everything about? Well, that feeling wasn't for my girlfriend. It was for God. Looking back now, that was my calling to be a priest'

girlfriend. But the priest said: "No, you've been searching for God, who is love."

I asked: "Well, how has God ever loved me?"

The priest gave me a crucifix and said: "God loved you so much, that He did this: He sent His son to die for love of you."

At that moment, I just started to cry because I realised that my self-worth wasn't based on what clothes I was wearing or how much money I had in the bank account; my self-worth was based on the fact that I was worth dying for.

I felt a great amount of grace

during the moment of absolution and that joy, that happiness that I'd always desired, I started to get a little bit of a taste of it.

I left the confessional almost dancing because of this joy that I received from God.

A little while later, in 2008, I was selected to represent my parish in the diocesan pilgrimage to World Youth Day in Sydney with Pope Benedict XVI. When I got to Australia, there were half a million young people there, singing and dancing and just so full of joy.

I was envious. They didn't have the joy because they had a lot of money, they had such great joy because they had a relationship with God.

While in Sydney, I embraced the Sacrament of Reconciliation once again and went to Mass each day, giving me another taste of this joy, happiness, and fulfilment.

When I came back about three weeks later I started to get what I

could only describe as a lovesick feeling. You know that feeling when you want to be with someone all the time and hang out with them and get to know everything about?

Well, that feeling wasn't for my girlfriend. It was for God.

And it wasn't a comfortable feeling to start with. I suppose looking back now, that was my calling to be a priest.

I continued on this path of discernment, seeking advice and guidance from a priest friend who had experienced similar feelings of being lovesick for God.

Eventually, I applied to the priesthood, was accepted, and embarked on a new life training for the priesthood in Spain.

While I was in Spain, I was praying about this lovesick feeling, my call to the priesthood, and I realised that I never felt that way about God at all.

What I do believe now is that God gave me a little taste of how He felt about me, how God is lovesick for each one of us.

There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each person, and it can only be filled by God, made known through Jesus Christ.

That 13-year-old boy who desired happiness has now got the fulfilment he looked for.

“

While I was in Spain, I was praying about this lovesick feeling, my call to the priesthood, and I realised that I never felt that way about God ...

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GARDENING



All the leaves are brown...

Why leaves change colour in the Autumn

Even if you live in the most tropical of climates, where summer is your only real season, you still can't help but marvel at the splendour of a brightly coloured autumn vista.

So, what's behind this annual event? Why do leaves change colour every Autumn and why are some years more vivid in colour than others?

To understand what's involved each fall in the transformation from a sea of cool green to a kaleidoscope of red, orange, yellow and every shade in between, it is helpful to know two important points. The timing of leaf colour change is primarily affected by

the calendar and the intensity is a product of three main factors: colour pigments, length of night and weather.

First are the pigments. There are three most responsible for leaf colour. Most of us are familiar with the first, which is chlorophyll. You know it as having something to do with providing the basic green colour found in leaves and grass. It's required for photosynthesis, the chemical process that allows plants of all sizes to use sunlight to produce food.

During the warmer months when plants are actively growing, the chlorophyll pigment dominates the colour we see in leaves.

However, another pigment is also present at this time, carotenoids. They produce the yellows, oranges and browns. But because chlorophyll is so dominant as a pigment, it is not until autumn, when the

photosynthesis process shuts down, that carotenoid pigments begin to become apparent.

Eventually the photosynthesis process ceases and all chlorophyll is depleted, eliminating the green colour completely from certain leaves and allowing the carotenoid pigments to take centre stage.

A third pigment, anthocyanins are not present in leaves until autumn. Warm bright days of autumn produce lots of sugars in the leaf. But as the days shorten and the nights cool, these excess sugars are trapped in the leaf as veins

leading into and out of the leaves gradually close. The combination of bright light and trapped sugars stimulate the production of the anthocyanin pigments. They produce the vivid shades of reds and purple and the many hues in between.

The next factor contributing to the colour of leaves in the autumn is the longer nights. Days become shorter, reducing the amount of sunlight available for plants to photosynthesise. This is nature's way of signalling plants that winter is on the way. Energy begins to shift from food and energy production

into storage and reserves.

As the photosynthesis process slows down in response to shorter days, so does the production of chlorophyll. In the absence of the dominant green pigment, carotenoid and anthocyanin pigments light up the fall landscape.

The third factor, and the one most responsible for the intensity of autumn colour, is the weather. The most brilliant autumn displays are the result of a warm wet spring, a mild summer, bright sunny autumn days and cool but above freezing nights. When this combination comes together, the result is the most vivid colour exhibition.

So, as you get ready for this season's display of colour, hopefully you will be rewarded with exceptional views.

And next spring, when it's warm and wet, be happy. It may be the makings of a spectacular autumn!

“The most brilliant autumn displays are the result of a warm wet spring, a mild summer, bright sunny autumn days and cool but above freezing nights. When this combination comes together, the result is the most vivid colour exhibition.

HEALTH

Seven techniques to avoid weight regain, approved by experts

Henrietta Graham & Claire Madigan

Losing weight is challenging. But as anyone who has ever successfully lost weight knows, it's avoiding weight re-gain that's the real challenge.

This is true no matter what method you follow to lose weight. For example, studies show that people who follow very low calorie diets (between 800-1,200 calories per day) regain between 26 per cent and 121 per cent of their lost weight five years after treatment. People who follow behavioural weight management programmes (such as WW, formerly Weight Watchers) regain between 30-35 per cent of their lost weight after one year.

Even people who use weight loss medications, such as Wegovy, are shown to have regained about two-thirds of the weight they lost one year after stopping the drug.

There are many reasons why we regain the weight we lose. First, maintaining weight loss is less rewarding than seeing the number on the scale decrease while you're losing weight. This makes it hard to maintain motivation and continue looking after your weight.

Second, it's often difficult to maintain the lifestyle changes we made in order to lose weight – especially if these changes are unrealistic and hard to stick with in the long-term (such as very low-calorie diets or cutting out whole food groups).

Third, weight loss can trigger increased production of hunger hormones – and can even slow your metabolism. These changes can make it difficult to resist overeating and can contribute to weight regain



over time.

But while weight regain may be a common experience, that doesn't mean there aren't many evidence-backed things you can still do to prevent it in the long run:

1. Be flexible

It's important to understand that maintaining a healthy weight will require lifelong management – so having rigid expectations and thinking you'll always adhere perfectly to your lifestyle changes is unrealistic.

Don't feel guilty when you have a slip-up. Instead, make plans to get back on track as soon as possible.

For example, if you think you may have overeaten on the weekend account for this by adding a couple extra walks into your routine the next week.

Doing this can prevent an "all or nothing" approach to weight management – whereby you feel guilty when you don't achieve your goals and so

instead abandon your efforts.

2. Plan for disruptions

Recognise that there will be disruptions to your weight management efforts – such as holidays, weddings and birthday parties.

Plan ways to navigate these disruptions successfully. For example, losing a few extra pounds ahead of time may adjust for extra weight that may be gained during these occasions.

Or, if you're going to a barbecue, bring along a healthier option (such as vegetable skewers) so you have a lower calorie option to choose. Doing this will help you enjoy special occasions with less worry.

3. Be proud of your achievements

Our weight naturally fluctuates over time – and so being proud of yourself when you achieve your goals, regardless of the number on the scale, is important.

Research also shows that people who focus more on how they can achieve their goals – rather than the outcome – are more likely to stick to behaviours important for maintaining weight loss. This might be because they're less likely to be affected by setbacks (such as regaining some weight).

4. Make habits

Creating habits can help maintain weight loss. This is because habits are thought to be less affected by fluctuations in motivation.

This means that even when we can't be bothered, the habits we implemented to help us lose weight will be easier to stick with when trying to maintain weight loss. You could also create some new habits after losing weight – such as going for a walk after dinner or taking the stairs when possible.

5. Get active

A study which looked at people who successfully maintained their weight loss found that physical activity was the most important factor for keeping weight off. This is because physical activity can offset some of the calories we eat.

The best physical activity for maintaining weight loss is the one you enjoy doing most. This is because you're more likely to stick with it in the long-term if you enjoy it. But research suggests you should try to get at least 250 minutes of exercise each week to maintain weight loss.

6. Weigh yourself regularly

Weight fluctuates by as much as 1kg-2kg throughout the week. By weighing yourself regularly, you can develop a personalised weight range of

your highest and lowest average weight. This will help you to keep track of your weight, and understand whether you need to make any changes to your diet and exercise habits in order to maintain your weight loss.

Research shows that people who use personalised weight ranges are better able to prevent large weight regain because they're able to adjust their behaviours when necessary.

7. Eat breakfast – and focus on fibre

Although the overall evidence on the importance of breakfast in weight management is mixed, one study found that almost 97 per cent of people who kept their weight off reported having breakfast each day.

Another study also found that people who ate plenty of vegetables and high-fibre foods – such as wholemeal breads, brown rice and oats – each day were more likely to avoid weight regain. Eating these types of foods means you feel fuller and are more likely to eat less.

Maintaining weight loss can be hard, but that doesn't mean it's impossible. And even if you're only able to maintain a small amount of the weight you lost, remember it can still be very beneficial to your health.

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FOOD

Jazzing up a midweek meal

Sausage-stuffed chicken breast

Chicken and sausage go well together at any time, and this stuffed version is no exception. A great midweek meal that jazzes up run-of-the-mill ingredients and turns them into a real treat. Ideal served with roast or baked potatoes, and salad or veg.

INGREDIENTS

4 pork sausages
4 spring onions, chopped
½ tsp dried sage
4 chicken breasts
4 rashers streaky bacon
1 tsp oil

METHOD

■ Preheat the oven to 200 C.

■ Remove the sausage meat from their skins and mix with the spring onions and sage.

■ Season to taste with salt and pepper.

■ Cut each chicken breast almost in half and open out like a book.

■ Stuff the sausage meat inside, close up and wrap each one in a rasher of streaky bacon, stretching to make sure it covers the meat.

■ Place in a roasting tin and drizzle with 1 tsp oil.

■ Cook for 25 mins.

Ideal served with roast or baked potatoes, and salad or veg.



“ A great midweek meal that jazzes up run-of-the-mill ingredients and turns them into a real treat.

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Derbyshire's finest: Bakewell tart

Bakewell tart is a deliciously easy favourite to make and a great way of doing some indoor baking. It is perfect for an afternoon tea or just a snack. Using ready prepared pastry makes it easy and quick, too.

INGREDIENTS

100g of shortcrust pastry
2 tbsp strawberry or raspberry jam
60g butter
60g caster sugar
1 egg
¼ tsp lemon zest
3 tbsp plain flour
115g ground almonds
¼ tsp baking powder
1 tbsp of flaked almonds (optional)

Icing sugar (for dusting)

METHOD

■ Pre-heat the oven to 190 C.
■ Grease or line a 20cm fluted tart tin. Best if you use one with a loose base.
■ Roll the pastry into a round shape a little larger than the tin. Cut a strip 1.5cm wide off the pastry and put round the edge of the plate with the cut edge outwards.
■ Dampen this strip with water and line the plate with the remainder of the pastry. Trim the edges and prick pastry with a fork.
■ Spread jam evenly over the bottom of pastry base.
■ Beat butter and sugar until white and

creamy. Beat the egg and lemon zest and add gradually to the creamed butter and sugar mixture. Add a drop of almond extract if desired.

■ Mix the flour and ground almonds together. Fold the flour and ground almond mixture into the wet mixture using a metal spoon.
Do this one spoon at a time, adding the baking powder with the last addition of flour.

■ Spread this mixture over the jam layer. Sprinkle flaked almonds on top, if using.

■ Bake in the oven for about 30 minutes until browned and thoroughly cooked. Sprinkle with icing sugar and serve.



“ A deliciously easy favourite to make and a great way of doing some indoor baking ... perfect for an afternoon tea or snack...

FILMS

Cowabunga! The world’s favourite half-shell heroes are back!

In rebooting a decades-old franchise with *“Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem”* (Paramount), director and co-writer Jeff Rowe has the titular heroes take a meditative turn. What should they make of humanity, they wonder. And what does the future hold for them?

The familiar quartet of anthropomorphised, masked, sewer-dwelling reptiles, each named for a master artist of the Italian Renaissance, surfaces in this CGI animation, their seventh big-screen outing, with all their trademark characteristics intact. These traits include gravity-defying ninja skills, as well as a weakness for pizza and Doritos.

Now 15, they have been told all their lives by their adoptive father and mentor, a giant rat named Splinter (voice of Jackie Chan), that when it comes to humans, “to interact with them is to die.” Yet they have begun to harbour regrets about their isolated, seemingly anti-social lifestyle.

People, after all, always look like they’re having so much fun,



and the turtles’ longing to interact is primal. Thus, at one point, Leonardo (voice of Nicolas Cantu) expresses his sense of confinement by way of an existential put-down. “I can’t live a happy life,” he observes to Michelangelo, Donatello and Raphael (voices of Shamon Brown Jr., Micah Abbey and Brady Noon), “knowing that your face will be the last thing I see before I die.” Ouch.

Even older children may not know what to make of that. But they will probably appreciate the knockabout adventure to which most of the running time is devoted.

As scripted by Rowe in collaboration with Seth Rogen, Evan Goldberg, Benji Samit and Dan Hernandez, moreover, the movie contains little to make parents uncomfortable, a touch of seemingly requisite gross-out humour aside. But the proceedings are too tumultuous for younger children.

Seth Rogen is fulfilling something of a childhood dream by being involved in the film. Like many children from the 1980s, he grew up wanting to be a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle. “I grew up with them. And I grew up loving them,” Rogen said. “I could not have

absorbed it more thoroughly.” He also spoke of the “wild energy” and “fun” present in making the film.

“Everyone is just so funny and we really had fun with it. I think part of the spirit that we were trying to capture honestly was to make the movie fun and to give it this wild energy,” Rogen said. “That was something that we talked about: how do we make it feel fun and silly and obviously have a good story and plot and all the things that the movie needs to have, but also have this kind of reckless weirdness that’s almost like a kid playing with their toys.”

The solution to their plight lies in befriending April (voice of Ayo Edeberi), a high schooler and budding journalist who wants to write about them. She’s out to gain fame but also, presumably, to portray the turtles in a positive light as likable and potentially popular.

The turtles’ journey of self-discovery is interrupted, however, by the arrival of villains, particularly Superfly (voice of Ice Cube). This outsized insect and his evil cohorts have a scheme for – what else? – world domination.

Mayhem ensues, with high-speed chases, encounters with humans who, just as Splinter predicted, want to kill the interlopers, rapid-fire cultural references that never seem to land and a lot of manic martial arts. Still, amid the chaos, the screenplay encourages respect for education, social interaction and the wisdom of the oldies.

There’s also intense action sequences, a restrained scene of torture, a couple of mild swear words and vomiting played for laughs.

LIFESTYLE

THE JOY OF BAKING IN THE SUMMER

While many people think of baking as a wintertime activity, summer provides a unique opportunity to indulge in its joys. From fruity pies to light and airy cakes, here are a few reasons why baking in the summer is a delightful experience.

1. Seasonal fruits and flavours

One of the greatest pleasures of summer baking is the abundance of fresh, flavourful fruits available. From juicy berries and sweet peaches to tangy citrus fruits, summer offers lots to incorporate into your baked goods. Whether it’s a mouthwatering blueberry pie or a zesty lemon tart, incorporating seasonal fruits elevates the taste and adds a burst of summer vitality to your creations.

2. The Great Indoors

While many people associate baking with turning on the oven, summer is a great time to embrace this cosy activity indoors. Getting lost in the process of baking can be incredibly satisfying. Plus, the delightful aroma of freshly baked goods is sure to bring a smile to everyone’s face.

3. Creativity in cool treats

Baking in the summer doesn’t have to be limited to traditional oven-baked treats. The warm weather offers an opportunity to explore the world of frozen desserts and no-bake delights. From homemade ice cream sandwiches and popsicles to chilled cheesecakes and fruit sorbets, there is no shortage of creative and refreshing options.

4. Bonding and sharing

Summer baking can also become a precious bonding experience with the children, teaching them your signature recipes. The joy of baking is always best enjoyed when shared. As you gather around a

delicious homemade pie, or a batch of freshly baked cookies, laughter and memories are created that will make your summer even more special.

5. Bringing joy to others

Summer baking provides an opportunity to spread joy. With barbecues, picnics, and outdoor gatherings, bringing a homemade baked treat can make any gathering more memorable. The effort and care put into creating something from scratch, tailored to the tastes of your loved ones, is a gift that will be appreciated and cherished.

Embrace the summer season as a time to explore new flavours, create cool treats, and share your love of baking with those around you. Whether you’re a seasoned baker or just starting to discover the joys of the kitchen, baking in the summer is an experience that will leave you with a sense of fulfilment and a taste of summer’s sweetest offerings.



Dismantling the myth that ancient slavery ‘wasn’t that bad’

HISTORY

Chance Bonar

As someone who researches slavery in the ancient Mediterranean world, especially in the Bible, I often hear remarks like, “Slavery was totally different back then, right?” “well, it couldn’t have been that bad, then” and “couldn’t slaves buy their freedom?”

Most people in the United States or Europe in the 21st century are more knowledgeable about the transatlantic slave trade, and live in societies deeply shaped by it. While the UK was not marked with sites linked to slavery, in the United States it’s very different: people can see the effects of modern enslavement everywhere, from mass incarceration sites and housing segregation to voting habits.

The effects of ancient slavery, on the other hand, aren’t as tangible today – and most westerners have only a vague idea of what it looked like. Some people might think of Biblical stories, such as Joseph’s jealous brothers selling him into slavery. Others might picture movies like *Spartacus*, or the myth that enslaved people built the Egyptian pyramids.

Because these kinds of slavery took place so long ago and weren’t based on modern racism, some people have the impression that they weren’t as harsh or violent. That impression makes room for public figures like Christian theologian and analytic philosopher William Lane Craig to argue that ancient slavery was actually beneficial for enslaved people.

Modern factors like capitalism and racist pseudoscience did shape the transatlantic slave trade in uniquely harrowing and enduring ways. Enslaved labour, for example, shaped economists’ theories about the ‘free market’ and global trade.

But to understand slavery from that era – or to combat slavery today – we also need to understand the longer history of involuntary labour. As a scholar of ancient slavery and early Christian history, I often encounter three myths that stand in the way of understanding ancient slavery and how systems of enslavement have evolved over time.

Myth #1: There is one kind of ‘biblical slavery’

The collection of texts that ended up in the Bible represent centuries of different writers from across the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia, often in very different

circumstances, making it hard to generalise about how slavery worked in ‘Biblical’ societies. Most importantly, the Hebrew Bible – what Christians call the Old Testament – emerged primarily in the ancient Near East, while the New Testament emerged in the early Roman Empire.

Forms of enslavement and involuntary labour in the ancient Near East, for example – areas such as Egypt, Syria and Iran – were not always chattel slavery, in which enslaved people were considered property. Rather, some people were temporarily enslaved to pay off their debts.

However, this was not the case for all people enslaved in the ancient Near East, and certainly not under the late Roman Republic and early Roman Empire, where millions were trafficked and forced to labour in domestic, urban and agricultural settings.

Because of the range of periods and cultures involved in the production of biblical literature, there is no such thing as a single biblical slavery.

Nor is there a single biblical perspective on slavery. The most anyone can say is that no biblical texts or writers explicitly condemn the institution of enslavement or the practice of chattel slavery. More robust challenges to slavery by

Christians started to emerge in the fourth century CE, in the writings of figures like St. Gregory of Nyssa, a theologian who lived in Cappadocia, in present-day Turkey.

Myth #2: Ancient slavery was not as cruel

Like Myth #1, this myth often comes from conflating some Near Eastern and Egyptian practices of involuntary labour, such as debt slavery, with Greek and Roman chattel slavery. By focusing on other forms of involuntary labour in specific ancient cultures, it is easy to overlook the widespread practice of chattel slavery and its harshness.

However, across the ancient Mediterranean, there is evidence of a variety of horrific practices: branding, whipping, bodily disfigurement, sexual assault, torture during legal trials, incarceration, crucifixion and more. In fact, a Latin inscription from Puteoli, an ancient city near Naples, Italy, recounts what enslavers could pay undertakers to whip or crucify enslaved people.

Christians were not exempt from participating in this cruelty. Archaeologists have found collars from Italy and North Africa that enslavers placed upon their enslaved people, offering a price for their return if they fled. Some of

these collars bear Christian symbols like the *chi-rho*, which combines the first two letters of Jesus’ name in Greek. One collar mentions that the enslaved person needs to be returned to their enslaver, ‘Felix the archdeacon’.

It’s difficult to apply contemporary moral standards to earlier eras, not least societies thousands of years ago. But even in an ancient world in which slavery was ever present, it is clear not everyone bought into the ideology of the elite enslavers. There are records of multiple slave rebellions in Greece and Italy – most famously, that of the escaped gladiator Spartacus.

Myth #3: Ancient slavery wasn’t discriminatory

Slavery in the ancient Mediterranean wasn’t based on race or skin colour in the same way as the transatlantic slave trade, but this doesn’t mean ancient systems of enslavement weren’t discriminatory.

Much of the history of Greek and Roman slavery involves enslaving people from other groups: Athenians enslaving non-Athenians, Spartans enslaving non-Spartans, Romans enslaving non-Romans. Often captured or defeated through warfare, such enslaved people were either forcibly migrated to a new area or were kept

on their ancestral land and compelled to do farmwork or be domestic workers for their conquerors. Roman law required a slave’s ‘natio,’ or place of origin, to be announced during auctions.

Ancient Mediterranean enslavers prioritised the purchase of people from different parts of the world on account of stereotypes about their various characteristics. Varro, a scholar who wrote about the management of agriculture, argued that an enslaver shouldn’t have too many enslaved people who were from the same nation or who could speak the same language, because they might organise and rebel.

Ancient slavery still depended on categorizing some groups of people as ‘others,’ treating them as though they were wholly different from those who enslaved them.

The picture of slavery that most of us are familiar with was deeply shaped by its time, particularly modern racism and capitalism. But other forms of slavery throughout human history were no less ‘real.’ Understanding them and their causes may help challenge slavery today and in the future – especially at a time when some politicians are again claiming transatlantic slavery actually benefited enslaved people.

Chance Bonar is a Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for the Humanities, Tufts University



Ancient Egyptian relief with prisoners and slaves in Abu Simbel - Egypt

They are not your opponents; they are friends competing in the same race

FAITH IN SPORT

Fr Vlad Felzmann

This week I am continuing the theme begun in last week's Universe, on the role and importance of 'sportspersonship'.

This includes fair play and kindness, as well as "understanding that it's not all about winning and losing," said Mallory Holtman-Fletcher, who gained fame for carrying an injured opponent around the bases during a 2008 Central Washington University softball game.

The player tore her ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) after hitting a three-run home run, and the rules prevented her own teammates from helping her. So Holtman-Fletcher and a teammate carried the injured player around so that she could touch each base. "She earned it," Holtman-Fletcher said afterwards.

At the time, no one talked much about what she did until the story gained traction with the media. Yet that's not surprising, because athletes often don't learn about sportspersonship in any systematic way, as Holtman-Fletcher confirmed: "Growing up, there wasn't a point that somebody sat me down to teach me about sportspersonship."

Sportspersonship came to the forefront of the 2018 World Cup a number of times. It determined whether Senegal or Japan advanced. When the two teams finished tied in the standings, and the first two tiebreakers did not give either one of them the edge, the teams' number of red and yellow cards were added, and Japan had a lower total. FIFA's new 'fair play' tiebreaker allowed Japan to advance.

During the same World Cup there was a more visual showing of sporting behaviour when Uruguay's Edinson Cavani started limping off the field. He was clearly struggling and so Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo helped him walk. Another came when Belgium's Romelu Lukaku signalled to the referee not to penalise Tunisia after a player made contact with him.

In other sports, Desiree Linden won the 2018 Boston Marathon even after slowing to help Shalane Flanagan catch up to the pack after she was forced to stop for a bathroom break.

During the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in 2018, the standout moment for many wasn't a gold medal victory but rather the gracious and inspiring behaviour that three athletes showed their opponent during the



At the 2018 World Cup, Uruguay's Edinson Cavani started limping off the field, and Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo helped him to the touchline

women's 10,000m final. Aussie trio Eloise Wellings, Madeline Hills, and Celia Sullohern waited until the final runner, Lineo Chaka from Lesotho, had crossed the finishing line. The three ladies could have left the track like the other athletes. Instead, they waited for Chaka to congratulate her and make sure she was not alone when she crossed the finishing line. This was a proud moment for Aussies and sports fans everywhere.

Defending NCAA Football National Champions, the Clemson Tigers, played Syracuse University in 2017, and lost. Despite the tension and the close score, which was maintained throughout the game, there were several moments of sportspersonship between the players on and off the field. However, it was what happened after the game that truly stood out to us.

With the game concluded and both teams in their respective locker rooms, Dabo Swinney, Clemson's head coach, walked into the Syracuse locker room to congratulate the players and coaches. One player mentioned "to be knocked down like that, but have the humility to come over and congratulate us when he didn't have to and no one expected him to, I think that says a lot about who he is as a person and a coach."

That act of sportspersonship is something that likely won't be forgotten by Syracuse's players and coaches anytime soon.

Derek Jeter will always be remembered as one of baseball's greatest players. However, it isn't just due to his on-field skills, but also because of his leadership and determination. After he played the final game of his career against the Boston Red Sox, Jeter personally walked around and said goodbye to every single opponent player. In recognition of his skills and sportspersonship, the Red Sox also brought out many of their other stars and Hall of Famers to make sure he received a hero's farewell.

Eugenio Monti was one of the

most successful bobsledder in Italian history, and one of the most successful athletes in the history of sport, winning six Olympic medals (two golds), and nine world championships. At the Winter Olympic Games in Innsbruck in 1964, Monti proved that his level of sportspersonship was equal to his skill as an athlete.

At those Games, the British pair of Tony Nash and Robin Dixon had put themselves in contention for the gold medal following their first two runs in the two-man event of the bobsleigh competition. After



'Kenyan runner Abel Mutai was a few metres from the finish line, but got confused by the signals and stopped, thinking he had finished the race. The Spanish runner, Ivan Fernandez, was right behind him and, realising what was happening in front of him, began shouting for the Kenyan to keep running. Mutai did not know Spanish and did not understand – so Fernandez pushed Mutai to victory.'

their third run, however, Nash realised that a bolt on their sled was missing and they didn't have a spare. Monti lent the bolt from his own sled to the British team. Nash and Dixon would go on to win Great Britain's first bobsleigh gold medal at the Olympic Games, while Monti won the bronze.

In response to criticism from Italian media, Monti told them, "Nash didn't win because I gave him the bolt. He won because he had the fastest run."

A few days later, Monti once again demonstrated his exceptional level of generosity when he and his mechanics helped repair the damaged axle of a Canadian sled in the four-man competition. Without Monti's intervention, the Canadian team would have been disqualified. Instead, they went on to win the gold medal, while Monti and the Italian team won bronze. He was awarded the Pierre de Coubertin medal – the first athlete to receive such an honour.

Four years later, aged 40, Monti won gold in the two-man and four-man bobsleigh competitions at the 1968 Winter Olympics in Grenoble.

Spanish national newspaper *El Pais* reported a heart-warming incident at the World Cross Country Championships in 2012, which were held in Burlada, Navarra, Spain. Kenyan runner Abel Mutai was a few metres from the finish line, but got confused by the signals and stopped, thinking he had finished the race. The Spanish runner, Ivan Fernandez, was right behind him and, realising what was happening in front of him, began shouting for the Kenyan to keep running. Mutai did not know Spanish and did not understand – so Fernandez pushed Mutai to victory.

One reporter asked Evan: "Why did you do this?" Evan replied: "My dream is that one day we can have the kind of community life that pushes ourselves and others to win as well."

"But why did you let the Kenyan win?" the reporter insisted. Evan replied: "I didn't let him win – he would win. It was his race."

The reporter insisted and asked again: "But you could have won!" Evan looked at him and replied, "But what is the merit of my victory? What is the honour of this medal? What will my mother think?"

Values are passed on from generation to generation. What values do we teach our children and to what extent do they inspire others to earn them? Most of us take advantage of people's weaknesses rather than helping to strengthen them.

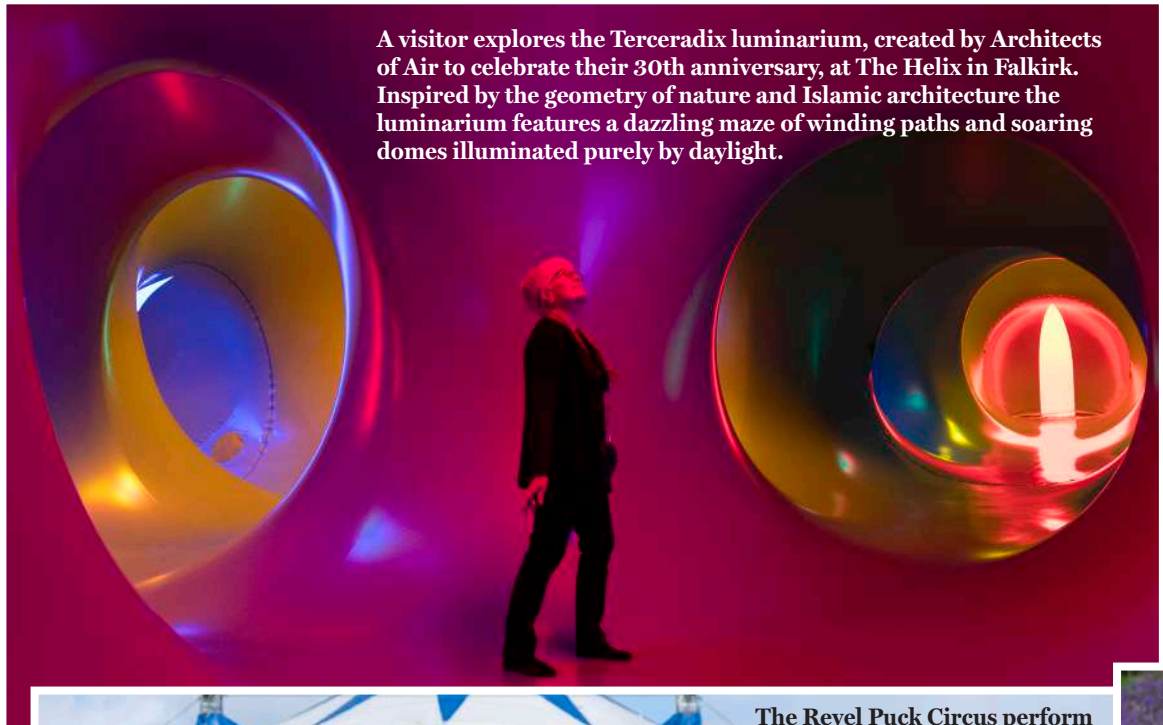
A pictorial round-up of the past seven days



A fledgling spoonbill in flight. The spoonbill chick is the first fledged since the 17th Century on the Norfolk Broads, a conservation charity has said.



Hot air balloons pictured during the launch of the Bristol International Balloon Fiesta. Half a million visitors are expected to descend on Bristol as it plays host to Europe's largest annual meeting of hot air balloons this week.



A visitor explores the Terceradix luminarium, created by Architects of Air to celebrate their 30th anniversary, at The Helix in Falkirk. Inspired by the geometry of nature and Islamic architecture the luminarium features a dazzling maze of winding paths and soaring domes illuminated purely by daylight.



Photographic artist Ray Burmiston at the launch of his new exhibition Art of London presents Take A Moment 2023 at the Piccadilly Lights, central London. The displays across the West End will feature hundreds of famous faces with their eyes closed for mental health awareness.



The Revel Puck Circus perform part of their Edinburgh Festival Fringe show The Wing Scuffle Spectacular at the Circus Hub in The Meadows, Edinburgh.



Edinburgh-based luthier and nature conservationist Steve Burnett at Tarhill Farm, Kinross, with a viola he made. The instrument was made last year to mark the bicentenary of the Union Canal, and is taken from an old Willow tree that was blown down alongside the canal. The varnish on the viola includes Scottish lavender oil from the farm.

LITURGICAL CALENDARS

Ordinary Form

Sunday Year A, Weekday Cycle I

Sunday, August 13:

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time
1 Kgs. 19:9, 11-13; Ps.85: 9-14 r.8;
Rom. 9:1-5; Mt. 14:22-33

Monday, August 14:

St Maximilian Mary Kolbe,
Priest, Martyr. Deut.10:12-22;
Ps. 147:12-15,19-20; Mt.17:22-27

Tuesday, August 15:

The Assumption of the Blessed
Virgin Mary. Rev.11:19, 12:1-6, 10;
Ps. 45:10-12, 16 r.10; 1 Cor.
15:20-26; Lk. 1:39-56

Wednesday, August 16:

Weekday in Ordinary Time
or St Stephen of Hungary
Deut.34:1-12; Ps.66:1-3,5,16-17;
Mt.18:15-20

Thursday, August 17:

Weekday in Ordinary Time
Josh.3:7-11,13-17; Ps.114:1-6;
Mt.18:21-19:1

Friday, August 18:

Weekday in Ordinary Time
Josh. 24:1-13; Ps. 136:1-3,16-18,21-22,24; Mt.19:3-12

Saturday, August 19:

Weekday in Ordinary Time or
St John Eudes, Priest. Josh.
24:14-29; Ps. 16:1-2,5,7-8,11;
Mt.19:13-15

St Maximilian Mary Kolbe,
Priest, Martyr.



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Stained Glass in the Chapel of Notre-Dame-des-flots, Sainte Adresse, Le Havre, France, depicting Saint Clare, an Italian saint and one of the first followers of Saint Francis of Assisi. Her Feast day is 11th August.