

Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.
1 John 4: 7-8



UCM News

The
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of Catholic
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'A Jubilee grace': Vatican announces Holy Year Indulgence

Following the solemn indiction of the Jubilee 2025 by Pope Francis last week, the Apostolic Penitentiary has published a Decree that provides the details for the Indulgences that will be granted during the Holy Year.

By Christopher Wells

The Catholic faithful will have multiple ways to gain the Jubilee Indulgence for the 2025 Holy Year, according to a new decree promulgated by the Apostolic Penitentiary – the Vatican Office with overall responsibility for the granting and use of indulgences.

In the wake of the Second Vatican Council, Pope St Paul VI taught, "An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints." Indulgences are plenary (full) or partial depending on whether they remove all or part of the temporal punishment due to sin.

Becoming pilgrims of hope

Recalling Pope Francis' invitation to all Christians to become "pilgrims" of hope, the Apostolic Penitentiary's Decree is intended "to encourage the souls of the faithful and nourish the pious desire to obtain the [Jubilee] Indulgence seen as a gift of grace specific to the Holy Year."

Hope, the Decree says, "is a virtue that must be sourced above all in the grace of God and in the fulness of His mercy." Recalling the Pope's declaration that the Jubilee Indulgence "is a way of discovering the unlimited nature of God's mercy," the Penitentiary says, "The [Holy Year] Indulgence, therefore, is a Jubilee grace."

"The Indulgence, therefore, is a Jubilee grace."

After confirming that all other indulgences remain in force, the Penitentiary establishes three main ways to gain the Jubilee Indulgence: Pilgrimages to any sacred Jubilee site; pious visits to sacred places and works of mercy and penance.

Pilgrimages

The first category of Jubilee places includes the four Major Papal Basilicas in Rome (St Peter's, St John Lateran, St Mary Major, and St Paul's Outside the Walls); and the Holy Land Basilicas of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the Nativity in Bethlehem, and the Annunciation in Nazareth; as well as Cathedrals and other churches or sacred places designated by Bishops in the particular Churches.

The Indulgence can be gained by "devoutly"

participating in Holy Mass at the site, or by taking part in a Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Hours (Office of Readings, Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer), the Via Crucis, the Rosary, the Akathist Hymn, or a penitential service that includes individual confessions.

Visits to sacred places

The "sacred places" described in the second category include the Roman Basilicas of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, San Lorenzo al Verano, and San Sebastiano; as well as the Sanctuary of Divine Love (Divino Amore), the Church of St Paul in Tre Fontane, and the Catacombs. Special mention is made of the churches of the Jubilee Pathways linked to member countries of the European Union and to female Patron Saints and Doctors of the Church.

Other sacred places throughout the world include two Basilicas in Assisi, Marian sanctuaries in Italy, and "any minor basilica, cathedral church, co-cathedral church, Marian sanctuary, or any distinguished churches designated by local bishops.

The faithful are required to spend a "suitable" amount of time during their visit in Eucharistic adoration and meditation, concluding with the recitation of the Our Father, any legitimate form of the Creed, and invocations to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Those who cannot go on pilgrimage or make a visit to a sacred place for serious reasons will be able to gain the Indulgence wherever they are by uniting themselves spiritually with those who do so, and reciting the Our Father, the Creed, and other prayers connected with the Holy Year while offering up their sufferings or hardships.

Works of mercy and penance

Finally, the Decree provides for the ability to obtain the Indulgence by performing works of mercy and penance.

They can do so by taking part in popular missions, spiritual exercises, or formation activities on the documents of Vatican II and the Catechism, according to the mind of the Holy Father; or by visiting those in need ("in a sense, making a pilgrimage to Christ present in them").

Similarly, they can offer acts of penance (such as fasting and abstinence), donate to the poor, support religious and charitable works ("especially in defence of life in all its phases"), or engage in other volunteer activities.

Duties of bishops and priests

The Apostolic Penitentiary also grants Bishops the possibility of imparting the Papal Blessing "on the occasion of the main Jubilee celebration in the cathedral and in individual Jubilee Churches, with the Indulgence for all those who receive the

Blessing, with the usual conditions.

The Decree strongly urges "all priests" to be generous in offering occasions for sacramental Reconciliation, notably recalling the possibility of hearing Confessions while Mass is being celebrated. Priests accompanying pilgrimage groups outside of their diocese are granted faculties to make use of the same faculties granted them in their own dioceses, while confessors in Papal Basilicas and elsewhere will be granted special faculties as well.

Priests are invited to give penances that will be conducive to "stable repentance," and to encourage penitents "to repair any scandal and damages" they have caused by their sins.

Concluding the Decree, the Apostolic Penitentiary, reminding bishops of their office of teaching, guiding, and sanctifying, "warmly" invites them "to explain clearly the provisions and principles proposed here for the sanctification of the faithful, taking account of local circumstances, cultures and traditions."

The full text of the Decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary, with all the details of the Jubilee Indulgence, can be found on the Holy See website.



Pope: May the Jubilee be a time to rediscover, proclaim, build hope

Source: Vatican News

Pope Francis called Christians to be builders of hope as he celebrated Vespers after presiding at the ceremony to officially proclaim the Jubilee of 2025.

The theme of Christian hope was at the heart of the Pope's homily on the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord in St Peter's Basilica, Rome, on 9 May. It followed a ceremony in which he proclaimed the ordinary Jubilee of 2025 with the public reading and delivery of the Bull of Indiction. The theme chosen for the Jubilee year that starts on 24 December 2024 with the Opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica is 'Pilgrims of Hope'.

Reflecting on the concept and reality of Christian hope that is "unperishable" and "unfading", the Pope said it sustains us in the journey of our lives, even during the darkest and most difficult moments and times. He encouraged Christians, as they prepare for the celebration of

the Jubilee, to lift up their hearts to Christ, and become "singers of hope in a world marked by too much despair." Hope, he remarked, is needed by the society in which we live, "often caught up only in the present and incapable of looking to the future;" it is needed by our age, "caught up in an individualism that is frequently and content merely to scrape along from day to day."

Hope, he said, "is needed by God's creation, gravely damaged and disfigured by human selfishness," and it is needed by peoples and nations who look to the future with anxiety and fear. "As injustice and arrogance persist, the poor are discarded, wars sow seeds of death, the least of our brothers and sisters remain at the bottom of the pile, and the dream of a fraternal world seems an illusion."

Hope, the Pope said, is needed by our young people, by the elderly, by the sick and by those who suffer in body and spirit.

Photos, copy and distribution queries for The UCM News should be sent by email to ucmnews@yahoo.com. For further details about the Union of Catholic Mothers please contact the National Secretary at ucmnatsec@yahoo.co.uk

Congratulations

80th BIRTHDAYS

- Pat Grant** Guardian Angels foundation, Bury, Salford Diocese
- Sylvia Miskell** St. Peter-in-Chains Foundation, Doncaster, Hallam Diocese
- Frances Mullooly** St John's Foundation, Chorlton, Salford Diocese
- Kathy Keane** St John's Foundation, Chorlton, Salford Diocese
- Lyn Utting** St. Ignatius Ossett. Leeds Diocese
- Joyce Stephens** Hounslow Foundation, Westminster Diocese
- Pat Tinkler** Hounslow Foundation, Westminster Diocese

90th BIRTHDAY

- Mrs Eve Fitzpatrick** St Mary's, Woolton, Liverpool Archdiocese
- Eileen Glenholme** Guardian Angels foundation, Bury, Salford Diocese
- Margaret Woods** Hounslow, Westminster Diocese
- Eileen Watts** Hounslow, Westminster Diocese

101st BIRTHDAY

- Betty Laffy** St John's Wood Foundation, Westminster Diocese member for over 80 years.

60th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

- Amy and Denzil Burns** Hounslow Foundation, Westminster Diocese

UCM Presentation

Good morning/evening everyone. I am so pleased to be here and to have the opportunity to talk to you about the Union of Catholic Mothers. Thank you, Father N, for allowing me this opportunity to speak.

Although our title says 'Union of Catholic Mothers' we are in fact open to all Christian women of every age, so long as they are sympathetic to our aims, especially caring for our families and supporting each other.

The UCM has been in existence for over 100 years and was very involved in helping bombed out families and refugees during the Second World war. In 1960, in response to a call from the Pope to help the world's starving, the UCM helped the National Board of Catholic Women to organise the first 'Family Fast Day' and within a few years were involved in setting up CAFOD.

Throughout its history the UCM has been involved with current affairs, particularly those that have an impact on the family. The National Committee ensures that members are kept informed about parliamentary activity and encourages members to exert pressure on matters that concern them.

We have a National Committee which oversees the organisation across the whole country and then each diocese is responsible for their own area. Within the diocese parishes may set up a Foundation which meets regularly.

Foundations differ depending on the members and circumstances within the Parish so the emphasis may vary. Many are very involved in supporting the PP with church cleaning, flowers etc. Some are very involved in charity work, raising funds and supporting those in need. For some they particularly enjoy the spiritual side and the study days. For others they like the talks/visits that are arranged.

However, for those who might find attending meetings difficult then it is possible to become a Diocesan Independent member. You would still be involved in UCM, you could attend Diocesan and National meetings and even stand as an officer.

But it goes without saying that all members value the friendship and support they gain from being a member of such a wonderful organisation.

We do currently have a Foundation within the parish and we meet

If you would like to know more about us and to consider joining us then please come along to our next meeting. You would be most welcome.

OR

At the moment we do not have a foundation in this Parish but if anyone is interested in finding out more about UCM with the possibility of setting up a new group then talk to us.



Submitting copy for next issue

The deadline for articles and photos for the next edition of the UCM News is 16th October 2024

Please send copy to ucmnews@yahoo.com

Thank you

(GDPR) General Data Protection Regulation

Anyone sending photos to be published in the UCMnews newspaper, it is your responsibility to make sure you get permission from all in the photos.

Editorial

I write this at the end of our Annual National Council and AGM here in Swanick, which was blessed with beautiful weather and surroundings.

We have a new National President Elect!

Please, once again, consider filling one of the vacancies we still have, not only at the National level, look to your Diocesan Committees and your Foundation Committees, leadership is necessary at all levels. Committees are the links that hold us together and make it possible for us to communicate with each other.

May I draw your attention to the article 'Hearts in search of God' by Phil McCarthy he was our guest speaker at National Council so you will get a flavour of his talk to us.

National Media Officer



Here is some information from National Committee to aid you in recruitment and retention. If you are planning a recruitment drive in a **new** Parish, it is better to choose a parish that has no existing Women's group at the moment e.g. Catholic Women's League (CWL)

Activity Suggestions for raising profile of UCM in 2024

| Month | Foundations |
|---|---|
| June Fathers Day 16th | Send PP a Father's Day card. 1st Communions. |
| July Walsingham End of school year | Start now to encourage more people to attend Walsingham 2024 Signed Holy Picture to all senior school leavers. Attend school leaver Masses if you are allowed/if room. |
| August Month | Holidays Foundations |
| September Start of School Year | Help out on 1st Day at all schools (cup of tea for mums leaving children for 1st time) help tying ties for high school children? Thanksgiving Mass for safe return of children Welcome back Coffee morning, fun activity for parents and grandparents for surviving summer!! |
| October Have some fun winter is about to descend. Autumn meeting | Trip out Shopping, sight seeing, theatre |
| November All Saints All Souls Let's Make somebody's Day Bonfire night 5th Remembrance Day 11th St Andrews day 30th | Mass to remember our deceased members and parishioners. "Saints next door" Attend Remembrance Day |
| December Advent | Parish Preparation/Mission. Shopping day/trip Carol Service, Selection Boxes, Parish Church cleaning day |
| Preparation Burns Night January (start now) January | Ask Parishioners/family/friends for their favourite Dad Jokes/childrens jokes anecdotes/ silly things you've done to be incorporated into a booklet for April Fools day. (see April) Meet with Local schools (ask your Governors to do this) (see April and (July) (September) later months might go better if earlier activities are successful. September encourage members/parishioners to think of one person who has helped them this year send that person an anonymous card just saying thank you for All Saints Day November! At Parish events wear your scarf at formal events wear your collar. Some of the above Activities already take place it's just a question of widening/raising awareness and inviting additional people/groups to attend, take part or help organise. Diocesan Committees can support all this Activity by holding similar Diocesan wide events, or advertising Foundation Events and encouraging members to attend and by joining with other local Diocese to support some of the larger Events e.g. Pilgrimages, Rosary rallies National Committee can support by getting to as many local events as they can. If each member of National Committee can try and get to 1 event per month then at the end of the year approx. 100 visits will have been made and probably 50 visits if same for Diocesan Committees (most Diocesan Committees do not have as many Officers as National at moment) |



FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Dear Friends in UCM,

Dear Friends in UCM, following a successful National Council last week we have a new President Elect in Eileen Priest who is from Birmingham Archdiocese. Through out the next year we will be working together before she takes over at the next AGM. We have also had several expressions of interest in joining the Committee, please keep us all in your prayers.

In July we have our Annual Pilgrimage to Walsingham. In July this year Mary Wardle, our Walsingham Administrator, come to the end of her term of office, she has very kindly agreed to work an extra year so that Walsingham can have a Pilgrimage in 2025. Please can you consider if you can work with her this year and take over so we can have a Pilgrimage in 2026.

It is usual for the National President to organise a Pilgrimage during her term of Office, I am planning to have Pilgrimage in A&B Diocese in 2025,

details of which were handed out at National Council. More to follow.

With the conflict in the Holy Land I would like to include this pray:

Mary of Nazareth, who is both Jewish and Palestinian, extend your mantle of mercy over all the peoples of the Holy land – Jews, Muslims, Christians, Palestinians, Israelis, migrants and refugees. Mother of the Messiah, show us how to be instruments of healing and peace in the midst of war, occupation, terrorism and divisions. Give us an embracing love for all in the Holy Land, especially hostages, innocent victims, the homeless and the dying. Mary our Mother, given to us by Jesus on the cross, pray for us.

With love and Prayers

**Joan Hodge
National President**

Vacancies

Applications are invited for the following:

2 National Vice Presidents

Start date National Council 10th May 2025

These are elected Positions; elections will take place at National Council October 2024 and successful candidates will start posts at close of National Council 2025
Opportunities to work shadow and for training are available.

Walsingham Sub Committee - Administrator

This is an appointed post and commences at close

of Walsingham 2025, However there is the opportunity to work shadow from Walsingham 2024

Please send CV's with completed Nomination Forms to ucmnatsec@yahoo.co.uk as soon as possible but no later than 6th September 2024

Walsingham Sub Committee - Member

This is an appointed post shared by two Committee members and commences immediately due to retirement of one Committee member.

Please send CV's with completed Nomination Forms to ucmnatsec@yahoo.co.uk as soon as possible.

Please seriously consider putting your name forward for these positions

Job Descriptions and Nomination Forms are available from your Diocesan President or Secretary or National Secretary Mrs Cath Lydon
ucmnatsec@yahoo.co.uk

Opportunities to work shadow and for training are available.

If you require further information please contact National Secretary as above or any member of the National Committee

Events

2024 dates

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Study 2024 | Wistaston Crewe | 18-19 June |
| Walsingham | National Pilgrimage | 1st-3rd July |
| Autumn Officers Meeting | St Chads Birmingham | Sat 12th October |

2025 dates

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| National Council & AGM | The Hayes Swanick | 3pm Mon–Wed 19th-21st May |
|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|

Gospel in Art

Source: Christian Art

Jesus went off to the other side of the Sea of Galilee - or of Tiberias - and a large crowd followed him, impressed by the signs he gave by curing the sick. Jesus climbed the hillside and sat down there with his disciples. It was shortly before the Jewish feast of Passover.

Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds approaching and said to Philip, 'Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?' He only said this to test Philip; he himself knew exactly what he was going to do. Philip answered, 'Two hundred denarii would only buy enough to give them a small piece each.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said, 'There is a small boy here with five barley loaves and two fish; but what is that between so many?' Jesus said to them, 'Make the people sit down.' There was plenty of grass there, and as many as five thousand men sat down. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and gave them out to all who were sitting ready; he then did the same with the fish, giving out as much as was wanted. When they had eaten enough he said to the disciples, 'Pick up the pieces left over, so that nothing gets wasted.' So, they picked them up, and filled twelve hampers with scraps left over from the meal of five barley loaves. The people, seeing this sign that he had given, said, 'This really is the prophet who is to come into the world.' Jesus, who could see they were about to come and take him by force and make him king, escaped back to the hills by himself.

Reflection on the painting

Today we read about the miracle of the five loaves and two fish. Those were held by a little boy: 'There is a small boy here with five barley loaves and two fish'. We don't often see him shown in paintings that depict this miracle. In our painting, Lucas Cranach places our boy centre-stage, directly next to Jesus. Jesus, the boy and the disciples form a group on the left, elevated. The crowds make up the diagonal right half of the painting. Cranach was a personal friend of Luther. Luther saw the pure, willing, immediate good-will of the child as the perfect ideal for the faithful. A simplicity of faith, yet faith of a profound depth. Cranach often depicted children as part of his paintings to convey the purity and innocence needed by Christians.

I don't think anyone in the crowd would have thought that the little boy mattered. No one would have even imagined that what he was carrying in his little basket would be the key to one of the most significant miracles Jesus ever performed. God reaches out to the humblest of people, with whom he does the most amazing things.

This also means that we ourselves are never lost in a crowd. We are unique. And God can do and will do the most amazing things with us. The Gospel teaches us that if we give to others generously from our resources, the Lord will work powerfully through those resources, small as they may seem to us.



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Archbishop Wilson leads over 10,000 school children in a rosary

Over 90 Catholic schools across South London and Kent took part in a rosary led by Archbishop John Wilson, as part of the Archdiocese of Southwark's campaign to encourage young people to pray.

Archbishop John led the rosary from Notre Dame Secondary School in Southwark, where he was joined by children from St George's Cathedral Catholic Primary School.

Pupils from across South London and Kent joined online, with the rosary was broadcast live. The Archdiocesan wide rosary is part of a wider plan to encourage young people and children to 'Give Prayer A Go' and to make prayer a part of their daily lives.

Archbishop John said, "I've been praying the rosary since I was a teenager, it's a prayer that means so much to me so it was a great joy to share in this great gift with so many young people and children in our Archdiocese.

"The rosary is so powerful because through Our Lady, we are led to Christ. Praying the rosary, in classrooms and in our homes, helps us to realise the beauty of our Catholic faith and helps us draw closer to the Lord Jesus.

"I hope this is just another step toward schools and young people praying the rosary regularly, and to ask the Blessed Mary, through her prayers, to lead us closer to her Son."

Around 30 children from St George's Cathedral Catholic Primary School were at Notre Dame with the Archbishop. The school has a Spiritual Life Committee, where during October and May children

take part in a daily rosary led by teachers. Parents are also invited and encouraged to take part in the rosary before school.

The Headteacher, Louise Grabowski, said: "Prayer life is so important at our school. Every day we come together to pray, which not only helps the children build their personal relationships with Christ, but it also helps them to build a bond with each other.

"That's what felt so special about this rosary, we were able to show our pupils they're part of something so much bigger."

The rosary was hosted at Notre Dame Roman Catholic Secondary School, near St George's Cathedral in South London. The Headteacher of the school, Blon Byrne, said, "Creating a spiritual life in schools is so important and it's a priority of ours at Notre Dame.

"The rosary felt like a real community celebration and underlined why making prayer a part of our schools is so crucial. I know our school will look to build on this event, as we continue to help our pupils achieve their full potential spiritually, academically and socially."

The Archbishop thanked all those who took part, especially Notre Dame for hosting the rosary and St George's for attending in person too. St Catherine's Catholic Girls School took part in the rosary by using sign language for the Hail Mary.

Primary and secondary schools, as well as sixth-forms, from across South London and Kent joined the rosary via zoom. At the start of the event, Archbishop John told the pupils about the history of

the rosary and how it helps to build a closer relationship with Christ, through Mary. Throughout the mysteries, Archbishop John encouraged the children and young people to pray for their loved ones, each other and their teachers. But he also asked them to pray for those in the Holy Land, Ukraine and Sudan – reminding us all of the need to unite our prayers to those suffering around the world.

The Archbishop fielded questions from pupils on the day, who asked about the rosary and what it is like being an Archbishop. Archbishop John replied that his greatest joy is getting to share something, each and every day, about the beauty of the Catholic faith with all he meets.

The rosary was organised by the Education Service in the Archdiocese of Southwark, as part of the Archdiocese's prayer campaign, Give Prayer a Go. This aims to provide people with practical and inspiring ways to make prayer a part of their life.

The campaign has been a huge success so far, including a video initiative during Lent which released a prayer video a day across social media promoting much loved prayers within the Catholic



Church. On Facebook alone, the videos had a combined reach of over 12 million people.

Archbishop John Wilson also released a video message on 1 May, encouraging people to pray the rosary for the Month of Mary. In the message, the Archbishop explained:

"Turning to Our Blessed Lady through the Rosary helps us to draw closer to Christ. Through our praying the Rosary, and Our Lady's intercession, we recall God's promise to us in the Lord Jesus. Our Mother Mary is a model for all of us. She shows us how to be a true follower of Christ".

(Photograph of Archbishop Wilson with children from the Archdiocese courtesy of the Archdiocese of Southwark)

Source: Catholic Herald

Archbishop Wilson praises "immense" contribution of migrant workers

CBCEW

Yesterday, Monday 6 May, Archbishop John Wilson of Southwark celebrated the annual Mass for Migrants, in honour of St Joseph the Worker, and said "the contribution of migrant workers to the United Kingdom is immense".

During the Mass celebrated at St George's Cathedral, Southwark, Archbishop Wilson thanked migrant workers in the UK and added "our life together is better because of the skills, the service, and the contribution you give".

His full homily is below.

Mass for Migrant Workers – St Joseph the Worker, 2024

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ

Today, we honour St Joseph with the title of 'the worker.' We know he was a carpenter, that he was the husband of our blessed Lady, and the foster father of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus. It's good to remember, as the Catechism teaches, that, for the greater part of his life, the Lord Jesus shared the condition of most people: 'a daily life, spent without evident greatness, a life of manual labour.' (CCC 531) Like his foster father, St Joseph, the Lord too was a worker. It's right, then, that our celebration today focuses on the dignity and importance of human work.

The story is told, perhaps familiar to you, of how during a parish retreat, a group of priests from different religious orders are gathered in the parish church to pray. While praying, all the lights went out. The Benedictines continued praying from memory; The Jesuits discussed whether the blown fuse means they are dispensed from the obligation to pray; The Franciscans composed a song of praise for God's gift of darkness; The Dominicans revisited their ongoing debate about light as a symbol of the transmission of faith; The Carmelites fell into silence;

Eventually, the parish priest went to the hallway and replaced the fuse; and the lights came back on.

Prayer is important; but so is work; and Catholic social teaching affirms work both as a duty and as a right.

- It's through work that we collaborate with God our Creator, exercising authentic stewardship over the earth's resources, providing for ourselves and our families.

- It's through work that we recognise and harness the gifts and talents given by God to each person.

- It's through work that we grow in virtue and holiness, uniting our work with Christ's own work of salvation.

St John Paul II said that work helps us to be more fully human. (Laborem Exercens, 9) And just as we need work, so, also, we need rest. We need to re-create, humanly and spiritually, honouring God's own rest at the end of creation. (LE, 25)

So many people have come to our country to seek and provide essential work for our nation. Recent information shows that foreign-born people make up nearly one fifth of the working population in the United Kingdom. Many highly educated migrant workers are overqualified for their UK jobs. Significant numbers of workers from overseas support the UK in the hospitality sector, in transport and storage, and in communications and information technology. Almost one fifth of NHS staff in England report a nationality other than British. The contribution of migrant workers to the United Kingdom is immense.

This said, the decision to leave behind one's homeland, and sometimes one's family, in search of work, is far from easy. It demands courage and sacrifice. How important it is today, to say 'thank you' to everyone who has migrated to work here in the United Kingdom. Our life together is better because of you. Our life together is better because of the skills, the service, and the contribution you give. Our life together is better because of the diversity of cultures you bring to our communities.

The Catholic Church in the United Kingdom has always been a migrant Church, with members from across the world. Our parishes, schools, and chaplaincies are a beautiful mosaic of people from all

nations who find with us a home from home. We are proud of this. It's something we celebrate with joy. The blessing of our unity in Christ gives witness in the Church to the harmony of humanity. This is a precious sign we give to our country.

Catholic social teaching upholds the dignity and rights of workers. It condemns all forms of injustice towards working people, whatever their country of origin or status in life. The human person is always more important than the product they produce or the service they provide. Work is 'for the person,' not the person for work. Employment should never 'use' a person, placing on them intolerable burdens and unacceptable conditions. Rather, work is a noble calling to share the life of our Creator. Work enables the human person, family, and society, to flourish. While work contributes to our fulfilment, we must remember that every person is more than their job. First, and foremost, every person is a son or daughter of God, someone respected for who they are, not for what they do or achieve.

Today, the Church invites us to look to St Joseph for encouragement. As the model for all workers, he provided for the Holy Family with dedication and faithfulness. Asking his intercession, we pray for the protection of workers and their rights; we pray for respect for the dignity of human labour; and we pray for an increased appreciation of the valued role of workers from overseas in our communities.

Dear friends, the history of humanity is a history of migration. So is the history of our faith. From Abraham to the Israelites, from the Holy

Family to the countless asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants of our own time, the experience of being 'a stranger in a strange land' is woven into the fabric of human existence. In welcoming others we encounter the face of Christ. In listening to their story, we begin to understand their unique identity. In offering refuge, asylum, or the opportunity to work, we build a better future together.

The foster child of St Joseph the Worker, the carpenter's son, is the word made flesh. The Lord Jesus himself learned to work as a carpenter. It prepared him for the work of salvation on the wood of the cross. He gives us a commandment that has no exceptions – to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves. May the example and prayers of St Joseph the Worker inspire us to be a people of welcome, solidarity and justice, so that the gifts of others might be enabled to serve the good of others.



Bishop Sherrington 'alarmed' by proposed amendments on abortion

Leicester, United Kingdom – Bishop John Sherrington, who heads the bishops' conference on life issues, is concerned that proposed amendments in the British Parliament will liberalise the country's abortion laws.

Four amendments have been submitted to the Criminal Justice Bill which relate to the protection of unborn babies and will be debated on May 15.

"I am deeply alarmed by two amendments to the same Bill, one of which is proposed by Dame Diana Johnson [a member of parliament] (New Clause 1). This amendment, if passed, will remove any legal protection for unborn babies when a woman seeks to bring about her own abortion at any stage of pregnancy," the bishop said in a statement.

"A further danger presented by this amendment is that women could abort their own pregnancies at home through the use of abortion pills at any point in the pregnancy, which could seriously endanger a woman's health and life. Moreover, the risks of

coerced or forced abortion would only increase as the legal safeguards around abortion decrease," Sherrington said.

He also questioned the second amendment by parliamentary member Stella Creasy, which includes proposals to decriminalise abortion up to the 24th week for any party involved and carries similar threats to pregnant women and their unborn babies.

"The Church recognises the struggle and trauma which may lead some pregnant women to consider an abortion. Such difficult situations require pastoral and medical care for vulnerable women in their time of need. When cases of illegal abortions are prosecuted, it is for the judge to decide the appropriate balance of justice and mercy for all involved," the bishop said.

"Our current legislation provides some level of protection for pregnant mothers and unborn babies by keeping abortion within the criminal law. Relaxing abortion legislation further would be a tragic mistake for both mother and child," he continued.

However, Sherrington said he was in favor of some of the proposed amendments.

"I support the amendment from Caroline Ansell MP (New Clause 15) that would reduce the abortion time limit to 22 weeks," the bishop said in the statement, noting that as a result of advances in medical practices many babies can now survive, if born at 22 or 23 weeks' gestation.

"Likewise, I call on parliamentarians to support the amendment tabled by Sir Liam Fox MP (New Clause 41), which will bring an end to the situation whereby babies diagnosed with Down syndrome can be aborted up to birth. This would be a step towards ending the discrimination against babies diagnosed with a disability in our current abortion law," he added.

Sherrington said that in England and Wales, both unborn child and pregnant mother deserve full protection under the law, since they are "some of the most vulnerable in our society".

"I encourage people to contact their MPs to make



their views clear on these amendments," the bishop said.

Follow Charles Collins on X: @CharlesinRome
(Bishop Sherrington | CBCEW)

Saint Nicholas Owen: Builder, Brother, and Protector of Priests

Although a mere Jesuit lay brother, was one of the most valuable members of the underground Catholic Church in England during his lifetime.

Dawn Beutner CWR

Detail from a 1675 engraving, by Melchior Kusell, of St Nicholas Owen being tortured in the Tower of London in 1606. (Image: Wikipedia)

Sometime during the night of May 1 and the morning of May 2 in the year 1606, Nicholas Owen died a martyr in the Tower of London. In 1970, he was canonized by Paul VI, along with thirty-nine other English and Welsh martyrs, including twenty-eight priests and an earl. Among these famous figures of sixteenth and seventeenth century Catholicism, the diminutive man who often went by the alias of "Little John" would be easy to overlook. But Nicholas, although a mere Jesuit lay brother, was one of the most valuable members of the underground Catholic Church in England during his lifetime.

No one knows where or when Nicholas was born, but by the late sixteenth century, persecuted English Catholics had come to rely upon him. That's because Nicholas could build priest holes: hiding places where priests could escape detection when the authorities broke into their illegal celebrations of the Catholic Mass. If the police broke into a home during a Mass and no priest or physical proof of a Mass could be found, those Catholics could plausibly claim that they were merely enjoying a dinner party. But the pursuivants—officers who were paid to find Catholic priests—would sometimes search a house for days, even breaking down walls and floors during the search.

Nicholas was short, but he was strong, smart, and amazingly skilled at creating these hiding places. He created priest holes by digging into underground passages, disassembling and reassembling thick walls, and constructing elaborate false fronts. Even though his priest holes were destroyed whenever they were found, he built so many and built them so well that several still exist.

For almost twenty years, Nicholas travelled with priests as they made their rounds to serve secret Catholics, acting as their servant. Nicholas knew that it was a capital crime to hide or help a priest, just as it was a capital crime to be a Catholic priest. Jesuit priest (and future martyr) Henry Garnet eventually admitted the ever-faithful Nicholas to the Jesuit order as a lay brother.

Nicholas, after all, wasn't merely a good

carpenter. He wanted to be a holy one, like our Lord. It is said that he prayed in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament before he began working on each priest hole, and despite living such a dangerous life, everyone remarked upon his personal virtue and innocence.

But, in 1594, a traitor betrayed him and Jesuit Father John Gerard to the authorities, and Nicholas was brutally tortured in an attempt to find out the names of other priests and Catholics. The pain of the tortures did not cause Nicholas to betray his friends, but it did cause permanent damage to his health.

The authorities demanded a hefty fine before they would release Nicholas from prison, but wealthy Catholics paid it. They could hardly do anything less since Nicholas' abilities were so valuable to them. And his time in prison gave him ideas for a new project: helping Father Gerard escape from prison, which Nicholas promptly did.

Nicholas continued his clandestine building work until the authorities broke into another Catholic Mass, one which he was attending. He had hidden himself inside a priest hole, but he let himself be found to protect the priests who were hidden in other locations.

His interrogators in prison were determined to break him this time, and they did, although not in the way they hoped. Nicholas' injury from his previous imprisonment was exacerbated by renewed tortures, and he died a painful death. The embarrassed prison guards spread a false rumour that he had confessed everything before he killed himself, but no one believed that lie. After all, if Nicholas had implicated anyone before his death, those charges would have been raised at future trials of priests, which never happened.

How do we know so much about a man who lived like a spy for decades? Because Father John Gerard, S.J., (1564-1637) was ordered by his superiors to write down his experiences as an underground priest in England many years after the fact. The *Autobiography of a Hunted Priest* describes his missions, escapes, tortures, betrayals, and his friends, including "Little John", who saved his life. After Father Gerard's escape from the Tower of London, he continued his clandestine ministry for a time and then managed to secretly travel to continental Europe. He spent the final years of his life at the English College in Rome, a seminary dedicated to training priests so that they too could return to England and provide the sacraments for hidden Catholics, despite the threat of martyrdom.

Gerard himself did not die a martyr. For whatever reason, Gerard has not been canonized or

beatified, even though he clearly earned the title of confessor of the faith for his faithfulness under torture. Regardless, Father Gerard's autobiography reveals him to be a humble, courageous, dedicated priest, and it provides us with an astonishing eyewitness account of the bravery of many Catholic priests, laymen, and laywomen.

So, on March 22, the Church celebrates a humble lay brother, Saint Nicholas Owen, who served the Church by swinging a hammer and sawing wood. And who, just as importantly, was willing to lay down his life for his friends.



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New stirring of the Spirit in the Church

Kristina Cooper reports: There seems to be a new stirring of the Holy Spirit at the moment. People are suddenly turning up in church who haven't been for a long time or have never been. Apparently, there were so many people trying to enter Westminster Cathedral this Easter that they couldn't all fit in! There are reports of similar things happening at parish level.

This is perhaps not surprising in the face of the state of the world, and the inability of politicians and world leaders to fix things. People are now beginning, perhaps, to look elsewhere for deeper truth and meaning. But how is the Church to deal with these new spiritual seekers? How do we help them open themselves up to the transforming power of the gospel message and to a personal relationship with Christ?

One of the most effective evangelistic tools that have emerged in the past 60 years is a course called The Life in the Spirit Seminars. This is not an

academic course, despite the name. Rather it is a series of seven sessions, often led by lay people which takes participants on a journey of conversion through a mix of talks, prayer and small group sharing. This culminates in a time of special prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Through this, participants come to a more conscious experience of their baptism and its meaning and are empowered by the Holy Spirit to become more effective disciples of Christ in the secular world today.

Pope Francis considers the Life in the Spirit seminars to be so effective that he has asked the Charismatic Renewal to run them throughout the Church worldwide. This has been happening over the last few years, particularly in the Southwark diocese. Here the local diocesan charismatic team has partnered with the Southwark diocesan Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis to put these on. This began during COVID with the talks and small group sharing taking place online.

This three tier concept was developed in Southwark but has been picked up by other dioceses too. Hexham and Newcastle ran the seminars in the same way in Lent 2024. While this Easter tide Arundel and Brighton and Northampton, will both follow the same format of a central location with live speakers and local hubs or online groups. Other groups and parishes in Southwark have also been inspired to run their own fully live versions of the LISS seminars. These include St Mary's in Croydon and St Andrew's in Thornton Heath which is being organised by the All Nations Catholic Charismatic Renewal network.

One of the diocesan organisers commented, "Our aim is not to recruit people to the charismatic renewal as a movement. It is simply to help Catholics discover the fullness of their baptism and the spiritual gifts that God wants to give them. As Catholics, we prepare for Christmas and Easter, but often Pentecost, is the forgotten feast. Yet this is an essential part of the gospel message and underlines



the importance of the sending out of the disciples to evangelise. We hope by putting on the seminars at this time, and facilitating their use, we will encourage a fuller celebration and understanding of the meaning of Pentecost in our lives as Catholics and equip us better to evangelise."

Source ICN

Pope appoints new Bishop Ordinary for the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham

His Holiness, Pope Francis, has appointed the Reverend David Waller as the next Ordinary and the first Bishop Ordinary of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

His appointment follows the Holy Father's acceptance of the resignation submitted by Monsignor Keith Newton.

On hearing the news, Monsignor Newton said:



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"I am delighted that our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has appointed Father David Waller as not only the second Ordinary of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham but the first to be in episcopal orders.

"I have known Bishop-elect Waller for over 20 years. He was amongst the first group of Anglican clergy to be ordained to the Catholic priesthood under the provisions of the Apostolic Constitution Anglicanorum coetibus in 2011.

"From its beginning he has been fully involved in the life of the Ordinariate and has served as chairman of its Governing Council and as Vicar General since 2020. He has been a wise and trusted confidant and is well known and respected by the clergy of the Ordinariate.

"Bishop-elect Waller has long experience in pastoral ministry both in the Church of England and in the Catholic Church, and he is presently Parish Priest of Christ the King, Chingford in the Diocese of Brentwood. I know he will use his pastoral gifts as he guides the Ordinariate into the next chapter of its life.

"We ask that the prayers of Our Lady of Walsingham and Saint John Henry Newman will guide him as he takes on the new responsibility in the Church."

Bishop-elect David Waller said:

"It is both humbling and a great honour to have been chosen by Pope Francis to succeed Monsignor Keith Newton as the Ordinary of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

"I have been a member of the Ordinariate since its inception in 2011, when groups of clergy and laity, up and down the country, were received into the full communion of the Catholic Church under the provisions of the Apostolic Constitution Anglicanorum coetibus.

"The past 13 years have been a time of grace and blessing as small and vulnerable communities have grown in confidence, rejoicing to be a full yet distinct part of the Catholic Church.

"I already know well the priests and lay faithful of the Ordinariate and I now look forward to serving them in this new role. My experience of these past years is that there is nothing to be feared in responding to the Lord and that Jesus does great things with us despite our inadequacies.

"I humbly entrust myself to your prayers as we



together embark upon the next chapter of the life of the Ordinariate. May Our Lady of Walsingham and St John Henry Newman Pray for Us."

Information regarding the Episcopal Ordination of Bishop-elect Waller will be made available in due course.

Short Biography

Bishop-elect David Waller was born in London on 10 June 1961 and educated at the School of St David and St Katharine in Hornsey and the College of Ripon and York St John, University of Leeds.

From 1983 to 1989 he worked as a community worker in Bradford, which was one of the most impoverished areas of the United Kingdom.

In 1989 he left Bradford to train for Anglican orders at Chichester Theological College and was Ordained Deacon in 1991 and Priest the following year. He served two parochial appointments in the Diocese of Chichester: Curate of Aldwick (1991-1995) and Team Vicar of Crawley (1995-2000); during this time, he was also a member of the Diocesan Synod and a part-time hospital chaplain.

In 2000 he moved to East London to become Vicar of the Parish of St Saviour, Walthamstow; he remained in this post until his reception into the Catholic Church.

From 2005 until 2010 he served as a member of the General Synod of the Church of England.

In Holy Week 2011, he was received into the full communion of the Catholic Church. After he was ordained to the diaconate and the priesthood, following the provisions of Anglicanorum coetibus, he was named Pastor of the Walthamstow Ordinariate Mission and has also held two diocesan parochial appointments: Parochial Administrator of St John the Baptist Ilford (2011-2015) and Parish Priest of Christ the King Chingford (since 2015).

Bishop-elect Waller has been Chairman of the Governing Council of the Ordinariate since its establishment; and for the past four years has served as Vicar General.

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ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON DIOCESE

A&B AGM New President



Bishop Richard Moth and both our Presidents Eileen Harris MBE and Anne Ager leading us into our Renewal Commitment. Photo by Janet Franklin



Left to right: Our UCM banner carried by Trish Colley (Secretary of Hove Foundation), Brenda Westgate, Anne Ager (previous President), Eileen Harris MBE (new President), Joan Hodge (National President) and Bishop Richard Moth.

On Saturday morning of 27th April 2024, A&B Diocese celebrated the installation of our new President Eileen Harris MBE. It was a special and long-awaited moment which finally arrived and we thank Eileen for stepping up to the post. We started the day with our welcome to guests and members, then a talk was given by Mr. Oliver Hawkins about the building of Arundel Cathedral which was first opened in summer 1873. We have much to thank Duke Henry, 15th Earl of Norfolk for his vision. It was he who commissioned Architect Joseph Hanson to design the French Gothic Style Cathedral. At mid-day we had a mass concelebrated by Bishop Richard Moth and our spiritual adviser Canon Tom

Treherne. Bishop Richard's homily emphasised a big thank you to the UCM, indicating that we live in a time where family is under threat, and how the witness of the UCM is valuable for many generations. He said thank you for our witness of motherhood, family life, parish community and life of the Diocese. He also mentioned St. Margaret Clitherow, who was devoted to family life and recognised the life God had given her. The Enrolment then followed where Bishop Richard invited Mrs. Anne Ager (current President) and Mrs. Eileen Harris MBE (President Elect) to come forward for the formal enrolment. Bishop Richard then blessed the President's badge and gave it to Mrs. Harris. We read our Renewed Commitment

together and had our own badges blessed. Congratulations and photos followed mass, and it was such a joy to see it all come together. We went into the hall for a shared lunch. Bishop Richard Moth and Canon Tom Treherne were able to join us and mingled in conversation with our members. We continued with our meeting and an exchange of thank you gifts to previous and new officers. Our previous President Anne Ager thanked her team for their support and wished our new President well in her new role. She thanked Judy Harkins our Diocesan Secretary for her wonderful preparation, although she could not be with us that day, and thanked Sue Mulligan who will shadow

Judy for a year before taking over officially. Our new President Eileen Harris MBE thanked everyone, and she looked forward to working with us all. As part of a new launch to promote the UCM, Eileen showed us a sample poster from her foundation in Hove, with highlight of activities, that other foundations may wish to adapt. To conclude the day, our National President, Joan Hodge read out a prayer to Mary of Nazareth. The prayer has such an appropriate meaning in our current time of conflict, that some members wanted to have a copy. This was made available a few days later and sent to all the foundation secretaries for sharing. We parted with an uplifted feeling from such a successful day.

Cecilia Thuy Cameron (A&B Media Officer)

Mothering Sunday Parish Lunch 10th March 2024

In our Parish of the Nativity of the Lord, comprising St. Joseph's Redhill, Holy Family, Reigate, and St. Teresa's, Merstham, we have a tradition of hosting a Parish Lunch on the second Sunday of each month. This lunch is hosted in turn by the various parish groups. As it happens the UCM were asked to host in March, this falling on Mothering Sunday. Although the timing was not great for most of us mums the coincidence of it being on Mothering Sunday made

it particularly meaningful. We were given a general guidance to host for at least 60 - 70 people and divided up the various responsibilities between us. On the day we served Beef Stroganoff and a range of desserts. We ended up serving about one hundred people. Before lunch our president, Janet Franklin introduced the UCM and their objectives to the guests before leading us in saying grace before the meal.

One of our members Vivienne O'Byrne also prepared mini flower bouquets to hand out to the mums at the end of lunch. We received thanks and compliments as people were leaving. The following Sunday the parish newsletter mentioned a big thank you to our UCM team for the wonderful lunch that was produced. Our grateful thanks to all who took part on the day

and thank you to everyone who contributed towards the food preparation, cooking, baking, setting up, clearing on the day. Some of our members also brought along family and friends to help. It was a wonderful team effort, and a great opportunity to promote our presence in the parish.

Cecilia Thuy Cameron (Merstham Foundation Secretary)



Some of our team members after clearing up: Dianne Hussey, Martina Stevens, Pamela Schwenk (Treasurer), Cecilia Thuy Cameron (Secretary), Patricia Wilding, Vivienne O'Byrne and Janet Franklin (our President). Photo by Geraldine Sharpe (Parish Sacristan)

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BIRMINGHAM ARCHDIOCESE

Kidderminster parishioners receive awards at a special mass

On Monday April 8th at 7.00 pm during the Mass of the Solemnity of the annunciation at Saint Ambrose's Catholic Church in Kidderminster. Two parishioners Christina Geraghty (UCM member) and Lyndon Whatley were presented with their Ubi Caritas awards by Bishop David Evans. They are worthy recipients and do a lot for the church and the parish community.

The awards were granted by the Archbishop of Birmingham Bernard Longley, as a symbol of the gratitude of the clergy and people of the

Archdiocese of Birmingham. "Ubi caritas et amor Deus ibi est" means where there is love and kindness, God is there. After the mass, parishioners, family and friends were invited into the Adams Lounge for a buffet, provided by Mick and Mary Preston, with cakes by the wonderful ladies of the UCM. A lovely evening was enjoyed by all.

Miriam Cunliffe Media Officer Birmingham Archdiocese



Canon Father Douglas Lamb, Christina Geraghty, Deacon Adam Nicholls, Bishop David Evans, Deacon Charles Duncombe, Lyndon Whatley

St Maries 90th year as UCM

On Monday the 25th Jan St Maries celebrated their 90th year as UCM with the parish. We started in 1934.

All our 13 members were there including our 3 Priests, Parish Priest Fr Agi and Fathers George and David and our Birmingham Diocesan officers President Eileen Priest, Sec. Angela Foster, Tres. Jane Barr.

Parish presidents from earlier years were invited plus some of our church friends who have always supported us.

A wonderful mass was celebrated, and all 3 priests came from the altar and blessed each mother individually, this was followed by coffee in our

Hibberts parish hall and a great welcome from Mary Hales our President and at midday we all sat down for a roast chicken lunch. The chat, laughter and great atmosphere was a delight, and we remembered all our past members whose hard work and dedication had led to this day. Before we all said our goodbyes the secretary who is retiring from the position Iris Edwards was presented with an award for 60 years commitment and service to the UCM.

Thanks be to God for a day of much joy, warmth, and friendship.

Iris Edwards



May Procession at St Ambrose's Catholic Church

Yesterday our very own Christina Stubbins was chosen to crown the statue of Our Lady at the end of the May Procession at St Ambrose's Catholic Church in Kidderminster.

Canon Father Douglas Lamb started the service with a reflection on the early life of Mary, Our Lady's journeys, visiting Elizabeth, Bethlehem and Egypt. He spoke of how Our Lady is the prototype of God's church. The readings were chosen from the Acts of Apostles because it was felt that it linked well with the Holy season of Pentecost. As the readings were from when the Acts of the Apostles, where they were gathered after the Ascension of the Lord.

We started the service in church, then the statue

was carried outside of church and along Birmingham Road, before turning into Leswell Street, then proceeding through the grounds of Saint Ambrose school leading into the rectory garden.

The parishioners and clergy recited the rosary as we walked in procession behind the statue of Our Lady.

There were 50 plus parishioners in attendance. We all came into the Adams lounge afterwards for tea and biscuits. We timed it nicely as it had started to rain as we were saying our last prayer.

Miriam Cunliffe Media Officer Kidderminster Foundation



HALLAM DIOCESE

Medjugorje talk by Peter and Susan Marshall

Since about the year 2000 Pete and his wife Sue have been arranging for pilgrims to travel to visit the Marian shrine in Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although the church of St. James in Medjugorje is Roman Catholic Christians of every denomination flock there, also many non-Christians.

In 1981 on 24th June, four young people witnessed an apparition on a hill outside the village. The following day two more also saw it.

These children were aged between 10 and 16.

They saw in a brilliant light the figure of a beautiful young woman. During the third apparition she told them that she was the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace.

Since these events thirty million pilgrims from every corner of the globe have flocked to be where the mother of Jesus appeared-and where she

continues to appear every evening. These days the apparitions usually last for three or four minutes.

They take place at 5.40pm every evening when Mary gives her monthly message for the world through the visionaries.

The Virgin explained to the children: "I have come to tell the world that God exists and that He loves you. He is the fullness of life, and to enjoy this fullness and obtain peace, you must return to God."

As news of these extraordinary events in Medjugorje spread, the Communist government reacted with repression. Police and troops were sent to the village, the visionaries were detained for psychiatric examination and the village people harassed. The parish priest at the time Fr. Jozo Zovko a Franciscan, was arrested by the secret police and imprisoned for 18 months.

Throughout that troubled period, the Virgin continued to appear to the visionaries daily without fail. The authorities ceased harassment and finally visitors were welcomed.

Medjugorje is not about signs and wonders, although there have been many.

The most important and numerous wonders have been the spiritual healings and conversions in which people have changed their lives and become reconciled with God and each other. In this holy place of Medjugorje there is a great feeling of peace and joy. Often, one pilgrimage is not enough, and pilgrims find themselves returning there again and again. The basic message of Medjugorje is Peace, through commitment to God, Reconciliation, Prayer and Fasting.



Deacon Peter Marshall (UCM Chaplain) and his wife Susan Marshall. Pastoral Centre at the AGM Saturday 10th February 2024.

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SOUTHWARK DIOCESE

Anerley Foundation

During our April meeting, we enjoyed a fun crafting session provided by DT Teacher Penny Curran. The group made hanging Sacred Hearts from scratch and as you can see, we were very pleased with our results at the end of the evening.

On Saturday 6th April we joined London tour guide Kate Boyle for a walk around the Old Roman walls of London. We started at the best-preserved section of wall at Tower Hill dating back to around 200AD, had entrance to the London walls gallery at Vine Street where we saw a short film, exhibits of

London's Roman wall, foundations of a bastion and other archaeological finds. We ended the tour at the wonderful sculpture in memory of King Edgars gift of land to 13 Knights near Liverpool Street. So much history at every turn. Kate raised £180 for the Missionary sisters of the Holy Rosary in Brazil. Thankyou Kate for another enjoyable walk

**Marie O'Gorman
Media Officer Anerley Foundation**



Lewisham Foundation, Southwark

were very pleased to get Lewisham Foundation up and running again with 17 members.

On 18th February 2024 we welcomed Mary Piper and her husband to an enrolment of 6 new members at our 10am monthly Mass, celebrated by Fr. Chris Connor, Parish Priest and Spiritual Adviser. After Mass refreshments were served in the church hall attended by 13 of our members by

courtesy of the Congress Group. Photo L to R: Anne Orogbu, Alicia Martin Palomares, Veronica Ijeoma, Toni Anderson, Elizabeth Nwawudu (President), Joan Tucker and Teresa Dennis.

**Joanne Parvitt
Media Officer Southwark Diocese**



Sutton in the Sky

Sutton UCM Foundation were very fortunate to have a lovely clear sunny day for our visit to the Sky Garden, just off Fenchurch Street in London. We were taken swiftly up 35 floors to the roof garden where the views over London Bridge, the Tower of London and beyond to the south were amazing. We were able to walk up beautiful staircases even higher and view in all directions identifying many familiar famous landmarks in our lovely city. It's free

to visit this popular place but you do need to book in advance. Because of its distinctive shape it is also known as the "Walkie Talkie Building". Following our leisurely morning we had a lovely lunch near the famous Monument which commemorates the origin of the Great Fire of London in 1666.

**Joanne Pavitt
Southwark Diocese Media Officer**



LIVERPOOL ARCHDIOCESE

Around the Archdiocese

Dear Ladies, firstly I would like to say a huge thank you for your generous support during my illness. I received numerous cards and good wishes and especially prayers for a speedy recovery. For those of you who don't know, I have been waiting over two years for a hip replacement and five weeks ago my dream came true, and it happened. I am still stuck in the chair with little mobility but each day I am getting stronger and moving more.

Easter Sunday morning I was unable to go to Mass, so I decided to live stream the Mass at the Vatican with Pope Francis. I was sitting there thoroughly enjoying it when it came to the Gospel. I couldn't believe my eyes. Our very own seminarian James Finnegan who is being ordained in our cathedral in July was processing with the gospel. Not only did James sing the

gospel, but he sang it in Latin. It was so beautiful. James also did the response to the intercessions and then at Communion he gave Holy Communion to the Holy Father. I think this is a day James will remember for the rest of his life and his family must be so proud of him.

Next time you are praying for vocations to the priesthood, think of James and all seminaries and how powerful our prayers have been towards and pray that we will get many more seminarians. We celebrate one of our ladies' diamond wedding anniversary with a small party thanks Madelaine and Philip McDonald for a good night. Marian Begley member of St Margaret Mary's Foundation Knotty Ash Liverpool received a National Award from the Irish government. The Irish community care volunteer award in recognition for her many

year's work supporting the Irish community here in Liverpool. Jill MacDonald talking about Kitty Willson the lady who opened the first Wash House it was a very interesting listening to all the things that happened to her, and I would recommend her if you were looking for a speaker.

Margaret Guppy a feisty eighty year old lady with Nicola her faithful guide dog and Betty Donafee secretary of St Margaret Mary's foundation. Margaret gave a very interesting talk on her life since losing her sight at the age of twenty eight. Nicola who has guided her for seventeen years has come to the end of her working life so now wears a lead inscribed 'retired guide dog' isn't that lovely.

**Maria Pimblett
Media officer Liverpool Archdiocese**



LEEDS DIOCESE

Churches Together

On Friday March 1st St Benedict's (Garforth Leeds) helped our local Churches Together Group to host the annual World Day Of Prayer. Sadly, there seemed to be a lot of opposition up and down the country as this year it was written by the Christian women of Palestine and some people felt this was inappropriate in the present climate.

However, at the Yorkshire area meeting it was decided to go ahead but without displaying any flags or political items. What a lovely service it was advocating peace for all. We were glad and privileged to be involved.

Sue Oldroyd
Leeds Diocesan Secretary



'Couple Herald 60 years of Marriage

Easter Sunday, March 31st, heralded 60 years of marriage for Pat and Derek Atha of Garforth, Leeds. Pat is our Diocesan Vice President here in Leeds and a member of St Benedict's UCM. At Mass, in front of all their family, Pat and Derek were presented with a Papal Blessing by our Parish Priest Father Henry Longbottom. Also on the photo

is St Benedict's President Janet Daniel. After coffee and cake following Mass Pat and Derek went for a lovely lunch with their family. Congratulations to Both.

Sue Oldroyd
Leeds Diocesan Secretary



New Members for St Ignatius

The photo shows newly enrolled members of St. Ignatius Foundation, Ossett. Left to right Lesley Senior-Watson and Tessa

Hepworth with foundation president Pam Watkins in the middle.

Eileen Goodwin Media Officer



St Joseph's, Castleford Foundation

Our Lenten Initiative continues ... In February 2023, St Joseph's Castleford UCM with the support of Father John (Aveyard) decided that their Lenten Initiative would be to collect food items for the town's local food banks. A request for non-perishable food items was included in the bulletin and a box was placed in the church

entrance and what followed has been truly amazing. The generosity and kindness of St Joseph's parishioners has enabled the UCM to continue collecting food bank donations on a weekly basis and to make regular deliveries to the Salvation Army to help support their food kitchen and food bank.

Eileen Goodwin Media Officer



NOTTINGHAM DIOCESE

Renewal Mass and Blessing of our badges

On 16th April 2024, our Spiritual Advisor, Fr. David Jones OLW (Ordinate of Our Lady of Walsingham) assisted by Terry Hutchings, offered a special Holy Mass, dedicated to Our Blessed Lady our Spiritual Mother. Special guest was Mrs. Sue Bickerstaffe, National Treasurer and Liaison Officer. Sue was accompanied by her husband John, her chauffeur.

Sue was invited by Fr. David to do the readings and bidding prayers. After which, we renewed our vows and Fr. David blessed our badges. A group photograph was taken after Mass, we then assembled with some parishioners in our hall for light refreshments, provided by our Foundation President Mrs. Dorothy Hutchings.

Pauline Hallam Foundation Secretary



A Job Well Done

Many years ago, I was left a very young widow with a house to run and 3 small boys to bring up all by myself. My young sons always wanted to help me with jobs around the house, so I included them as much as possible. They loved gliding over our parquet flooring with dusters wrapped around their feet, helping with washing and ironing and as they got older with cooking and baking. By the time they left home they were very accomplished young men, so much so that my eldest when away at university cooked a full Christmas dinner for his housemates after buying a

real Christmas tree and decorating it himself. He even made his own sage and onion stuffing to accompany the meal. My youngest son did qualify as a chef but had to give it up due to high pressure. Later when my grandchildren came along the boys all followed in their fathers' footsteps enjoying cooking, but the girls were never interested. My 3 daughters -in -law have never had to cook or iron unless they wanted to all because my boys have carried on enjoying their boyhood chores.

Pat Whitford -Bartle, past Foundation President St. Clares Bradford, {now closed } Pat is now an Diocesan Independent Member

MIDDLESBROUGH DIOCESE

A Visit to Bishopthorpe Palace

On Tuesday 16th April, St. Aelred's UCM and a group of parishioners and friends from St. Aelred's, English Martyrs and St George's parishes in York were welcomed at the Gatehouse to the Archbishop of York's Palace at Bishopthorpe for a tour and afternoon tea in the great hall. Some of us had met the Archbishop, Stephen Cottrell, on Mary Ward day at the Anglican church of St. Thomas, Osbaldwick, when he had preached to a joint Anglican and Catholic congregation. He had commended the contribution that women make to the churches on that occasion. He would have been there to greet us at Bishopthorpe, but he was attending an important debate in the House of Lords that day.

We had a wonderful tour of the Palace, led by David Atkinson who has worked at the palace for many years and who lives in the mediaeval building that predates the eighteenth century "Strawberry Hill Gothic" residence. He explained how the site has developed since the twelfth century and gave us some of the highlights of the lives of former Archbishops of York, many of whom have portraits displayed in the Drawing room and Great Hall, now

used as a dining room where we were entertained to afternoon tea beside a cosy log fire. As well as the history of the Office of Archbishop, he showed us the modern gallery that shows photographs of the present-day work of the church and people across the Archdiocese. We sat in the Mediaeval chapel while he explained about the services held there and the northern saints represented in the stained-glass windows.

He told us about a recent visit from Dame Mary Berry and how he had had to cook her breakfast, which he found more intimidating than any Royal Visit, and we saw where the late Queen had sat for lunch and where Queen Victoria had come as Royal Princess before her Coronation.

After tea we were free to wander in the gardens and on the riverside terrace on what became a magical Spring afternoon. We came away feeling we could not have been made more welcome had we been royalty ourselves.

Tours of Bishopthorpe Palace can be booked for groups of up to 30 people. Bookings are now being taken for 2026, so plan well ahead!

Petra Micklethwaite



St. Aelred's UCM and friends celebrate at the Bar Convent

On St. Joseph's day, 19th March, St. Aelred's UCM and friends attended Mass at the Bar Convent Chapel, celebrated for us by Father Bill Serplus, our Diocesan Spiritual Advisor. During Mass a new member of our Foundation, Petronilla Clarke, was enrolled. Our bidding prayers included a prayer for the recognition of Mary Ward, foundress of the order of the Community of Jesus, as a Saint, as during 2024 the order is campaigning for her canonisation. We were also in the presence of the

relics of St. Margaret Clitherow, patron Saint of the UCM, and we felt the influence of these two significant women who had both suffered for their faith in penal times.

After Mass we gathered for a celebratory lunch in the Bar Convent Café. For those who may not have visited it, this is a delightful and welcoming space, with a garden for summertime use. If you visit York, call in. You will get a warm welcome and delicious food as well.



PORTSMOUTH DIOCESE

Portsmouth Diocesan UCM events

The main events for our members have been the World Day of Prayer for Women and our annual Day of Reflection in Lent. Traditionally our foundations have worked with Churches Together in their towns to celebrate the World Day of Prayer. This year's liturgy came from the Christian women in Palestine. Their theme "I beg you... bear with one another in love", was chosen in 2017, but it was so appropriate and relevant amidst the devastating war in Gaza and Israel. This surely was a God given opportunity for us to pray with all Christians for peace, unity, and justice. A few foundations reported a decline in the number of women supporting this very special day, perhaps fearing that it could be seen as being politically motivated and not wishing to be associated with either side. But for those who attended the service they saw how important it is for Christian women to bear with each other in love. We were united in our common ground, created in the image of God, and knowing that we receive a common grace from God who does not discriminate. In the time of war and violence, we stood in solidarity, protecting God's creation and praying for a just peace. A line from one of the songs from Palestine said, "Our world is full of sorrow, struggle, loss and pain, tempting us all into despair". Despite the sorrows, struggles, loss, and pain that we all face, we are called to bear with one another in love along this journey of life. This is what we in UCM Portsmouth Diocese try to do. Our Lenten Day of Reflection continued the theme of journeying, but this time Fr Liam Cumming led us on a day's pilgrimage through the Synodal process. He began by explaining that Pope Francis is not asking us to change the Church but to

change ourselves into tender people showing mercy and compassion. The Pope is asking us to be missionary disciples. In St John's Gospel, Jesus said "come and see", then three years later "go and tell". By our baptism we received the graces of faith, hope and charity empowering us to be tender. Our actions are not to be just about maintenance but mission. We need to move beyond preservation to evangelization. The way we live tells people what a Christian is. We must listen to God and share our story with each other. Are our minds so cluttered with the worries and concerns of everyday life, to notice the sights and sounds around us that are real?

Fr Liam's second talk was to challenge us as members of UCM to reflect on the way we live our vocation as missionary disciples. Do we always try to reach out to the non-person? Do we challenge unjust structures? We have the power to recognize what needs to change and move forward. Our emphasis should not be on numbers but the fruit of our actions. To spread the kingdom of God we must live a life of mercy, enter the chaos of life, and do something about it. Mercy goes hand in hand with pastoral work, challenging society and seeking justice.

Our faith is a gift, but it must be nurtured by prayer. Giving time and space to personal prayer allows God's inspiration to give direction on the journey He is of asking us; to look at the world through different eyes. Our foundations continue to be active in many ways to enhance the work of their parish community.

Maureen Meatcher
Diocesan Media Officer

A spring makeover; Thistle Glen Creations at St Aelred's UCM

In March we were treated to a demonstration of lampshade and picture frame making by Claire Wilkinson. She explained that she had been prompted by the Covid restrictions to set up her own business at home and she decided to design and make items that she could sell online. It was her Scottish connections that gave her the idea of calling her business Thistle Glen, and she purchases some of her fabrics from a tweed manufacturer. After a period of ill health and some personal challenges she found the creation of her designs was therapeutic and she has kept the business going even after her return to work at York University. She now sells some of her products with Little Bird markets that operate in Harrogate, Driffield and Easingwold. Claire's talk and demonstration was very inspiring and showed what inspiration combined with hard work can achieve. If you are looking for presents or a new look at home, look out for Thistle Glen.

Petra Micklethwaite Media Officer
Middlesbrough Diocese



SALFORD DIOCESE

Introducing Fr Emmanuel Ugwuoke at his first National UCM Conference

I was born in Nigeria in the late fifties, I had all my early education in Nigeria
I joined the Vincentian Fathers and consecrated myself to God.

I made my Bon Propo - first vows 1983. I was ordained 1992 and I have served in Italy Mozambique, United States and now in Salford diocese.

My interest in women groups in my 32 years priestly ministry would in no doubt delight my mother popularly known as mamma Emma or Rosa enormously. She would have been happy that as a parish priest in Mozambique, I had gathered the moms and initiated the foundation of a strong Union of Catholic Mothers known as Wiwanana Waximama Catolicas in the diocese of Nacala. The responsibility which gave so much delight and fulfilment of all in the 32 years of ministry was being the national director of Our Lady of Miraculous Medal Association in my country.

My mother would have been proud to know that I am the UCM Spiritual Director in the Diocese of Salford. I am very happy to do this to the best of my ability for our Holy Mother Mary and my biological mom Rosemaria Ossai.

Fr Emmanuel Spiritual Director Union of Catholic Mothers Salford Diocese



Fr. Emmanuel, Joan Hodge and Kathleen Henderson-Playfair

Annual Lenten Retreat

This year's theme was 'Pilgrims of Hope - Pope Francis' invitation to Prayer'
Synod Hour Listening to one another
A wonderful afternoon of prayer. Sharing our stories, Adoration, Confession, Reflection and

Mass followed by afternoon tea
Photo shows Foundation members with Fr Bryan Cunningham who attended our annual Lenten Retreat at Schoenstatt.



Tea and Cakes Afternoon

Some of our ladies of the UCM at St. Mary and St. Philip Neri, Radcliffe, in Salford Diocese. In February we held a tea and cakes afternoon. We gave out invitations after masses two weeks before to as many ladies as we could, as they were coming out of church. There was a wonderful

selection of donated cakes, and as you can see our members wore their UCM aprons. It was very successful, with nearly fifty ladies attending. We hope to be hosting a few more later in the year.

Mildred D'Amore



World Day of Prayer

Salford Committee members joined president Mrs Kathleen Henderson-Playfair, Mrs Kim Fletcher foundation president and St Hilda's Foundation

members for World Day of Prayer at St Hilda's Church in Bury



St Joseph Foundation – New Members

Fr Emmanuel Ugwuoke celebrating his first Enrolment Mass with four new members of St Joseph Foundation in Reddish. Our new members shown in photo with Fr Emmanuel are Catherine Timms, Toni Moore, Jen McGuinness and Rachel Townley.



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Pilgrims of Hope: Walking Towards the 2025 Jubilee

2025 will be a Jubilee year, with the motto 'Pilgrims of Hope,' and 2024 is a year of prayer in preparation for this. In the Christian tradition, and in many other religions, undertaking a pilgrimage is one way of deepening a personal relationship with God. Hearts in Search of God is a three-year project to promote walking pilgrimage in England & Wales by developing Pilgrim Ways between every Catholic cathedral and one or more shrines in the same diocese. The title comes from Pope Francis:

Whoever they may be — young or old, rich or poor, sick and troubled or curious tourists — let them find due welcome, because in every person there is a heart in search of God, at times without being fully aware of it.

More details of the Project and of the Way in your diocese can be found at www.pilgrimways.org.uk. The Ways vary in length and difficulty, and they can all be walked in stages. There should be something for almost everyone.

Pope Francis wrote in his letter declaring the Jubilee:

In the realization that all of us are pilgrims on this earth, which the Lord has charged us to till and keep

(cf. Gen 2:15), may we never fail, in the course of our sojourn, to contemplate the beauty of creation and care for our common home.

I hope to encourage people, especially the young, in every diocese to undertake a walking pilgrimage during the Holy Year, helping us to become 'Pilgrims of Hope' for the 21st Century. We live in a time of global warming, so a walking pilgrimage in England & Wales using public transport to the start and finish of the route gives us an opportunity us to contemplate the beauty of creation while caring for our common home.

Pilgrimage is an ancient way that people of many faiths have used in their search for God. Undertaking an outer journey can help us focus on our inner journey, on questions of meaning and purpose. Walking pilgrimage may lead us to feelings of awe at the beauty of creation and of unity with the universe, which may lead us to prayer and to being open to God's presence. Walking necessitates the acceptance of the problems of the road: there is no point railing against the rain, steep hills or aching knees! This recognition of one's smallness and transience can promote humility.

A pilgrim may appear to observers as independent and autonomous, striding towards his or her destination. In contrast, the inner experience

may be one of vulnerability to the elements, and of dependence on the goodwill of strangers. Pilgrimage involves 'stepping out' of one's daily life, work and family responsibilities to become a marginal, transient person, often the recipient of hospitality, but sometimes of scorn and suspicion. Pilgrimage may be a mixed experience of companionship and sometimes of solitude. There will be times of silence, and occasions of encounter with others. These varied experiences make us aware of the transcendent in our lives, and of our need for our loving God.

The Hearts in Search of God website www.pilgrimways.org.uk offers a range of resources to support your spiritual journey. On the pilgrim prayer introductory webpage there are links to a new resource from the Jesuit Institute called Pilgrims of Prayer covering a wide variety of approaches to prayer and spiritual exercises. There are also collected prayers for use before the pilgrimage, while on the road, on arrival at the shrine and after the journey. There are links to meditations on the Jesuit Pray as You Go app.

One traditional way of marking the end of a pilgrimage is to light three candles: one for your own intentions, and any that others have asked you to pray for; one in gratitude for the people who helped



you along on the way; and one in hope for those who will follow you. You may want to give thanks for your safe arrival and any other blessings you have received.

Please pray for Pope Francis as he leads the Church, the Pilgrim People of God, and for all who will walk as 'Pilgrims of Hope' during the 2025 Jubilee.

WESTMINSTER ARCHDIOCESE

Holloway foundation

On 11 April 2024, at 11am mass at Sacred Heart Parish, 10 members of the UCM Holloway foundation renewed their vows. The President, Ms Rosemary Parson, the Vice President Iona DeSouza and Recruitment officer, Sr. Brigid Collins, attended together with members of other foundations. It was an enjoyable occasion. The foundation was started by the late Fr. David Irwin, Spiritual director with the assistance of Sr. Brigid Collins. Twenty-five members were enrolled. Since then, the numbers have slowly declined and the past few years the foundation has been dormant. Members

felt renewing the vows would motivate them to become proactive. The mass was held by Fr Samuel, our assistant priest. He reminded the mothers of the importance they play in the life of the church and the importance of carrying out activities that aim to address the objective of the UCM. The UCM must be a visible presence in the life of the parish. The mass ended with a bring and share in the parish hall.

**Sonia Mullings - Foundation President
Diocese, Welfare/Justice and Peace Officer**



Hounslow Foundation

Amy Burns received a certificate for being a member of the UCM for 50 years. Amy's daughter Connie collected the certificate on her behalf. Pat Tinkler also received a received certificate.

Elizabeth Bottomley Diocesan Media Officer



Rosary at Bernadette's House

Hounslow UCM Member Bernadette hosted rosary at her house



Westminster AGM

Westminster AGM was held on Saturday 20th April 2024 at the Catholic Church of Our Lady of The Rosary. National President Joan Hodges said a few words. We had coffee and biscuits before the meeting and held a raffle. Father Michael celebrated Mass after the AGM had finished. Then lunch was held in the hall afterwards. Photo shows National President Joan Hodge and Diocesan President Rosemary Parsons.



Submitting copy for next issue
The deadline for articles and photos for the next edition of the UCM News is 16th October 2024
Please send copy to ucmnews@yahoo.com
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Anyone sending photos to be published in the UCMnews newspaper, it is your responsibility to make sure you get permission from all in the photos.

The Touch: On Saint Damien of Molokai and the love of Christ

God may not ask many of us to minister to those who suffer from Hansen's disease as St. Damien did. But we are all too aware of the various leprosy of the soul that plague our modern world.

A while ago, my wife and I were trying to find a movie that we hadn't seen before. We settled on the film *Molokai* (1999). Though I had heard of Fr. Damien before and had filed his name away in the back of my mind given our common Low Countries heritage, the film was my first true introduction to Fr. Damien de Veuster, whose feast is celebrated today.

While the movie attempts the impossible task of trying to fit sixteen years of the saint's life into a two-hour running time, it is a faithful and moving adaptation of the story into movie form. It solidified my devotion to the saint.

Fr. Damien was born Jozef de Veuster, the youngest of seven children of a pious family in rural Belgium. Two of his sisters became nuns and an older brother became a priest in the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus Mary. His family needed him to work on the farm, cutting his education short, but he felt a call to the priesthood. At age 20, he joined the same congregation as his brother, taking the name Damien, presumably after the St. Damien of the fourth century, famous not only for his martyrdom but for being an "unmercenary" physician (treating the sick without fee).

The name would prove prophetic.

When his brother could not go to the mission field because of illness, Damien was sent by his superiors to Hawaii in his place. He was ordained a priest in Honolulu and first served north of the city on the island of Oahu. It was there that he first became acquainted with the health crisis among the native Hawaiians caused by diseases from foreigners to which the natives had no immunity. Due to the fears surrounding leprosy especially, those diagnosed to the disease were sent by the government to quarantine camps on the island of Molokai.

The Bishop responsible for the Hawaiian missions wanted to send priests to care for those in this desperate situation, but he did not feel that he could order anyone to endanger their health so he asked for volunteers. Four priests volunteered, with the original plan being that they work in shifts to minimize the danger to any one man. Fr. Damien

was the first sent, arriving at the settlement on May 10, 1873. From the beginning, he made his concern not only the spiritual welfare of the lepers but their physical welfare as well, working with them to build up the church, repair the houses, and construct roads and hospices. He ate with the lepers, bandaged their wounds, and when needed, build coffins and dig graves with his own hands.

In a letter to his brother still in Europe, he said that "I make myself a leper with the lepers to gain all to Christ," paraphrasing and taking for his life's motto the words of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 9.

In his sermons and speeches to the Catholics of the camp, he would often begin with the words "My dear lepers." In December 1884, after eleven years of ministering among them, the residents knew that things had changed forever when Fr. Damien started with the words, "My fellow lepers..." He continued working with the people until his condition made it impossible. Volunteers took up his duties and cared for him on his deathbed. He died on April 15, 1889, only forty-nine years old.

He was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI in 2009. Very interesting to note is the fact that his feast day is not the day of his death, but May 10, the anniversary of his arrival at Molokai.

Every saint points us back to Jesus Christ, the source of all holiness. I have often compared the grace of Christ to pure, bright light. The saints are like gems, each of them reflecting that light in a unique way due to their unique composition and shaping by the Spirit. But this means that, by looking at Christ as He lives on in His saints, we might possibly see details about Our Lord that we might otherwise have missed looking only at the pure light itself.

We of course see much of Christ in St. Damien. Much of Our Lord's ministry to the sick was devoted to the lepers in particular. But there is one healing in particular that I believe today's saint illuminates in a striking fashion. In Luke 5: 12-13, we read:

While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and besought him, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." And he stretched out his hand, and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him.

While the English translation is good, it masks a feature of the Greek text. In Greek, in a sentence



like this with multiple actions (stretching, touching, saying), the author can choose to emphasize one of those actions by writing it in what is called the indicative mood. The other actions are then rendered as participles. Thus, a more literal translation might read: "And, stretching out His hand, He touched him, saying..."

It is the touch, the touch of Jesus Christ that St. Luke wants us to focus on here.

Our Lord could have healed the leper in any way. We see other types of cures in the Gospels. For the man born blind, he makes a mud compress. Others He cures with a mere word. So why here in this passage does He choose to cure with a touch?

St. Damien helps us see why.

Leprosy proper (Hansen's disease) doesn't kill directly. It deadens nerves so that wounds are not cared for properly and thus become infected. You lose your body, one piece at a time. But it is a notorious disease not only for the horrific harm that it does to the body but because of the great fear of contagion around it. This fear causes communities to isolate the sick away from everyone else. Leprosy takes all human contact away, destroying all human feeling just as surely as it destroys feeling in one's fingers and toes.

How does Jesus choose to bring healing to the leper? With a touch. We don't know how long the man had suffered, but it is not impossible to think that it may have been years, even decades since he had known the warmth of human contact. Our Lord's touch is the man's salvation. For sixteen years of his life, Fr. Damien was the touch of Jesus for the lepers of Molokai, reaching them, calling them not only to the Gospel but calling them back to their basic humanity.

God may not ask many of us to minister to those who suffer from Hansen's disease as St. Damien did. But we are all too aware of the various leprosy of the soul that plague our modern world. Every Christian is called to imitate Christ. We need to look for ways that, like St. Damien, we can be the hands of Our Lord: reaching out in compassion, reminding the dead and dying around us of their dignity as children of God, never compromising the truth but proclaiming the Gospel of Love and Life with our own lives. We can be the hands of Jesus in the world today if we so choose.

Donald J Uitvlugt for CWR

Is the family still the "fundamental and basic unit of all societies"?

Article by Maureen Meatcher for Women's Voice

At the WUCWO General Assembly I, Assisi May 2023 we resolved to take with renewed conviction, the joyful journey of family love, motherhood, and fatherhood. family love.

We are aware that family life is important. It is within our own families that we build each other's sense of value, that we grow stronger, that our children learn what is important and what is not. Recent reports from the UK Office for National Statistics revealed that the proportion of people in England and Wales who are married or in a civil partnership has fallen below 50 per cent for the first time. This statistic is just one of a number of indicators that points to people living more individualistic lives, fearing making a commitment to anything or anyone. It is into this headwind of individualism that too little attention is given to the importance and to the potential of fruitful interchange between generations and to family values. Individualism appears at odds with the family as a community of persons, and in our society the family's fundamental role for a peaceful civilization finds itself increasingly challenged.

The culture and world that we live in is besieged by violence, war, clashing ideologies and a consumer culture that holds little of value for most people. Harsh difficulties such as economic crisis and poverty make it difficult for families to maintain intergenerational bonds as in the past. As family ties break down, millions of children and youth are left

without the proper and necessary guidance and are increasingly exposed to risks such as dropping out of school, forced labour, and sexual exploitation. Do we in the UK attribute an increase in knife crime, mental health issues in the young, abusive behaviour, homelessness, and poverty to the decline of the family?

Many parishes in England and Wales have realised that there are many struggling families in their neighbourhoods who were invisible to them. When they learned that children were going hungry in the school holidays, they have started lunch clubs. In some areas this has developed into opportunities for families to meet and form community self-help groups – not a church for the poor, but of the poor. Pope Francis tells us that it is in the family that a person learns endurance, the joy of work, fraternal love, generosity in forgiving others and the offering of one's life at the service of the others. Young people are hungry for real relationship and for a more just society. But they need help to overcome the culture of individualism that fuels self-consciousness, isolation, and anxiety. Their natural sense of justice and longing for connection can be nourished through local relationships and collaboration with neighbours in the places where they live and work. Hence the desire to marry and form a family needs to be strengthened in order that its fundamental role for society may be rediscovered. Studies show that marriage is best both for adults and for children. In marrying, couples at least have an intention to stay together for life. The Holy See is calling for the promotion of the

family as the "fundamental and basic unit of all societies," saying its defence needs to be sustained for the common good of our world community. We must question what we as Church can do to meet this

challenge. People need that stability; we must lobby our National and local governments for greater cooperation and concerted actions to strengthen family-centred policies and programmes.



OBITUARIES

LEEDS
Pauline Hughes St. Patricks Foundation Bitr stall (Previous Diocesan Secretary)

A&B
Christina Clarke Merstham Foundation

PORTSMOUTH
Marie Gray St Edward & St. Mark's Past Foundation President
Sheila Clare Windsor Foundation

Peggy Flanagan Windsor Foundation

In last edition Pat Brooke and Doreen Russell were said to be from Westminster but they are also Portsmouth RIP

SOUTHWARK
Ann Groves Tolworth Foundation (member for 40 years)
Ann Pettingell Sutton Foundation

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord

Your memories linger, Your smile that cared , Your listening ear Your goodness shared. In God's deepest love. In God's gentlest care This is my prayer.

Guglielmo Marconi: 'The man who listened to the future'

Ahead of International Marconi Day and 150 years since his birth, we recall the rich legacy of Guglielmo Marconi, the inventor-entrepreneur who set up Vatican Radio in 1931 and installed a 'big cell phone' in Pope Pius XI's car that connected to the Vatican.

By Michele Raviart & Devin Watkins

Guglielmo Marconi was born at the Marescalchi Palace in Bologna on April 25, 1874.

His father, Giuseppe, was a landowner from Italy's Emilia province, and his mother, Annie Jameson, had come to Italy to study "bel canto" singing. She was Irish, a UK citizen, and the granddaughter of the founder of the famous Jameson whiskey distillery.

Among his many experiments, Marconi invented the first radio that could broadcast beyond line-of-sight in 1895.

After receiving the first patent for his "wireless telegraph" in England, Marconi established the London-based "Wireless Telegraph and Signal Company," later the Marconi Company.

Two years later, he opened a branch in the United States, which was later sold to General Electric and became RCA. By the end of his life, Marconi held 70 patents.

Nobel prize for life-saving invention

He received the Nobel Prize in Physics, along with the German scientist Karl Ferdinand Braun, for

the "contribution to the development of wireless telegraphy." He accepted it in December 1909 in Stockholm, at 35 years old.

His radio technology became mandatory on all ships across the globe after Mayday radio calls helped save over 720 people in the tragic sinking of the Titanic in 1912.

In 1922, Marconi inaugurated a new radio station in London out of which, by order of the British government, the BBC was born.

Then, on February 12, 1931, Pope Pius XI became the first Pope to address the world via radio, saying, in Latin: "In arcano dei consilium, succidimus in loco principis apostolorum."

At the Pope's request, Marconi had personally set up Vatican Radio, which in 2015 was incorporated into the newly-created Dicastery for Communication and lives on as the radio broadcaster of the Holy See.

Marconi's 'big cell phone' for the Pope

Among his other inventions, Marconi created a "big mobile phone" that connected Pope Pius XI's car with the Vatican and the papal summer residence at Castel Gandolfo, near Rome.

Many years later, Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple, told participants at a conference in the United States, "Marconi is our roots. We are the branches."

After him, Sir Martin Cooper, who invented the hand-held mobile phone as we know it today, said, "Actually, my invention, the small mobile phone, descends from Marconi's intuition and from



Marconi's big cell phone."

Radios fell silent at his death

On July 20, 1937, Guglielmo Marconi died in Rome from one of his frequent heart attacks.

Radios around the world, increasingly present in public spaces and in people's homes, simultaneously interrupted their broadcasts for two whole minutes.

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STELLA MARIS

14th July is Sea Sunday.

Please pray for seafarers and fishers and support the Catholic charity ministering to them: **Stella Maris (formerly known as Apostleship of the Sea).** To donate, go to www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate

Pope Francis reflects on importance of friends

Source: Vatican Media

Approximately 20 thousand pilgrims gathered in St Peter's Square on Sunday for the Regina Coeli with Pope Francis.

In his reflections on the day's Gospel Pope Francis recalled Jesus' words to the Apostles, "I do not call you servants any longer, but friends". What does this mean?"

"In the Bible, the 'servants' of God are special people to whom He entrusts important missions, such as Moses, King David, the prophet Elijah, up to the Virgin Mary. They are people into whose hands God places his treasures. But all this is not enough, according to Jesus, to say who we are for Him, it is not enough, we need more, something greater, which goes beyond goods and projects themselves: we need friendship.

"Since we are children we learn how beautiful this experience is: we offer our friends our toys and the most beautiful gifts; then as we grow up, as teenagers, we confide our first secrets to them; when we are young we offer loyalty; as adults we share satisfactions and worries; as old people we share memories, considerations and silences of long days. The Word of God, in the Book of Proverbs, tells us that "perfume and incense cheer the heart, and the advice of a friend softens the soul". Let's think for a moment about our friends, and thank the Lord for them! A space to think about them...

"Friendship is not the result of calculation, nor of coercion: it arises spontaneously when we

recognize something of ourselves in the other. And, if it is true, the friendship is so strong that it does not fail even in the face of betrayal. 'A friend always loves you' - the Book of Proverbs states again -, as Jesus shows us when he says to Judas, who betrays him with a kiss: 'Friend, that's why you are here!'. A true friend doesn't abandon you, even when you make mistakes: he corrects you, maybe scolds you, but he forgives you and doesn't abandon you.

"And today Jesus, in the Gospel, tells us that we are precisely this for him, friends: dear people beyond all merit and all expectations, to whom he extends his hand and offers his love, his grace, his Word; with whom - with us, friends - he shares what he holds most dear, everything he has heard from the Father. To the point of becoming fragile for us, of putting himself in our hands without defenses and without pretensions, because he loves us. The Lord loves us, as a friend he wants our good and wants us to share in him.

"So let's ask ourselves: what face does the Lord have for me? The face of a friend or a stranger? Do I feel loved by Him like a loved one? And what is the face of Jesus that I witness to others, especially to those who make mistakes and need forgiveness?"

May Mary help us to grow in friendship with her Son and to spread it around us."

After the Regina Caeli, Pope Francis sent his best wishes "with great affection to the brothers and sisters of the Orthodox Churches and some Eastern Catholic Churches who today, according



to the Julian calendar, celebrate Holy Easter. May the risen Lord fill all communities with joy and peace, and comfort those who are in trial. To them, Happy Easter!"

He also assured people in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, in Brazil, who have been affected by major floods of his prayers. "May the Lord welcome the deceased and comfort the family members and those who have had to leave their homes."

The Pope greeted greeted many groups of pilgrims present from around the world, and had special greetings for the new Swiss Guards and their families "A round of applause for the Swiss Guards!" he said.

Once again he called for prayers for "tormented Ukraine - it suffers so much! - and also for Palestine and Israel, may there be peace, so that the dialogue is strengthened and bears good fruit. No to war, yes to dialogue!"

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Tanzania: Catholic community supports beleaguered Maasai

A Catholic community in Tanzania's Ngorongoro Crater region have, for many months, been bearing witness to attempts by Tanzania's national government to squeeze out indigenous Maasai communities from their traditional lands, by cutting health services in a long-established clinic.

The clinic, which has been run by the Catholic church since 1965, has suffered cuts to water and electricity, and the operators have been refused permits to upgrade or renovate the facility. In addition, the facility was downgraded from 'hospital', to a 'clinic' a move that was accompanied by the suspension of ambulance and emergency services - a situation which has caused great distress for those acutely ill in the community.

A report by Doreen Ajlambo, in Global Sisters' Report on October 9, 2023 also documents the harassment and abuse of the religious leaders, including nuns, priests and catechists, whom the government have attempted to silence through arrest and detention in retaliation for the religious community's support of the Maasai position.

Fr Julius Malema - using a pseudonym - who has been repeatedly arrested for his work in Ngorongoro defending the Maasai, said: "As a priest who has worked here for a very long time, I feel disappointed with how the government is handling things by treating people like they are unworthy."

One of the nuns in the district also stated that Maasai women and girls are beaten and raped during the increasingly violent evictions being enacted by the government in its campaign to push through its policy of removing the Maasai from their longstanding home inside the Ngorongoro Crater, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979.

International rights monitor Amnesty International said in its June 6, 2023 report on the issue that the

national government, in 2009, unilaterally restricted human activities in the crater, purportedly in preservation of the environment. The Maasai, however, have for generations enacted their nomadic lifestyle there, famously maintaining a balance between Maasai community needs and that of tourism entities in the area, and nature. The Amnesty report continues by cataloguing a shocking litany of abuses of the Maasai's traditional lifestyle through no fewer than four cycles of forced removal and evictions since 2009. Earlier evictions began as long ago as the 1950s, when Maasai were removed from the Serengeti National Park.

In March 2024 the online campaigning organisation Avaaz alerted the international community to the ramping up of plans to continue to forcibly remove the Maasai from Ngorongoro. States Avaaz's article on the evictions: "President Samia Suluhu Hassan may not listen to us, but we know she'll respond to media and public pressure."

Ironically, these developments are in direct contravention of innovative work that has been carried out in South Africa since the 1994 advent of democracy. In contrast with the exclusionary policies of apartheid, private sector lodges across the country routinely work with local communities in ongoing processes of skills transfer, job creation, profit sharing - but perhaps most importantly, dialogue, where great efforts are made to record indigenous knowledge and create joint efforts at managing issues such as poaching, primary health, unemployment and education in deeply rural areas - and conservation.

With its own sickening history of forced removals that were a regular feature of the 20th century, the former 'polecat' of the world has created important precedents, and, whilst there is still a long way to go to fully address historical injustices, these

approaches are, today, at least foundational protocols embedded within private/public sector developments.

The Maasai themselves are more than aware of these approaches. One of the Catholic catechists at Ngorongoro, himself a Maasai, said: "The government should engage the Maasai leaders and find a lasting solution to the problem. The authorities should help people and wildlife to coexist in ways that benefit both, instead of violating the rights of the Maasai."

In a recent development reported by Katie McQue in the Guardian, thousands of Maasai have written to the British and UK governments appealing for help to stop the evictions. It is clear from the various reports reviewed that the Maasai suspect their lives are being sacrificed for tourism developments that have been approved without their involvement. The Guardian report cites another disputed locale near the Kenyan border, where Maasai face eviction to make way for a purportedly-United Arab Emirates-owned hunting company.

Academics are very concerned too. Quoted in the Guardian, Anuradha Mittal, executive director of the Oakland Institute thinktank, likened the situation to that prevailing under the most repressive years of colonial rule, and a guest essay the New York Times in February 2024 by Robert Williams, a law professor and faculty chair of the Indigenous Peoples Law and Policy programme at the University of Arizona pointed out that, around the world, indigenous communities have by far the best record of maintaining the balance between people and nature. Says Williams: "... an estimated 476 million Indigenous people dwell on lands that are home to 80 percent of the world's biodiversity."

Whilst the world sounds the alarm, the Catholic community of Ngorongoro continues to speak truth



to power despite attempts to muzzle them. Church personnel speak of killings; of disappearances; and of the bullying tactics of authoritarian states that wish to stifle dissent, including press harassment. Nuns in the region are visiting abused families to support them, caring in particular for traumatised evicted women and children caught in the long running and exhausting dispute. Catholic personnel are also supporting Maasai men with information about legal avenues of protest, as well as seeking to create dialogue aimed at bringing the conflict to a negotiated end where tourism can flourish - but also the Maasai.

Day for Life Fund – Grant applications now open

Grant applications for the Day for Life Fund opened on 1 May, giving organisations the opportunity to apply for funding for initiatives that promote the dignity of human life from conception to natural death.

Bishop John Sherrington, Lead Bishop for Life Issues, said:

"I am pleased to announce that this year's applications are now open. I encourage any organisation whose work strives to uphold the Church's commitment to protecting the dignity of human life to apply.

"I also encourage anyone who can to donate to the Day for Life Fund to ensure that this important work continues."

One previous recipient of funding is the Saint Gianna project, run by Catholic Care in the Diocese of Leeds, which provides support to anyone within the diocese during a pregnancy for the first year of the baby's life. Recently, the project launched a new initiative, supplying 'welcome to the world' packages to families in need, which include Moses baskets purchased through the Day for Life Fund. This support is open to anyone within the diocese, regardless of age, religion, race or marital status and is a vital lifeline for expectant mothers.

Bishop Sherrington praised the project, and highlighted how important Day for Life funding has been for its work:

"We recently celebrated the feast of St Gianna Beretta Molla, the Patron Saint of physicians, mothers and unborn children. Her life is a testimony of sacrificial love for the most vulnerable, that each member of the Church is called to follow.

"I congratulate Catholic Care's Saint Gianna's project who celebrated their Anniversary Open Day on 1 May. Their work reflects the example set by their Patron to provide support and assistance to women and girls during and beyond pregnancy.

"Thanks to the generous contributions to the Day for Life Fund, the Catholic Church in England and Wales is able to fund the work of organisations like St Gianna's."

Bishop Sherrington, reminding us that Day for Life will be celebrated on 16 June in our parishes, offered a prayer for the gift of life:

"As we approach this year's Day for Life on the 16 June, let us pray with St Gianna Beretta Molla that we can receive the graces to better recognise the beauty and gift of life in the most vulnerable. Using her words: 'Lord, keep Your grace in my heart. Live in me so that Your grace be mine.'"

Apply

The Day for Life Fund specifically gives financial assistance to organisations that work on life issues.

Source: CBCEW



We must maintain our independent thinking and discernment – machines should assist not replace

Bishop John Arnold, Lead Bishop for Communications, has spoken about Pope Francis' message for World Communications Day and the role Artificial Intelligence plays in the development of information technology.

The day, celebrated on Sunday 12 May, has as its theme "Artificial Intelligence and the Wisdom of the Heart: Towards a Fully Human Communication".

The pace at which AI is developing is extraordinary. The ethical questions surrounding the technology will always need amplifying – how AI impacts on how we think, the dignity of work, how we use the information, its sourcing and accuracy, global regulation – to cover just a few bases.

Pope Francis is keen to stress that communication needs to be authentic and human. We must speak from that most human of organs, the heart. Bishop Arnold agrees:

"Just about every invention that we have, there's a negative side, and we've got to be sure to identify that," he says. "The human heart can help our discernment as to what is good for humanity, what progresses who we are, what adds to our dignity, our well-being, but also to identify those things that are not so positive, those things that can be destructive."

But being people of God, perhaps we have an advantage. We are acutely aware not to make gods out of ourselves. We have a higher authority – a divine regulator – to help us maintain our humanity and perspective.

"We, as Christians, rely very much on the guidance of the Spirit, on providence in our lives, to guide us in much of what we do," says Bishop Arnold. "Machines can't dictate that for us. We've got to maintain a sense of independent thinking, independent discernment and wisdom in order to find the best way forward. What is God asking of us as individuals? As a community? As a global humanity?"

"Let's use machines to assist us in what we're doing to make our world a better place, to enhance

the way we live. But let's not allow machines in any way to think for us or to make decisions which are not appropriate."

When we focus on the positives of Artificial Intelligence, the speed at which information can be gathered and shared, how it can be made more accessible to people across the globe – the so-called 'death of distance' – we can see examples of how the technology is enabling a global audience to access what the Church says on any given subject. Magisterium AI is a chatbot that makes the teaching of the Catholic Church available 24/7 at incredible speed using more than 6,000 documents as its knowledge base.

Bishop Arnold considers it a very useful bank of knowledge:

"It has the technical ability to give you exactly what you're looking for in an instant, instead of wondering through a library and looking through thousands of pages, hoping that what you want is in a particular volume. It does it all for you, and that's something which is making learning accessible.

"It's not changing learning, and it's not dictating anything that hasn't been approved as being Magisterium of the Church. It's simply keeping in a store, in an enormous bank with wonderful search facilities, what the teaching of the Church is and how that applies to us. That's a real asset, but it's not intelligence."

So on World Communications Day, Bishop John Arnold is encouraging Catholics to embrace the technology in terms of how it serves the common good, but there is a key caveat:

"As individuals we've got to be very careful to recognise that we can be led astray by fake information, and to make sure that we're testing what we hear before we proclaim it to be true.

"The technology could be of enormous value to us, but we've got to identify clear boundaries as to what can be good and useful and what really needs to be avoided."

Source: CBCEW