

The Catholic universe



FREE inside - Catholic TIMES

Children risk paying the biggest price for pandemic

School closures driving increases in youth mental health problems say psychiatrists

Michael Winterbottom

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has warned that the Covid pandemic risks a generation of young people being lost to “lifelong” illness as they continue to struggle to cope with current restrictions on their lives.

The closure of schools, cancelled exams and lockdown restrictions all threaten a “mental health crisis that could plague the current generation of children for years to come,” it stressed.

Half of the college’s child psychiatrists have reported an increase in emergency or urgent cases among children, and one in six children now has a mental health problem, up from one in nine just three years ago.

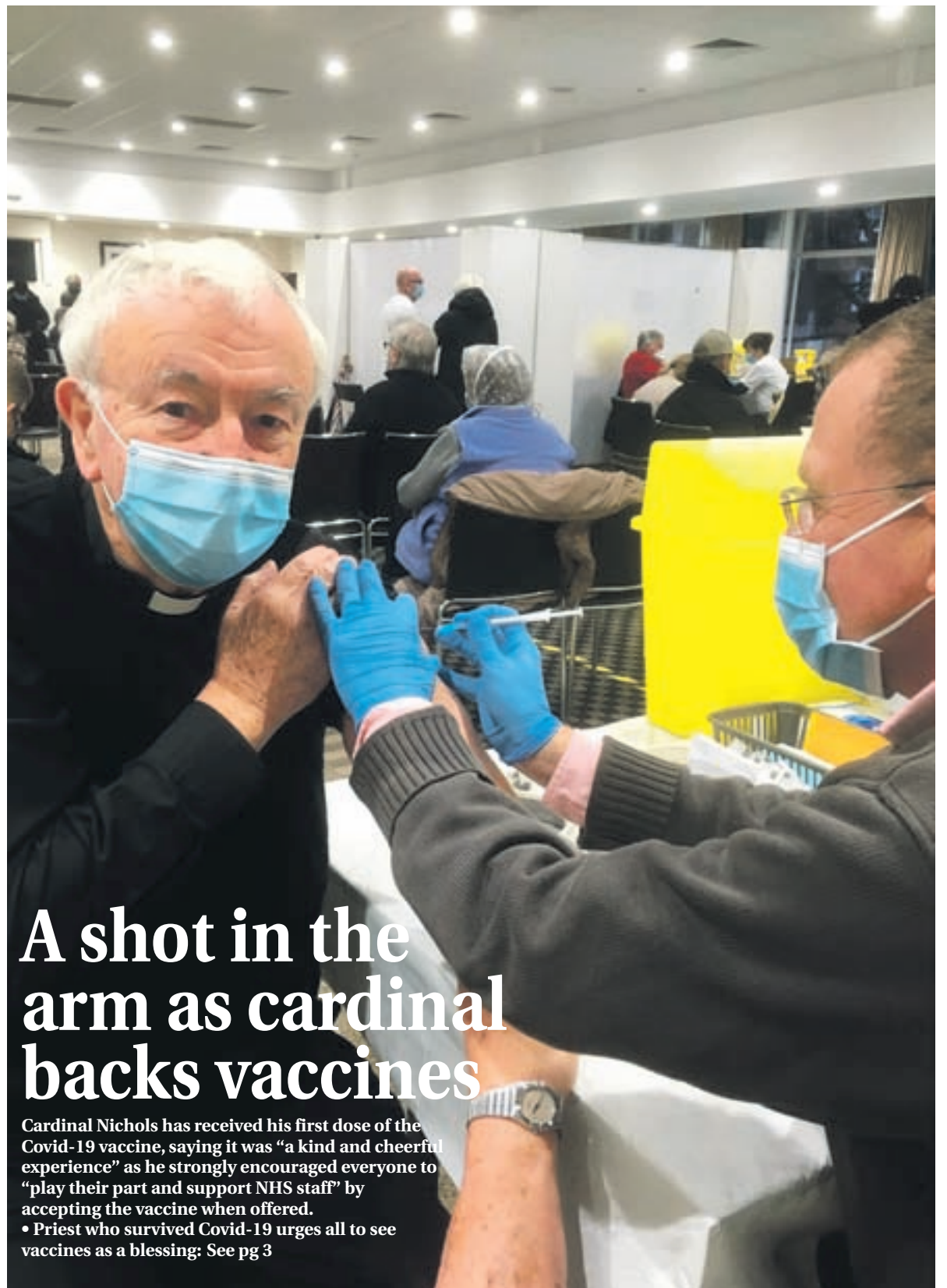
The surge has been blamed on Covid-19 restrictions, with a survey by the Prince’s Trust revealing that one-in-four young people feels unable to cope with life at present and that the crisis has taken a “devastating toll” on the confidence of teenagers and young adults.

A leading paediatrician has confirmed that the number of children admitted to hospital for mental health reasons now outstrips those with medical ailments. Prof Russell Viner, president of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health told MPs that this is a phenomenon that paediatricians have seen across the UK since the start of the pandemic.

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‘Mother Teresa of Manchester’ moves closer to sainthood

See pg 15



A shot in the arm as cardinal backs vaccines

Cardinal Nichols has received his first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine, saying it was “a kind and cheerful experience” as he strongly encouraged everyone to “play their part and support NHS staff” by accepting the vaccine when offered.

• Priest who survived Covid-19 urges all to see vaccines as a blessing: See pg 3

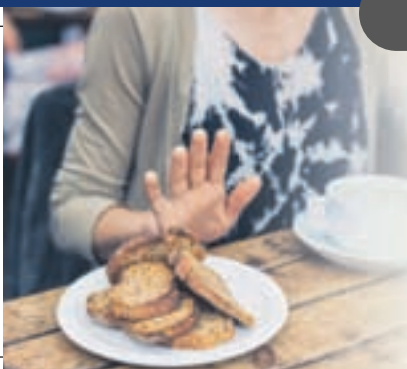
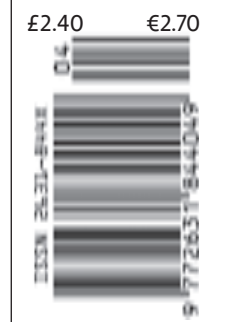
This week’s Companion

Why the future is looking digital for our finances

Common symptoms of gluten sensitivity and how to treat it

Leg-strengthening exercises to boost your running performance

The joys of a traditional English garden



Mass mourns loss of 'a great tree of the faith'

Nick Benson

"A great tree felled unexpectedly in the middle of the night" resulting in a loss that "has changed the landscapes of so many lives," Bishop Hugh Gilbert said at the funeral Mass of the Archbishop of Glasgow.

Archbishop Philip Tartaglia died suddenly at his home in Glasgow on Wednesday, 13th January, just two days after celebrating his 70th birthday. He had been self-isolating at home after testing positive for Covid-19 shortly after Christmas.

Covid-19 restrictions meant only 20 relatives and friends of the late Archbishop were able to attend the



The Archbishop of Glasgow, Philip Tartaglia
Photo: Scottish Catholic Media Office

service at St Andrew's Cathedral on Thursday, 21st January.

In his homily, Bishop Gilbert, president of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland, acknowledged the many different ways people knew Archbishop Tartaglia, "as a member of his family, or in his school and student days, in Rome, in the seminaries and parishes he served, as Bishop of Paisley and Archbishop of Glasgow".

"There were the many circles he moved in: of ecumenical dialogue, Catholic education about which he

was so engaged and realistic, the civic life of Glasgow, not forgetting its sport," he added.

Bishop Gilbert recalled the archbishop's "deep Catholic faith" and his "genuine, heartfelt" concern and work with the vulnerable, including asylum seekers, survivors of abuse and victims of accidents. He also remembered Archbishop Tartaglia's comforting role in the aftermath of the Glasgow bin lorry tragedy and the Clutha helicopter crash.

"We are commending to God today someone who wasn't small in any sense, someone of gravitas, and someone in whom head and heart came together, possessed of intellectual force and clarity and at the same time of great human warmth," said Bishop Gilbert. he had a "gift for friendship and insight into people", Bishop Gilbert recalled, during an *Ad Limina* visit with the pope in 2018, he said to the Holy Father, "I miss the parish", which received "a delighted papal thumbs-up" in response.

Bishop Gilbert described the loss of Archbishop Tartaglia as "a great tree felled unexpectedly in the middle of the night", adding that "only when we woke up the day following did we divine what had happened, did we grasp the depths of its roots, see the space this tree occupied, the shelter it gave, and what we've personally and collectively lost. This uprooting has changed the landscapes of so many lives."

The bishop also noted that this tree had a root - "the deep Catholic Christian faith he had received from his family". "Through that faith flowed the sacramental sap that nourished and greened his life," he added.

He noted that it was "consoling" that Archbishop Tartaglia, who served as Archbishop of Glasgow since 2012, "should go to God" on the Feast of St Kentigern/Mungo, the patron saint of Glasgow. "May he rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen."



The Primate of All-Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh, Eamon Martin, pictured when in-person public worship was possible

Public worship ban stays until March says Northern Ireland

Nick Benson

The Catholic bishops of Northern Ireland have announced that in-person worship will continue to be suspended until March.

The announcement comes as the first and deputy first ministers extended Covid-19 lockdown restrictions until 5th March.

First Minister Arlene Foster said extending the restrictions was an "appropriate and necessary response" to tackle the "imminent threat" posed by Covid-19.

Deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill said she was aware that the executive was "asking a lot of everyone" but stressed that "we will do everything we can to make sure you are supported during this time", while Ms Foster admitted that the executive had not ruled out the possibility of the measures being required until at least Easter.

"We have to be proportionate and we have to only do what is necessary," she said.

"We will review this decision on

18th February because it would be very wrong to keep restrictions in place for any longer than necessary."

The Catholic Church, as well as the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Church, confirmed that it would continue to suspend services until the end of lockdown.

Churches would remain open for private prayer and arrangements made for recording and/or live-streaming of services. Exceptions would be made weddings, funerals and baptismal liturgies, with appropriate restrictions in place.

The Catholic bishops said they were making the decision "reluctantly, conscious of the pain that not being able to gather for public worship causes for all the faithful."

However, they did so "in the hope that this period of sacrifice is inspired by the command of Jesus to love our neighbours and undertaken for the protection of life and health and for the Common Good" They encouraged parishes to continue to broadcast the

celebration of Mass and other devotions online, and highlighted the "important role faith and prayer plays at this difficult time."

The bishops also continued their call for prayers for the sick, the bereaved and all those whose livelihoods have been particularly impacted by the pandemic.

"We keep especially in mind all health workers, carers, chaplains and other essential workers," they said.

They also welcomed announcements that a similar position is being taken by the leaders of the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland and many other denominations and faith communities in response to the extension of restrictions.

The statement was signed by the Primate of All-Ireland, Archbishop Eamon Martin; the Bishop of Down and Connor, Noel Treanor; the Bishop of Derry, Donal McKeown; the Bishop of Clogher, Larry Duffy; and the Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh, Michael Router.



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Trust me: get the vaccine says Fr Albert

Nick Benson

A London-based Catholic priest who was admitted to hospital with Covid-19 has recalled his “frightening” experience of the “havoc” caused by the virus, and has encouraged all to get vaccinated.

Fr Albert Ofere, parish priest of English Martyrs, Wembley Park, London, described the vaccine as “a blessing” and “a gift from God” as he urged people to listen to the facts and speak to their GP to make an informed decision about the vaccine, rather than being influenced by “outlandish conjectures” attempting to dissuade people from getting it.

His appeal has been echoed by Cardinal Vincent Nichols, who recently received the first dose of the vaccine and “strongly” encouraged others to do so in an effort to support the NHS, as it continues in its battle to save lives amid the deadly pandemic.

Recalling the harrowing experience he suffered after contracting the virus and being admitted to hospital, Fr Ofere warned the public that Covid-

19 is real and is a danger to all, as he criticised those attempting to downplay the severity of the virus.

“I had a near-death experience contracting Covid-19 not long ago,” Fr Ofere said in a video message, posted by the Diocese of Westminster. “I was admitted at Northwick Park Hospital and it was frightening and not an experience anyone should go through.

“I speak from experience of what I have been through, that Covid-19 is real and is causing havoc. We are all affected directly or indirectly regardless of your nationality, race or class.”

The Nigerian priest explained that he suffered greatly from the virus, despite being an active and healthy person. “I can only imagine how it affected those with underlying health issues. It’s not surprising that people have died. I was saved by prayers and medication. Indeed, God saved me. I am a testimony to God’s goodness and love and the power in prayer.”

Recalling the “great joy” he felt when Covid-19 vaccines were approved, Fr Ofere said this emotion turned to sur-



Nuns arrive at Lord’s Cricket Ground in London to receive the Covid-19 vaccine. Photo: John Sibley, Reuters Inset, Fr Albert Ofere Screenshot from YouTube/Diocese of Westminster.

prise as he discovered that some members of the public said they would turn down the vaccine “and are encouraging others not to take it,” he said. “I have even heard some people say that Covid-19 is not real but I am here to tell you that it is real. If you have been through what I have been through you will not hesitate to go for your vaccine.”

Fr Ofere urged people to “listen to facts and not some conjectures”, including some “very outlandish” posts on social media, which present so-called reasons for not being vaccinated.

“Look at the facts, speak to your GP. If you prefer, speak to your ethnic GP, get answers to any questions you might have. Importantly pray, pray about it and then make an informed decision to have your vaccine,” he said. Citing the words of Pope Francis, Fr Ofere stressed that it is everyone’s “ethical duty not to only protect ourselves but to protect others”.

“Pope Francis supports the vaccine and so do I. As Jesus says, ‘I’ve come to give you life, abundant life’. So go get your vaccine so you can live your life to the full.”

Bishop Paul McAleenan, in his ca-

capacity as Bishop for Ethnic Chaplains for the Diocese of Westminster and as Lead Bishop for Migrant and Refugee Issues for the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, reiterated Fr Ofere’s words, describing the vaccine as “a blessing”.

He thanked Fr Ofere for sharing his experience and stressed that all should listen to his message.

“Fr Albert Ofere urges us to listen to the voice of reason, to be united in protecting ourselves and others by being vaccinated,” he said. “His message is for everyone, regardless of race, culture or origin.”

Cardinal’s ‘great joy’ after receiving vaccine

Cardinal Nichols described receiving the first dose of the vaccine as “such a kind and cheerful experience”.

Speaking the following day, he said: “First dose of the Covid-19 vaccine yesterday! Such a kind and cheerful experience.”

“I strongly encourage everyone to take the vaccine. Let’s play our part and support NHS staff as they fight to save so many lives. Please, please continue to pray too for an end to this pandemic and for all who have lost their lives.”

Children at risk of paying highest price

Continued from page 1

The Children’s Commissioner, Anne Longfield, said the findings were so alarming that the Prime Minister must now prioritise school reopenings, calling for a “clear roadmap for getting all pupils back in the classroom.”

“It is far easier to close schools than to reopen them,” she warned, and without a clear path to reopening there was a risk that “the status quo of closer could become embedded as the default position.”

“School closures are having an enormous impact on children,” she said, “badly affecting their mental health and widening the gap in learning.”

Meanwhile, another group of paediatricians has said that anxiety, self harm and suicidal thoughts are at “frightening levels” among children.

Prof Viner told MPs that children were now being admitted to hospital for mental rather than physical ailments in increasing numbers, with school closures being the driving factor behind the increase. A number of dif-

ferent issues have arisen in children as a result of being kept at home, such as difficulty sleeping, a reduction in physical activity and reduced well-being, he said.

The latest NHS figures showed the number of children referred to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) was 4,615 per 100,000, the highest on record and up nearly 20 per cent.

A spokesperson for the Catholic Education Service commented: “The decision regarding the opening and closing of schools is made by national Government in consultation with its scientific advisers.

“Conscious of the importance of education to children’s health and well-being, Catholic dioceses work in close partnership with local authorities across the country to ensure that Catholic schools remain operating in a Covid-secure manner for vulnerable children and those of key workers, with a view to full re-opening when it becomes safe to do so.”

Keep lonely in prayers says archbishop

The Archbishop of Cashel and Emly has urged Catholics to ensure that they keep in regular contact with the vulnerable and lonely throughout the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and appealed to the faithful to continue to pray for those affected by the virus.

Archbishop Kieran O’Reilly expressed his “deep sadness and solidarity with all those affected by the pandemic”, and encouraged all to keep regular contact, in the safest ways possible with those who live alone or with those who might be vulnerable in any way to the virus or to loneliness or depression,” he said.

The archbishop praised the many “amazing lessons of Christianity-in-action we have seen throughout the pandemic, and what an example our frontline workers have set us, and especially for our children and young people.

“I pledge, and I ask you humbly to join me, to continue to pray daily both for all those affected by the virus but also to pray for continued health and strength for all frontline staff.”

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Children under the age of five are dying from malnutrition and vitamin deficiency

The Sisters of Charity of St Vincent De Paul write to The Little Way Association from north-eastern India: “Covid means that people are completely depending on the St Vincent Health Centre which we established in 2015 in Darenchigre. Patients are suffering from anaemia, jaundice, typhoid, diarrhoea, malnutrition, calcium and iron deficiency, and many children below the age of five are dying. We are unable to provide better medical care and treatment due to the lack of finance and the other issues like lack of medical equipment and oxygen supply monitors in emergency situations.”



One of the Sisters of Charity and grateful patients at St Vincent Health Centre, north-eastern India.

“Please can you help us?”

The sisters work in one of India’s poorest regions, where the people scrape a living from subsistence-agriculture. The health centre was intended just to provide first aid but people from 20 villages have come to use it as their principal medical facility. The sisters urgently ask for funds for vitamins, diagnostic equipment and treatment for those suffering from various dietary deficiencies.

The sisters conclude their letter: “We earnestly ask you to participate in this humble effort to offer our medical support to the people in need.”

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Universities' 'no platform' policy tackled by Tory MP

Veteran Tory MP David Davis has brought forward a Bill that would require universities to respect freedom of speech.

The Bill has received praise from pro-lifers, who say universities must be "bastions of free speech". It follows a number of attacks on pro-lifers' right to address meeting at UK universities.

The MP for Haltemprice and Howden warned that there is now a "corrosive trend" in universities whereby certain views are prevented from being aired. While certain groups argue that this is to protect from offence, Mr Davis insisted that it is "censorship".



He insisted that the principal reason that the UK is a great nation can be encompassed in one word – "freedom" – of which one of the most precious of all is freedom of speech.

"It has been fundamental to the development of our culture, our society, our literature, our science and our economy," he said.

"Freedom of speech is fundamental to everything we have, everything we are and everything we stand for."

He said those who "explicitly or indirectly no-platform" others "are not protecting themselves; they are denying others the right to hear those people."

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SPUC offers brave Pippa a lifeline by funding appeal

The mother of a brain-damaged five-year-old girl who was told that her daughter should be left to die "in a controlled fashion", has been given a lifeline after a pro-life group donated £100,000 to fund a court battle to save her daughter.

Pippa Knight has been in hospital for two years after taking ill and is currently in a vegetative state. Her devoted mum Paula Parfitt, 41, from Strood, Kent, has carried out a bedside vigil at her London hospital bedside.

However, medics went to court in December seeking permission to end her treatment and won the backing of Mr Justice Poole after a trial in the High Court. He described the case as "heart-rending" after visiting the youngster at Evelina Children's Hospital in London.

Pippa's case was initially funded by legal aid but this was refused for the appeal. In desperation Paula made a public plea for financial support to fund the hearing, which could cost £100,000.

Her call has now been answered by the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC). Deeply religious Paula said: "When my solicitor told me I was overwhelmed and I must admit I shed some tears. SPUC has given Pippa a second chance – and she deserves a second chance.

"I feel so privileged. And I'm grateful not just for the financial support but for their prayers for Pippa, their faith and humanity and for trying to save her with prayers and love. I know that, as a Christian, I am a great believer in God's law, and that is to preserve life and respect and care for every human life."

John Deighan, SPUC's deputy chief executive who takes over as CEO from



Pippa Knight.
Photo: SPUC

John Smeaton who retires later this year, said: "We have been deeply moved by Pippa's plight and Paula's predicament as this courageous mum does everything humanly possible to protect her daughter. We could not stand by and do nothing.

"Our supporters have a wonderful track record of giving generously to defend the right of life in such court cases and I am sure they will respond to our call to help finance this crucial legal battle which now looms.

"I would urge everyone to dig deep and provide as much as they can to help fund the legal fight to save Pippa. You can make a donation at www.spuc.org.uk/donate."

Pippa was born in April 2015 and developed normally, but in December 2016 she became unwell and began to suffer seizures. Since she was 20 months old she has fought various virus conditions which have left her brain damaged and for the last two years she has been in hospital.

Specialists have diagnosed acute necrotising encephalopathy and those treating her at the Evelina Children's Hospital in London said life-support treatment should end.

Hospital bosses asked Mr Justice Poole to rule that ending treatment and allowing Pippa to die would be lawful and in her best interests. The judge was told that the youngster is in a vegetative state and has no awareness.

He ruled specialists could lawfully stop treatment but said it should continue for a short period to give time to mount an appeal. Paula has asked that her daughter to be placed on a portable ventilator and allowed home for a home-care trial.

She said evidence shows that Pippa is not in pain and two independent medical experts believe home care is worth trying.

Paula added: "Pippa has survived the last two years which shows she wants to survive.

"I have a strong Christian faith and I'm keeping my faith in God. They have tried to talk me into switching off Pippa's life support. But she's still there and that is not God's will. He would have taken her by now if He had wanted her. She is amazing.

"I am convinced she knows what is going on. Hand on heart. She is aware I am here and knows her family.

"Before she was ill I taught her to pray, she put her hands together and said: 'Jesus'. I am trying to follow the way of Jesus. To God be the glory. Always."

Expressing her thanks to SPUC, she added: "Please tell everyone at SPUC I am really appreciative of what they are doing for us.

"Thank you so much."

Bishops wade into row over Polish patient denied treatment

The Catholic bishops of England and Wales have written to Health Secretary Matt Hancock expressing their opposition to a court ruling to withdraw life support treatment from a Catholic Polish patient in an English hospital.

The letter follows a request from Archbishop Stanislaw Gldecki, who wrote to Cardinal Vincent Nichols, president of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, asking for his intervention in the case, which involves a Polish national known only as RS.

As reported in last week's *Catholic Universe*, RS is a Polish citizen who has lived in Britain for many years. He fell into a coma after suffering a heart attack in November. Since then he has received artificial hydration and

nutrition at a Plymouth hospital. However, the Court of Protection gave permission to University Hospitals Plymouth National Health Service Trust to withdraw artificial hydration and nutrition earlier this month.

The patient's birth family

Health Secretary Matt Hancock has been asked to look at the case of 'RS'



appealed to the European Court of Human Rights to halt the case but its application was dismissed. The European court later also rejected an application from the Polish Government to repatriate the patient.

In their letter to the Health Secretary, the bishops state: "The Church continues to oppose the

definition of assisted nutrition and hydration as medical treatment.

"Providing food and water to very sick patients, is a basic level of care. This must be given whenever possible unless it is medically indicated as being overly burdensome or failing to attain its purpose. The recent court cases concerning patient Mr RS in the care of Plymouth NHS Trust has shown the level of controversy around this definition as judges have been called to make decisions in the 'best interests' of the patient.

"We note that Mr RS had not refused food and fluids nor had he expressed any view about not wanting food and fluids in these circumstances and that there was no evidence that he viewed assisted nutrition and hydration as medical treatment."

Tributes to teacher killed in M4 crash

Tributes have been paid to a much-loved Catholic teacher, grandma and bride-to-be who was killed in a car crash.

Devout Catholic Carole Patricia Fowler, 61, died following a collision on the M4 in Hendy, Carmarthenshire. She had worked at St Mary's Catholic Primary School in Llanelli for 30 years and was planning to marry to her long-term partner.

Ms Fowler's family said she was a perfect teacher, as "she loved children and they loved her".

In a statement her family said: "As one of her past colleagues said, she made such a difference to every child she taught. She was very popular with staff and well respected and loved by parents. She was dedicated and conscientious, always 100 per cent for the children – and she was wise, strong, beautiful, generous, devout and feisty."

Jesuit to lead on key safeguarding role

Fr David Smolira SJ has been appointed as the Religious Lead for overseeing the implementation of the new safeguarding structures on behalf of the Religious in England and Wales.

The role has been established to ensure the needs of religious congregations are met as the new 'standards-based' safeguarding structure is established. It follows a major review of safeguarding in the Church by Ian Elliott.

Carol Lawrence, project implementation director, said: "Fr David's appointment completes our team and I am delighted to welcome him.

"We are fortunate to have his breadth of experience and skills that will support our work."

Fr Paul Smyth CME, the President of the Conference of Religious, said: "We too are delighted Fr David has agreed to take on this important role.

"We are committed to making every effort to assist religious congregations to embed a safeguarding culture at all levels of religious life."

Fr Smolira has worked in safeguarding for over 35 years, with a professional background in social work and psychotherapy.

He will take on this role for a period of six months and will be undertaking this work alongside his duties of directing the spirituality work of the Jesuits in Britain.

Fr Smolira said: "I look forward to



Fr David Smolira Carol Lawrence

this challenging but vitally important work, ensuring that religious congregations play their full part in safeguarding within the Catholic Church.

"We have work to do as we move forward with renewed commitment to higher standards in safeguarding, as well as improving our responses to and our support of victims/survivors.

"I know there is a great desire within religious congregations to do every aspect of safeguarding well and so it is very important to ensure that we have the knowledge and the right resources available to fulfil this objective."

The bishops are adopting a "One Church" strategy which will place safeguarding in a comprehensive model covering religious institutions and other areas of ecclesial life as well as diocesan parishes and schools and other settings.

Hypocrisy charge as new coal mine gets go ahead

Nick Benson

A Catholic environmentalist has accused the Government of "hypocrisy" over its decision not to block plans for a new coal mine in Cumbria.

Cumbria County Council approved plans for Woodhouse Colliery in 2019, as it will create jobs in an area of high unemployment.

And now Robert Jenrick, the Secretary of State responsible for planning, had decided against using his powers to block the decision, with the proposed coal mine set to become the first deep coal mine in England since Asfordby pit in 1987.

It comes as the UK is set to host a UN climate summit in November, where it will urge other nations to phase out fossil fuels.

Ellen Teague, of the Columban Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, branded the decision "utter hypocrisy" and noted that it undermines Britain's claim to climate change leadership.

"Not challenging the decision is utter hypocrisy," Mrs Teague told *The Catholic Universe*. "At the UN climate summit in Glasgow the UK will urge other nations to phase out fossil fuels. In addition, the British Government has launched the 'Powering Past Coal' alliance of nations to relinquish coal."

She added: "Coal is the dirtiest of the fossil fuels driving up global tem-



peratures. The Columbans have supported protests describing them as "immoral". Some argue that the mine will create jobs in an area of high unemployment, but what about more investment in green jobs."

Mrs Teague said that recent floods in the north of England shows that the country is experiencing wilder weather events, linked to global warming. "Victims of extreme weather both here and in the global south will be paying a heavy price for fossil fuel projects," she said.

Alok Sharma, who is leading the COP26 climate summit and who co-ordinates UK policies on climate change, acknowledged how it could be seen as an "embarrassing" move but added that "the direction of travel for the UK is very clear and I completely understand the point you're making."

Pro-life power scores win on DIY abortions

Nick Benson

Pro-lifers have heralded "pro-life power" after the Government performed a U-turn on the way in which the public can make submissions to a consultation on 'DIY' home abortions.

The Department for Health and Social Care had previously said its consultation on whether 'DIY' abortion should be made permanent would accept online submissions only.

However, members of the pro-life community contacted their MPs to express outrage at the fact that those without access to technology would be unable to take part.

Now the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) has revealed that responses can be submitted on paper.

"Thanks to pro-life power, the Government will now accept responses from people who cannot make an online submission," said Michael Robinson, SPUC director of communications. "It is concerning that the Government deemed it appropriate to silence the voices of many on this important matter solely because they cannot contribute online.

"We welcome the Government's decision to revoke this restriction. This shows the power of the pro-life presence in the UK."

The Government's consultation will close on 26th February.

Mr Robinson welcomed the opportunity given by the consultation to highlight the particular horrors of the home abortion regime and to argue

that women and babies deserve better.

"We urge all pro-life people in England to make their voices heard and respond to this consultation," he added.

To access the consultation online, see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/home-use-of-both-pills-for-early-medical-abortion>

However, written paper submissions can also be sent to: Abortion Consultation, Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries Unit, Department of Health and Social Care, 39 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0EU

People who would prefer to make a written submission on paper to the consultation can download a paper form at <https://www.spuc.org.uk/>

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The revelation that new variants of the coronavirus may be deadlier than the first shows why the Government's response must be flexible and sophisticated. Circumstances change and we must adapt to them.

But what we need now is a calm conversation about the philosophical choice we face. There are two key questions: is the goal to eliminate the virus, or to control transmission? And if we can control Covid-19, do we need to talk about finding a way to live with it?

If the goal is elimination, that would justify policies such as closing schools, keeping businesses shut or shutting the borders. But when would Britain reopen? When the entire world is vaccinated?

And, as we have seen, new variants can emerge from within the country. This is not March 2020; the disease is among us and widespread – as many as one in 55 could have it in England – so it is highly unlikely that we can push transmission to zero, however tough we act, and expect it never to rise again.

As Sir Patrick Vallance said, Covid-19 is “going to stay around ... probably forever”. But, he added, “it will be controlled”. Pushed to explain what this means in practice, the Prime Minister laid out three conditions for easing the lockdown: confidence that the vaccine is working, certainty that the variant does not pose significant new challenges, and getting the R-number to a point low enough that unlocking the country will not lead to a “rebound”.

But learning to live with a pandemic does not just mean counting the things we cannot do: it also has to mean planning for and investing in opening up as far as we safely can. It means getting children back in school; helping businesses not only survive but return to work; and expanding NHS capacity so that it can function as a health service for all, not just those with Covid-19.

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CATHOLIC COMMENT

**Sean
Ellard**



There is something different in the air. For the past four years, so much of North America, and the world, has been on alert for what could be incoming at any time from the White House. The sheer unpredictability of the daily chaos of the Trump administration was exhausting.

The renewed sense of hope is incredible. The relief that the people in power in Washington are folks that we can at least give reasonable assumption are good, decent humans is palpable. People who want to treat others with kindness and respect because that's what civilized people do. It's not hard, complicated, or difficult.

After more than 30,000 false statements during President Trump's time in office, the daily onslaught of falsehoods had left many beaten, exhausted and exasperated. Now, after what has felt like an eternity, we are all left with relief, but also angst the crisis is far from over. Everyone knows what's possible, now.

Between the Capitol insurrection on January 6th and the departure of the 45th President, many people felt a sense of time standing still for two weeks. We were all waiting to see what would happen next as Washington was turned into fortress-DC. One of most incongruous sights to be witnessed was that of the mobilisation of troops to protect Americans – from other Americans.

With a military budget of more than \$600 billion, it's ironic that people fuelled by misguided treasonous patriotism posed the biggest threat to its centre of power since the Cold War. While many have said the unimaginable took place when the mob stormed Washington, the seeds of modern day hate and division on the right had long been planted and were already growing above our knees when the terror occurred.

The growth of fear and a distrust of the US government and 'authorities' really began to take hold and spread during the early 1990s. Several deadly and violent clashes with US federal officers was akin to throwing accelerant on the fires of distrust which had long been simmering. It was easy anti-Government propaganda that had platforms to push it both online and in conventional media. Distrust was both easy to propagate and had the bonus of being good business for some.

The deadly 1992 stand-off in Ruby Ridge, Idaho and in Waco,



President Biden takes the oath of office from Chief Justice Roberts (out of picture) while his wife, Jill holds the family Bible

Hope returns – now it's up to Biden to restore faith in US democracy

Texas the following year – both of which left children dead after deadly exchanges of gunfire with federal agents – unfolded on live television after days of around-the-clock coverage. The stand-offs and deadly sieges were broadcast into the homes and minds of millions in real-time. Ghastly images, regardless of beliefs, that were unimaginably horrific. Especially when you think of the innocents caught in the cross-fire.

But deadly showdowns with right wing extremists, especially under Democratic presidents, was occurring, on video, right up to the 2016 deadly shooting of a militia member involved in the occupation of federal land in Oregon. So, the modern culture of weaponised distrust and aggression by the far right, especially against Democrats, had become mainstream for some since the last century.

However, it does not mean that within the dangerous, extremist agendas there doesn't lie elements of harsh truths to their causes. Truths that speak to the hardships of many

people, struggling with economic disparity, that extends far beyond their insurrectionist bubbles.

People are hurting and afraid, and this is what makes it easy to be cajoled by a populous political movement to channel their feelings and resentment for someone else's evil deeds. The fact that people were taking private jets to storm the Capitol shows just how deep and widespread the feelings and manipulation of truth can go.

We have an amazing skill of putting a nice, heavy glaze over the top of things here in North America. From our food to our facts, a glossy, sugar-coated, foggy layer is the perfect dressing to partially mask those harsh realities we'd rather hide from ourselves. The comforting part is the bitter taste of reality beneath is still too overpowering to ignore and many are finally losing their taste for it.

Many Americans now understand there really is something to lose – their democracy – if the complacency of invincibility isn't overcome. But no one loves a comeback, or a redemption story, better than we do!

Especially when fear of defeat at the hands of an extremist fringe, and what it could mean for everyone, is reality.

The amazing part about right now is the genuine feeling of hope, relief, and optimism. A devout US president who is committed to the basic tenants of not just Catholicism, but human decency, is good for all of us, regardless of what we believe.

Emotions of the heart are some of the most powerful forces in the world. President Biden has the chance to tap into that unlimited resource in all of us to change things for the better.

Love thy neighbour as thyself.

Sean Ellard is a professional feature writer for CBR.com and a former senior national news producer. He has also served as director/producer for a number of TV series, including series like *Border Security: Canada's America's Front Line*, *Yukon Gold*, *Love It or List It*, *The Bachelor Canada* and *60 Minutes International*. You can find out more about him at [Twitter: SeanE@SingingRebels](https://twitter.com/SeanE@SingingRebels)

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New figures reveal abortion remains world's top killer

Abortion remained the leading cause of death worldwide in 2020, according to data provided by Worldometer.

The free statistics website found that 42.6 million abortions took place around the world last year, dwarfing the number of deaths from cancer (8.2 million); road traffic fatalities (1.4 million); and Covid-19 (1.8 million).

The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) said: "2020 was a terrible year, especially for the world's unborn. The Covid-19 pandemic has wreaked hardship and death on a global scale. But amidst this challenge, we should not forget the world's unborn who are attacked every day.

"42.6 million babies lost through abortion is a catastrophic death toll."

SPUC noted that last year 209,519 unborn children were aborted in England and Wales in 2019 – the highest number since the Abortion Act came into force in 1968.

"These statistics are sobering and heart-breaking," the pro-life group said. "They underline the challenge pro-lifers around the world face in 2021.

"This year we must act on these figures and advance the pro-life cause with renewed vigour and determina-

A memorial for victims of abortion. Photo: Jonathan Bachman, Reuters.



tion. We must defend the innocent and the vulnerable. We must not lose hope."

Worldometer is a respected reference website that provides counters and real-time statistics for diverse topics, keeping a running tally through

the year of major world statistics, including population, births, deaths, public healthcare expenditure, newspapers circulated, water used and CO₂ emissions.

It was voted one of the best free reference websites by the American

Library Association (ALA) and has attained greater popularity due to hosting reliable statistics on Covid-19

The site registers the total number of abortions worldwide, based on the latest statistics published by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Book praised for offering 'real science'

Pro-lifers have praised a new children's book that teaches youngsters that life begins at fertilisation, saying it should not be viewed as controversial.

When You Became You by Christiane West and Brooke Stanton takes readers on a scientific journey through the stages of a human being's life and comes in response to teachers' requests.

The colourful book teaches youngsters that it is a "basic fact" that life begins at fertilisation, the authors stated, noting that teachers had approached them asking for such a book that teaches children about this concept for years.

The book states: "Your humanity is what you have in common with all human beings. It does not matter what you look like ... you are a human being."

Catherine Robinson, of Right To Life UK, welcomed the book's publication, saying that it should not be viewed as controversial. "The basic facts of embryology, chiefly, that life begins at conception, is a well known fact, which is supported by 96 per cent of biologists in the largest survey of biologists on this question," she said.

"A book for children which states this explicitly should not be controversial. Only an abortion ideology intent on dehumanising the human being *in utero* would attempt to deny such a well-established an obvious truism."

The authors noted that no-one takes an issue with any of the statements until the section about those who aren't born yet. Stanton said people reading the book called it "pro-life science" – but she insisted it is not. "This is the real science," she said.

"Having a book that starts children off correctly and protects them against false information is part of the goal of this book," she said.

Health staff urged to say no to abortion

Pro-lifers are calling on healthcare workers to refuse to participate in abortion after the Northern Ireland Department of Health released abortion figures for the 2019-2020 period.

Liam Gibson, the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) Northern Ireland's political officer, said: "Sadly, the 22 babies killed by abortion in Northern Ireland is only the tip of the iceberg as these figures do not reflect the radical legislative changes imposed on the Province by Westminster. Since then unborn children were stripped of all meaningful legal protection. In 2019 over 1,000 children from Northern Ireland were killed in abortion facilities in Britain and this number increased dramatically in 2020."

Mr Gibson pointed out the tragic irony of the public being urged to protect the NHS and save lives amid the Covid-19 pandemic, while the same health service ends the lives of tens of thousands of babies each year.

"We are continually being reminded to protect the NHS and to save lives by slowing the spread of Covid-19, yet the NHS is now responsible for the deaths of more than 200,000 children," he said. "Abortion is not healthcare. It is lethal violence against an innocent child. Healthcare workers should refuse to take part in abortions," said Mr Gibson.

Corrie star proud of pro-life role in drama

Nick Benson

Coronation Street actress Kerri Quinn has revealed that she is "delighted" to play the part of a pro-life activist in a forthcoming BBC drama.

The Belfast-born actress, 37, best known for playing Vicky Jefferies on the ITV soap, said she is "thrilled" to represent the pro-life community in *The Awakening*, which covers the change in abortion laws in Northern Ireland.

Ms Quinn said the role is an important one not only for her, but for her entire family. She also revealed that she based her character on her mother who, she said, is the "most influential person in my life".

"I play a pro-lifer which I was delighted about because my whole family are pro-life, so it was a role I really wanted to portray and portray properly," she told *The Belfast Telegraph*.

"I based the character very much on my mum who comes at it from a very different angle, having lost a child.

Ms Quinn revealed that her parents lost her brother Kevin, who had a hole in his heart, when he was just three-years-old. "I think that definitely impacts on how you feel about it. I think that's why I believe that life is absolutely precious, I really do, because I have watched friends and family lose children."

"My mum and dad lost my brother Kevin when he was three and I think life experience plays a massive part in the matter. My mum is the most influential person in my life so I wanted to represent the pro-life community as I know it."

Ms Quinn said it was great to have the opportunity to represent that point of view and represent it well. She even went so far as to say she was made to play the role.

"I really clicked with the director straight away. It was very clear that I was meant to play that part," she said.

Ms Quinn admitted that while it's a very important part of her life, it's a topic she doesn't discuss that often, as she has a lot of friends who have a different view. "It's not that we would argue but we have differing views so we shall remain friends and not discuss it," she said.

"It's obviously going to provoke a reaction from both sides and but I was thrilled to be a representative of the pro-life community."

Ms Quinn also warned that she is preparing for a lot of controversy.

"I think there will be a lot of controversy but that needs to happen I think so I'm really excited to see how it's received," she said.

Ms Quinn's comments have been welcomed by the pro-life community across the province.



Kerri Quinn. Photo: ITV.

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Youth hold the key

John Battle



The impact of Covid on society has not just been deaths, hospitalisations and serious illness in the older population. It's also hitting children and young people hard. They are the real victims now in terms of school and educational shutdowns and the loss of job opportunities, future incomes and security. The closure of schools is not easily replaced by virtual home schooling. For primary school children, not only are the basic learning building blocks falling away, the absence of peer group social interaction is already registering as withdrawal and behavioural problems. Older children working in bedrooms worrying about course interruptions and exams are, according to the Children's Commissioner, showing signs of serious mental health problems. The interruption of university and further education is leaving young people losing faith in the future. Young people are increasingly the new poor and are losing any sense of career or sense of vocation. The 'millennials generation' can't get jobs, homes or at present marry and are last in the queue for vaccines, feeling betrayed by the 'baby boomer' generation born in the 1950s and 1960s, now comfortable pensioners. They will leave the younger ones a world of pandemics, conflict and environmental degradation. Moreover, they have been told to pay the debt. Little wonder, as unemployment among young people hits 18.4 per cent and is expected to rise, young people are the new poor, the lonely and the desperate. Over 350,000 young people under 25 are now expected to be 'long term unemployed'.

While 'the forgotten children' locked out of school are attracting some attention there is a danger of a generation being written off as we wait to get free of the virus. But even before the pandemic youth services had seen funding slashed. 763 of 1,759 youth clubs had already closed and many more are in financial jeopardy.

In Leeds we are resetting our Bramley Community Baths project, which employs over 49 local young people as lifeguards, gym and fitness trainers, as an employability centre, training young people in the skills of first aid, life guarding, physical and mental rehabilitation support and health caring in the community.

The health needs of the community are a post-Covid future priority. Training and qualifying young people to be properly equipped and paid to go out into the community to tackle the problems could help reset our economic and social systems. As Pope Francis stresses in *Christus Vivat*, making space to include young people now is the key to our future.

Getting the jab: When will poorest nations get access?

Rory Horner



Covid-19 vaccination programmes are gathering pace in high-income countries, but for much of the world, the future looks bleaker. Although a number of middle-income countries have started rolling out vaccines, widespread vaccination could still be years away.

The first two vaccines authorised in Europe and the United States – made by Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna – aren't well-suited to lower-income countries. Pfizer's has to be stored at -70°C, requiring costly equipment and infrastructure, and is expensive at roughly US\$20 (£14.50) a dose. Moderna's can be kept in a standard refrigerator for up to 30 days, but is even more expensive. Low- and middle-income countries have consequently struck few direct deals to buy these vaccines.

Availability is also a problem. Most of these vaccines have been purchased by high-income countries. Pfizer has offered to provide only 50 million doses of its vaccine to Africa's 1.3 billion people between March and December 2021, while Moderna has none allocated for Africa this year. Fears abound that, for a while at least, the majority of the world will go without.

Covax: not enough and too slow

Backed by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Covax initiative was created to share Covid-19 vaccines around the world, especially with lower-income countries. In 2020, \$2.4 billion was raised, with agreements made to give low- and middle-income countries access to 1.3 billion vaccine doses.

However, the Pfizer vaccine is still the only one that has received WHO emergency use listing, a minimum regulatory requirement for distribution through Covax. A third Western vaccine – developed by Oxford/AstraZeneca – is substantially lower priced, more easily stored and has large-scale manufacturing partnerships in place, as well as an agreement to supply Covax, but is still awaiting approval from the WHO.

The WHO has stated Covax will deliver its first vaccines by the end of January at the earliest. By the end of 2021 it aims to have supplied two billion doses globally.

But even if this promise is met, it will be insufficient. Speaking on behalf of the African Union, South Africa's president Cyril Ramaphosa expressed concern that "the Covax



Surabaya in Indonesia was the first place to provide its citizens with Covid-19 Sinovac vaccine injections, on 15th January

volumes to be released between February and June may not extend beyond the needs of frontline healthcare workers, and may thus not be enough to contain the ever-increasing toll of the pandemic in Africa.

The total doses pledged by Covax to Africa, he noted, will only cover 300 million people, or 20 per cent of the continent's population.

India, China and Russia to the rescue?

Not wanting to wait, higher-income countries have bypassed Covax by cutting direct deals with Covid-19 vaccine manufacturers instead. Increasingly they are being joined by middle-income countries, such as Argentina, Indonesia, South Africa and Turkey, but these nations are turning to different products: vaccines made in India, China and Russia.

The Serum Institute of India (SII), the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, has a licence to produce the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, while Bharat Biotech has developed its own. India approved both products on 3rd January, and the domestic roll-out began on the 16th.

India is also making its vaccine output available to other countries. Bangladesh has approved SII's Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine and has a deal for 30 million doses, while South Africa has announced it will procure one million by the end of January and another half a million in February.

The SII is one of three suppliers providing the African Union with 270 million vaccine doses, with 50 million due to arrive by June 2021. It

will also supply Covax, but the SII Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine is still waiting for regulatory approval from the WHO.

Following its earlier ventures in mask diplomacy, China has been extremely active in using vaccines to build political bridges as well. President Xi Jinping has promised China's vaccines will be available as a global public good, and has also offered financial support to help Latin America and Africa acquire vaccines.

On 31st December, China approved a vaccine developed by state-owned pharmaceutical company Sinopharm for general use. The company projects it will produce one billion doses in 2021, and the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco have all begun rolling out the vaccine, while Egypt and Pakistan have announced deals for 10 million and 1.2 million doses respectively.

Both Turkey and Indonesia have begun vaccination programmes with another Sinovac vaccine, CoronaVac. Thailand and the Philippines will also soon start rolling out this vaccine. Further afield, the state of São Paulo in Brazil has agreed a deal for 46 million doses of CoronaVac and has administered the country's first inoculations with it.

Russia, the first country in the world to approve a Covid-19 vaccine, is also active on vaccine diplomacy. Its Sputnik V jab received initial approval on 11th August. Argentina began rolling out Sputnik V on 24th December, and the vaccine is one of the first for Covid-19 to be administered anywhere in sub-Saharan Africa, in Guinea. Manufacturing partnerships are in place

with Hetero Drugs and other Indian firms, as well as for production in Turkey. The Brazilian state of Bahia has agreed to host further trials of Sputnik V in exchange for getting priority access to 50 million doses.

When will the world be vaccinated?

Increasingly, middle-income countries are accessing and beginning vaccination programmes, but are doing so outside of the WHO's procurement and regulatory mechanisms. While this is allaying fears that they would go completely without, there is some mistrust arising around the testing and reported efficacy of vaccines that haven't yet had WHO approval.

If the world is to reach sufficient vaccine coverage to halt Covid-19, existing vaccines – including those from India, China and Russia – need to prove effective. Accessibility must also increase in low-income countries, not just in middle-income ones. Fears that the virus will mutate beyond these current vaccines must also remain unrealised.

It can't be overstated how enormous the vaccination task is. Although possessing huge manufacturing capacity, India's aim to vaccinate 300 million of its people by August 2021 still means less than a quarter of its population will have had the vaccine.

"For everyone on this planet – or at least 90 per cent – to get it, it's going to be at least 2024," says Adar Poonawalla, CEO of the SII.

Rory Horner is a Senior Lecturer, Global Development Institute, University of Manchester

LOOK HIM IN THE EYES

**AND TELL HIM YOU ALWAYS
KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE.**

Anthony Covid-19 patient

Around 1 in 3 people who have Covid-19 have no symptoms and are spreading it without knowing. Are you absolutely positive you're not one of them? Only go out if essential. Sticking to the rules stops the spread.

STAY HOME ▶ PROTECT THE NHS ▶ SAVE LIVES

Have faith – but it's time to dig deep

CATHOLIC COMMENT

Caroline Farrow



It's no surprise that anxiety levels are currently at their peak. There isn't a single person who is not finding this third period of lockdown much harder and more trying than when it was first introduced in March.

The reasons for this are obvious. Many people are desperately worried about their livelihoods, especially if they are in the travel or retail industry and there seems to be no end in sight, despite the promise of the vaccine.

If like me, you are a parent, you'll be desperately worried about the impact upon your child's education or mental health. My heart broke the other day when my five-year-old plaintively held up a drawing he had done in school "before Covid existed" and expressed how much he was missing his friends.

I count myself among the lucky ones. At least my job affords me the flexibility of being able to work outside of office hours, meaning that although I am exhausted after having to work late into the night, I can at least devote time to my children throughout their school day. As I've said before, you cannot simply plonk your primary school age child in front of a screen and expect them to be able to get on with their tasks independently. If they are to make any kind of progress then they need an adult on hand to act as a full-time teaching assistant, providing assistance and encouragement.

A five year-old is still mastering the art of forming their letters and



School lessons via Zoom are no substitute for the real thing. Credit: ElinaMist

using scissors. Likewise, don't expect an eight-year-old not to be tempted by the lure of YouTube, distracted by Solitaire or whatever else they can get their hands on, instead of listening intently to their teacher drone on about the Anglo-Saxons.

Not that I am knocking teachers: it's hard to deliver the curriculum in an imaginative, interactive and hands-on fashion via Zoom, especially when a lot of the time you can't even see your students.

Friends of mine have told me tales of woe about needing to prioritise their own work and leave their children to get on with it, in order that they can pay the mortgage. "I'm trying not to think about the effect on their education, otherwise I'll get upset", said one friend, "but if we lose the house, it will be even harder for them to catch up."

Another couple I know, who were

previously affluent, have been forced to sell valuable possessions in order to pay the bills and are now at the point of needing to sell their house, although its unlikely that any mortgage lender will take them on.

Compared to situations such as these, we feel relatively lucky; while it's clear that the children's education is suffering, we are at least better placed than many in being able to help them catch up, and neither do we stand to lose our home. That said, life does seem pretty bleak, in that there is little to look forward to in the near to medium term future.

Part of this stems from the weather. During the summer we were at least able to go for regular walks in the afternoons once school had ended, whereas now, there's only about half an hour before it gets dark. No doubt, once the weather improves, many people's

moods will lift.

With no hope of a summer holiday, or even being able to meet up with our friends in the garden and a huge amount of uncertainty hanging over our futures, it's not surprising that in a recent survey over 42 per cent of adults surveyed by the National Office for Statistics reported high levels of anxiety and said that they felt less happy, less satisfied and were less inclined to think that things they were doing were worthwhile.

But before we get thoroughly depressed, there are still many reasons to be cheerful. If coronavirus had happened in previous generations, then the experience would be altogether different, with families being forced to live an almost monastic existence in total isolation. At least there is the internet to keep us entertained and, importantly, connected.

What lockdown is demonstrating is that the internet is a poor substitute for real-life interaction and if anything, we might actually become less, rather than more, dependent on our phones and tablets.

Hard though it is, we really need to keep viewing lockdown and this enforced isolation as a blessing and an opportunity to really reconnect with God, especially as once again we approach Lent.

Even though I have more demands on my time, the rhythm of the day means that I am now more able to fit prayer into my daily routine and am going to try to make 2021 the year that I deepen my relationship with God.

I talked a few weeks ago about grasping the moments of joy where you can – this week's snowfall has been one such timely moment, reminding us that the rhythm of the

seasons are as constant as God's love, and of the benevolence of Creation.

Perhaps inevitably, with so much global instability, there has been a lot of apocalyptic chatter on social media, which can also add to the sense of fearful anticipation. While we always do need to be prepared for the fact that Jesus could come back tomorrow, we are also told that this will be like a 'thief in the night' and that nobody knows the day or the hour. Every generation on the precipice of enormous change feels that perhaps this is a portent of the 'End Times' and that the tribulation is occurring, but even if this were to be the case, then as believing Christians, we ought to have nothing to fear.

We must use this time productively, to reinforce both our faith and our family bonds, and realise that tough though things are, we are being given an opportunity to pause and to take stock of what truly counts.

As Christians we really need to remember that our mission is to pass on the joy and the hope of the Gospel – trusting that things will get better, even if not in this life but in the next. Perhaps God is giving us this time to help evangelise and encourage those who are anxious and looking for answers.

On the day of judgement, when we are asked what we did to get to know and love Him better during the lockdown, when we had all that spare time, we need to have a better answer than "watched Netflix and complained on Facebook".

Caroline Farrow is a Catholic journalist and UK campaign director and media commentator for Citizens Go

There's still time to enter Columban competition 2021

SCHOOLS MEDIA COMPETITION

We are looking for students (aged 14-18 inclusive) to submit an original piece of writing or an original image on the theme:

'LET'S CREATE A WORLD WITHOUT RACISM'

The winning entries will be published in the *Far East* magazine and online on Columban websites in Ireland and Britain and shared on Columban social media. This is a chance to engage with an issue that addresses equality, justice, inclusion and also draws on faith and personal experience.

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“We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life.” POPE FRANCIS, June 2020

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www.columbancompetition.com
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THE COMPETITION IS BEING LAUNCHED ON MONDAY 5TH OCTOBER 2020

COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES

There's still time to enter the Columban schools media competition 2021 – but with just a month to go before the competition closes on 20th February, you will have to get a move on producing your writing and image entries.

This year the theme is 'Let's Create A World Without Racism' and it is open to students aged 14-18 years old. All details can be found on: www.columbancompetition.com.

Entries have already been received from schools the length and breadth of the country – from St Thomas More in Nuneaton to St Gregory's Oxford to Worth School in West Sussex. So far, the Columban have received roughly the same number of articles and images.

Winners will be announced on 15th March 2021 and there are cash prizes of £300 for winning written and image entries. Two separate competitions will be judged, one for students in Ireland and one in Britain and high-profile judges from the world of journalism have been secured.

The theme is very relevant in the lead up to Racial Justice Sunday on 31st January.

Reflecting on a year that saw a global pandemic disproportionately impact on ethnic minority groups and a series of mass protests in the US in response to high profile killings such as that of George Floyd, the lead Bishop for Racial Justice, Bishop Paul McAleenan, says: "It's not enough to simply denounce racism. This is a time to act."

Bishop Paul echoes the words of Pope Francis pointing out that instances of racism continue to shame us and show that "our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we think."

He adds: "Racism is a sin and a violation of human dignity in which we are all complicit. As Catholics we need to acknowledge and confront our own failings – as individuals and as a Church."

"Every single one of our parishes, schools and organisations has a responsibility to actively practise anti-racism in all aspects of our mission."

"We need to address the lack of visible diversity at every level, so that people can see themselves, their race, their culture and their history in the Church's life." See: www.columbancompetition.com

God helped me reach my pinnacle says football's cult hero

Nick Benson

Football is temporary but faith is eternal, Wycombe Wanderers' Adebayo Akinfenwa has said.

The experienced striker revealed how important faith is in his life and for the Championship side, with many of the players praying together before games and ensuring that they support each other through good times and bad.

"There's a strong faith that runs through the Wycombe changing room and it's nice to be able to discuss that with your peers," Akinfenwa told TalkSport.

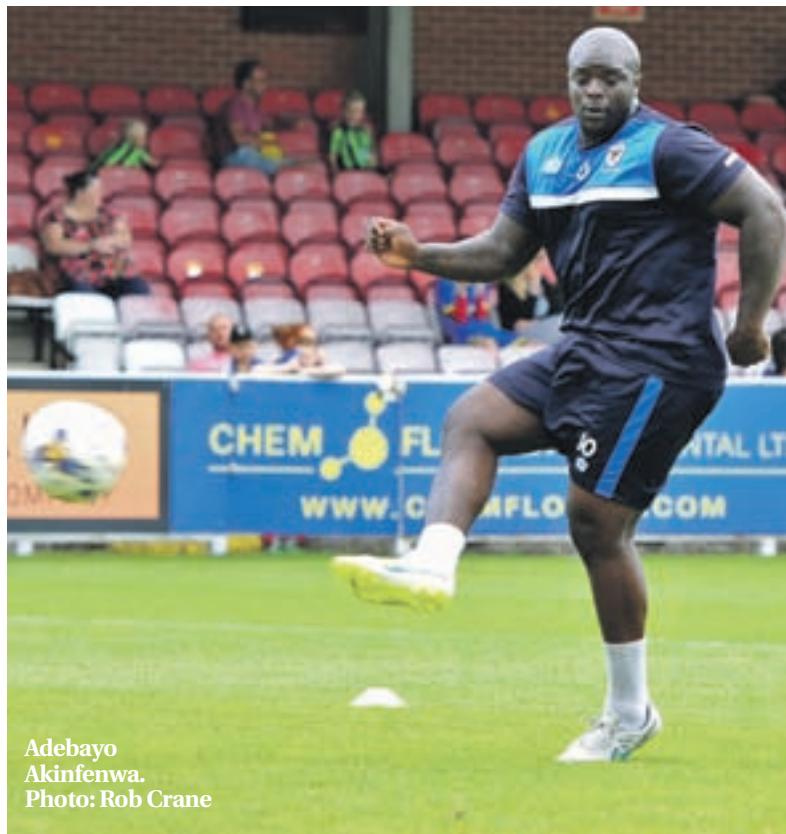
Recalling the famous moment fellow Wycombe striker and Christian Alex Samuel knelt beside him in prayer on the Wembley turf after the side were promoted to the Championship following a hard-fought victory against Oxford, Akinfenwa said it will always remain a "special" memory.

"That moment with me and Alex Samuel is something that will hold itself in such high regard for myself," he said. "It wasn't something that was planned whatsoever.

"I went off to give thanks [to God] by myself and then I felt his hand on my shoulder. It was a special moment."

Akinfenwa, who is nicknamed 'the Beast' due to his hulking physique, credited his faith for the major role it has played in him reaching the "pinnacle" of his career – playing Championship football.

"You start getting older and think to yourself, maybe I won't get to the



Adebayo Akinfenwa.
Photo: Rob Crane

Championship, but I've got there at 38 and trust me, I'm going to enjoy it," he said.

"My faith has played as big a role as the ability has taken me," Akinfenwa said, contemplating the journey he has taken to reach this goal.

"Football is temporary. One day it will come to an end and I'll have to

hang up my boots, but my faith is with me for eternal.

"When there's been good moments and when there's been bad moments, my faith has always been there.

"My life is testament to that, in the sense that at the age of 38 I reached the pinnacle of my career and that's down to my faith and belief."

Halifax star turns to faith to push him on to next match

Halifax Town defender Tom Bradbury says that his Christian faith goes hand-in-hand with his passion for football.

The 22-year-old said his faith has played a "huge" part both in his personal life and his professional life.

"There's no football without faith now, and there's no faith without football," he told *The Halifax Courier*.

"Football's my platform to express my faith, and live through my faith."

Bradbury said football is extremely important in his life but his faith is "just as important, if not bigger".

"The way I would describe it would be it gives me peace, and it takes the pressure off me in terms of football," he said.

"I don't just have my faith for that, but I believe that God has a plan for my life, he's chosen me for a reason and he's given me this talent for football to express myself.

"The plan is to get as high as I can

and then spread the word, because I'm forever grateful to him."

The youngster revealed that he used to suffer with his nerves prior to games but his faith has helped to alleviate those feelings of stress and worry.

"It's not about that anymore, it's



playing to enjoy myself, believing you're good enough and knowing that God's got big things for you," he said.

"When the timing's right, I'll achieve those things."

Bradbury revealed that his faith also pushes him to better himself and not fall into bad habits.

"Even little things like when you want to watch a film and not stretch and prepare for the next game, God tells me to get my stretching done because I've got another game," he said. "It makes me a better person, I try not to sin. They're both entwined. They come as a pair."

Bradbury said he hasn't always been religious but since finding God – just three months before he received his first professional contract – his faith has changed his life.

"He's honestly changed my life and I couldn't imagine having my life without God," he said.



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Minister in pledge to help prisons beat virus

Prisons Minister Lucy Frazer has pledged to “double down” on efforts to control the spread of Covid-19 in prisons as she paid tribute to staff who had been the “crucial factor” in helping to curb prison infections.

Prisons have introduced tough measures including routinely testing staff and new prisoners and stopping social visits. Vaccinations for prisoners had also begun.

In addition, stringent safety measures are in place to curb infection, including providing PPE to staff and creating an additional 1,200 temporary cells to enable better social distancing.

Prisoners now can see their families only via secure video calls unless a compassionate visit is required in certain circumstances.

However, staff are helping offenders to keep in touch through phone calls, with more than 1,500 mobile handsets and extra phone credit distributed.

Specially trained staff are also supporting prisoners with mental health issues, as well as continuing with rehabilitation work, in-cell education and exercise.

Ms Frazer said: “Our decisive action is limiting the spread of the virus in our prisons. But this is largely thanks to the tireless efforts of our dedicated officers.

“I am proud of our staff, who are keeping prisoners safe.”

“As always, my priority remains to limit the spread of the virus to save lives and prevent the NHS from being overwhelmed.”

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Local church partners help Feed the Hungry distribute food in Coventry.

Say Halo to a new way to solve city food crisis

Coventry Foodbank is to become part of Feed the Hungry, a charity which worked with other food provision organisations in the city as it looks to end the need for emergency food.

The move will see a 25,000 square foot warehouse in Coventry repurposed by Feed the Hungry into the Halo Centre, providing long-term solutions to the current food crisis.

The Halo Centre will bring together local and national partnerships to benefit the people of Coventry.

Day-to-day food bank support will continue as before, with people struggling to afford food still able to access emergency food at the food bank's centres, while that longer term work to address the reasons why people don't have enough money for food is underway. People will also be able to access support with business mentors, work clubs, clothes recycling, and advice on welfare, debt, health and wellbeing.

The food bank will continue to be

part of the Trussell Trust's network, working with food banks across the UK to implement the best projects, partnerships and networks needed to end the need for emergency food.

This month Trussell Trust reported a 47 per cent rise in food parcels given out by its volunteers between April and September 2020. The charity revealed that during the first six months of the pandemic it distributed 1.2m food parcels, of which 470,000 went to families with children.

Gwyn Williams, operations director for Feed the Hungry said: “The Halo Project wants to transform the most deprived communities and bring life and hope by walking with hurting people. We believe that journey is most effectively enacted when the local churches act together. This is not simply about getting food to people, it's a holistic approach to support.”

Coventry Foodbank was established in 2011 as part of the Trussell Trust national network of food banks.

Through its 17 citywide food distribution centres, it rapidly became one of the largest food banks in the Trussell Trust's network across the country.

Williams added: “The Covid pandemic has impacted us all – but those living in or near the poverty line have been disproportionately impacted. The great work of campaigners such as Marcus Rashford have highlighted the need to provide emergency food, and we are hugely grateful to the Trussell Trust for the work they have been doing locally and across the country to meet that need.

“But the solutions must be long term to ensure those families are given the opportunity to not only survive but build a sustainable future for themselves.”

Gavin Kibble, founder of the Coventry Foodbank, said: “We are very proud of our impact in Coventry. But the needs are greater now than ever – we need not only a short term solution but a holistic and long term one, too.”

More help on way for mental health

Nick Benson

Public Health England (PHE) has launched a new campaign to support the nation's mental health. The move comes as half of adults say they are more worried during this current lockdown than in March 2020.

The Better Health – Every Mind Matters campaign will support people to take action to look after their mental health and wellbeing and help support others, such as family and friends.

A new survey commissioned by PHE has revealed that almost half of respondents (49 per cent) felt that the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted negatively on their mental health and wellbeing.

Significant numbers said they had been experiencing more anxiety, stress,

sleep problems and low mood during the pandemic.

Missing friends and family, loneliness, uncertainty about the future and financial and employment worries were the key reasons for low mood.

The good news is that three-fifths remained hopeful for the future.

Many adults (75 per cent) said they had or were planning to they take steps to look after their mental wellbeing, with exercising regularly (32 per cent) eating well (29 per cent) and talking more to family and friends (28 per cent) being the main actions.

The Better Health – Every Mind Matters campaign encourages people to get a free NHS-approved Mind Plan from the Every Mind Matters website.

By answering five simple questions, adults will get a personalised action plan with practical tips to help them deal with stress and anxiety, boost their mood, sleep better and feel more in control.

The Every Mind Matters Covid-19 hub also includes practical tips and support on how adults can deal with uncertainty, how to cope with money and job worries and how to look after both their own and their family's mental wellbeing while staying at home.

• For urgent help with mental health see nhs.uk/urgentmentalhealth.

For more information on the Better Health – Every Mind Matters campaign, see: www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/

Fraud warning as bailiff scams on the increase

The Government is urging the public to be vigilant as fraudsters are posing as bailiffs and enforcement officers to demand money from victims.

It warned that scammers are phoning members of the public, posing as County Court bailiffs, High Court Enforcement Officers (HCEOs) and Certificated Enforcement Agents (CEAs). In a number of cases they claim to be a bailiff at Northampton County Court.

They are targeting people with a County Court judgment for debt.

The fraudsters claim that the person owes money, and demands that they transfer funds into a bank account.

HM Courts and Tribunal Service does contact people by phone to discuss taking payments over the phone. However, it stressed that it will never telephone someone to ask for their bank details or telephone someone to ask them to make a bank transfer using their sort code and account number.

If anyone claiming to be a county court bailiff, an HCEO or CEA calls asking for this information, it said people should not make any payment and should not provide their bank details.

If you believe you have been a victim of this scam you should report it to: <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk> or call 0300 123 2040.

Mortgage problems to soar, warn lenders

Default rates on mortgages and other types of non-mortgage lending are expected to increase in the first quarter of 2021, a Bank of England survey of lenders hsa said.

The Bank's Credit Conditions Survey said that lenders were also reporting that the lengths of interest-free periods on credit cards for balance transfers decreased in the final months of 2020.

Figures released last week show 130,000 mortgage deferrals were in place at the end of December 2020, down from a peak of 1.8 million in June 2020. Mortgage payment holidays are still available, until 31st March.

TV licence evasion ‘to remain offence’

The Government said it has dropped plans to decriminalise TV licence fee evasion but will keep the idea under consideration.

It is also looking at alternatives to the licence fee for 2027, when the BBC's royal charter expires.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said that, while a criminal sanction feels “outdated and wrong” in the current public service broadcasting landscape, moving to a civil enforcement system risked being seen as an “invitation” to evade the fee and could result in those who decline to pay being rewarded.



Tolkien's former home in Oxford
Photo: Breckon and Breckon.
Inset: Tolkien.
Photo: Frazio Dalla Casa

Hollywood stars back campaign to save Tolkien's house

Nick Benson

People from around the globe, including a list of Hollywood stars, have joined with award-winning author Julia Golding to launch a crowdfunding campaign to try and save 20 Northmoor Road, the Oxford house in which famed Catholic author J.R.R. Tolkien wrote *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, in advance of its being put on the market for sale.

The initiative, Project Northmoor, aims to purchase the house and set up a literary centre in honour of Tolkien, one of the most beloved literary writers of the 20th Century.

Tolkien was a devout Catholic whose faith influenced and penetrated his writings, and preserving his legacy and the importance of his works is a priority for Catholics.

Sir Ian McKellen, who earned an Oscar nomination for his role as wizard Gandalf in the 2001 film, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, is helping to gather a new 'fellowship' of funders to purchase the house, with a crowdfunding campaign opened at www.projectnorthmoor.org.

To kick off the project, McKellen and a host of celebrities and others associated with the Tolkien universe came together for a special video. Among them Emmy Award-winning actor Martin Freeman, who plays Bilbo Baggins in *The Hobbit* trilogy; music legend Annie Lennox, who wrote and performed the Oscar win-

ning theme *Into the West*, from *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*; actor John Rhys-Davies, who plays Gimli in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy; the Emmy and Tony Award-winning actor Sir Derek Jacobi, who stars in *Tolkien* and narrates the Farmer Giles of Ham audiobook; and illustrator John Howe, whose work includes *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*.

Other notables include Lord Rowan Williams of Oystermouth, the former Archbishop of Canterbury; Joseph Lconte, author of *A Hobbit, a Wardrobe, and the Great War*; and Cliff Broadway, also known as Quickbeam, a writer, actor, Tolkien fan and staff member of TheOneRing.net.

Tolkien's Oxford house is largely unchanged since it was built in 1924. It features six large bedrooms upstairs, one bedroom on the ground floor, and a spacious garden. The Tolkien family moved there in 1930 and stayed for 17 years, during which time Tolkien wrote both his fantasy masterpieces. It is also where he hosted fellow Catholic author C.S. Lewis. The historic home is located just a few miles from his home parish.

Project leader Julian Golding says this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity, and he aims to raise roughly US\$6 million from Tolkien fans around the world to purchase the house and set up a Tolkien centre. The centre will be financially self-sustaining once

established.

Golding admits it is a tough target: "To raise six million dollars in three months is a huge challenge," Golding told *The Catholic Universe*. "However, we need only to look at Frodo and Sam's journey from Rivendell to Mount Doom, which took that same amount of time – and we are inspired that we can do this too!"

Actor Sir Ian McKellen added: "We cannot achieve this without the support of the worldwide community of Tolkien fans, our fellowship of funders."

As a charitable venture, the mission of Project Northmoor is to promote Tolkien's work, allow fantasy writers and artists to come together to write, learn and create, and preserve the fascinating house for future generations to enjoy. The facility would also have an engaging online presence to bring into the house's programme those who cannot travel to Oxford.

Fans may donate to Project Northmoor at: www.projectnorthmoor.org through to 15th March.

If the campaign to purchase the house is successful, donors will have an array of benefits: from having their name listed in the Red Book of funders that will sit in Tolkien's study, to being invited to VIP events and even overnight stays – depending on the level of donation.

• **For more information, see: www.projectnorthmoor.org**

University axes Chaucer in favour of 'decolonised' literature

A university has been criticised after it announced it would no longer teach Chaucer and other medieval literature, replacing the classics with modules on race and sexuality.

The University of Leicester's says the new modules will cover texts "students expect" to study.

The new syllabus removes *The Canterbury Tales* and Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf* in an attempt to de-

liver a "decolonised" curriculum devoted to diversity.

However, the plans have met with widespread criticism, with critics in the literary world calling the move part of the 'woke' culture and saying students will miss out on in-depth knowledge of English classics.

New modules described as "excitingly innovative" would cover: "A chronological literary history, a se-

lection of modules on race, ethnicity, sexuality and diversity, a decolonised curriculum, and new employability modules."

Other texts to be axed include John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and works by Christopher Marlowe and John Donne. However, Shakespeare's works will remain in place.

The changes place 60 jobs under threat.

Your opinions: Letters to the Editor

We want to hear your views on the big Catholic issues.

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Please keep letters concise; we reserve the right to edit.

Vatican should be brave on Biden

It was a shame that the Vatican ordered the US bishops' conference (USCCB) to hold back a statement on incoming President Joe Biden that called attention to his pledge to pursue anti-life and anti-family policies that would advance "moral evils" in the areas of "abortion, contraception, marriage, and gender." The statement was to be released on Wednesday but was embargoed. Part of the statement said: "So, I must point out that our new President has pledged to pursue certain policies that would advance moral evils and threaten human life and dignity, most seriously in the areas of abortion, contraception, marriage, and gender. Of deep concern is the liberty of the Church and the freedom of believers to live according to their consciences."

'Abortion is a direct attack on life that also wounds the woman and undermines the family. It is not only a private matter, it raises troubling and fundamental questions of fraternity, solidarity, and inclusion in the human community. It is also a matter of social justice. We cannot ignore the reality that abortion rates are much higher among the poor and minorities, and that the procedure is regularly used to eliminate children who would be born with disabilities.'

Biden's choice of a radical pro-abortionist as Vice President, a radical pro-abortionist as head of medical care and a deputy who is a man who identifies as a woman bodes ill for the moral future of the USA. Like John F Kennedy before him, Biden's 'Catholicism' may be more Joe's version of Catholicism rather than the real thing.
Name and address supplied

Little choice when faced with two evils

The scenes from Washington last week, as a caring, compassionate, thoughtful – dear we say, decent? – man was inaugurated as President, highlights perfectly the challenges of being a Catholic in our increasingly chaotic political world.

On paper, Catholics should have rejoiced as Biden took office. He is one of our own, a proud son of Ireland and a man who seems to understand immediately the societal challenges of our time. Every part of my being wanted Biden to beat Trump – a man I saw as a braggart who was aggressive, sexist, possibly racist; a man, it seemed, with-

out a decent bone in his body.

Yet Biden's clear support of abortion, despite his Catholic faith, so troubles me that I find my support for him wavering already as he puts liberal abortion backers into prominent positions in his cabinet.

And as the detested Trump goes off to contemplate his post White House life in the shadows, I find myself yearning for the pro-life stance he took throughout his four years in office.

It begs the question, can you really be a good Catholic and back Trump, and all the horrors he stood for and supported? And at the same time, can you equally be a good Catholic and back Biden when he appears so aggressively pro-abortion?

Life for a Catholic in the public square has never been so hard!
Patrick Delaney, Co Antrim

Time for the old to take debt burden

John Battle's prescient column (*Catholic Universe*, 22/1/21) on the growing tension between the old and young certainly makes me think. Born at the end of World War II I am one of the fortunate 'baby boomers' whose life steadily improved through the 'peace' of the 1950/60s, and with all the opportunities enabling me now to be fairly comfortable during the third lockdown.

I have even missed the dangers of working in the NHS at this time.

While during my 45 years of hospital work we had some bad flu epidemics, they only lasted a few weeks, and with more beds and very little need for intensive care, there weren't the public expectations we have now.

To talk of being a burden as we get older is understandable, but we are all a burden during some part of our lives, and it is our human duty to help others when we can, and accept help when we need it.

As the pandemic wanes, it will be our generation's duty to help as much as we can, not only our own children and grandchildren, but others less fortunate, too. Those of us on reasonable pensions and mortgage free, must be prepared to shoulder significant tax increases to fund the Covid crisis and reduce the national debt that the younger generation will inherit from us.

Dr Steve Brennan Thornhill, Hope Valley

"Those of us on reasonable pensions and mortgage free, must be prepared to shoulder significant tax increases to fund the Covid crisis and reduce the national debt that the younger generation will inherit from us."

IN BRIEF

Vatican homeless receive vaccines

The Vatican health service has begun offering Covid-19 vaccines to homeless people who live in Holy See-owned shelters.

The first 25 shelter residents were vaccinated last weekend, with more due to receive the vaccine in the coming days.

Recipients were all aged over 60 and most had serious health problems. They live at the Vatican's newest shelter, the Palazzo Migliori, which is staffed by members of the Community of Sant'Egidio, and in the separate shelters for women and for men run by the Missionaries of Charity.

Most are Italian but the group also included people from Georgia and Romania.

One, named Mario, praised the initiative: "We thank the pope for the gift he's given us. Now I have added security."

Carlo Santoro, a member of the Sant'Egidio Community who helps at the shelter, said that there had been a number of cases of Covid-19 in the shelters.

Covid-19 calls a halt to Lenten retreat

The pope's annual Lenten retreat with Roman Curia officials has been cancelled because of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

However, Pope Francis has invited those who normally participate in the retreat – cardinals living in Rome and the heads of Vatican offices – to arrange for their own personal retreat in prayer, said the Vatican press office.

Officials usually come together for the spiritual exercises at the Pauline Fathers' retreat and conference centre in Ariccia, 20 miles south east of Rome.

The week set aside for each person to arrange for his own retreat will be from 21st-26th February. Pope Francis will follow the same schedule, which means he will not have any appointments that week, including general audiences.

Pope Francis did not attend last year's retreat because of a mild cold. It was held just days before the Italian Government enforced its first lockdown to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Pair guilty in first fraud court case

A former president of the Vatican bank and his lawyer have been found guilty of money laundering and embezzling millions of euros from property sales.

Angelo Caloia, who served as president of the Institute for the Works of Religion 1999 - 2009, and his lawyer, Gabriele Liuzzo, were sentenced to 8 years and 11 months for skimming profits from the sale of Vatican properties.

It is the first court case held in the Vatican since it applied international standards for investigating and prosecuting money laundering and fraud.



Sciatica keeps Pope away from Word of God Mass

Archbishop Rino Fisichella presides over Mass marking Sunday of the Word of God in St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican.

Pope Francis had been scheduled to celebrate the Mass but was not present due to a bout of sciatica, a condition with which he has suffered for many years, a Vatican spokesman stressed.

Photo: Romano Siciliani

Pope urges nations to create world free from nuclear arms

Carol Glatz

Pope Francis marked the day the United Nations' new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons came into force to make a renewed plea for all nations to scrap their nuclear arsenals.

The treaty is the first legally binding international agreement to prohibit signatory states from the development, testing, production, stockpiling, stationing, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as assisting with and encouraging such activities.

Nuclear weapons have an "indiscriminate impact" as they can "strike large numbers of people in a short space of time and provoke long-lasting damage to the environment," the pope said during his weekly general audience, livestreamed from the library of the Apostolic Palace.

The pope "strongly encouraged" all nations and people "to work with determination to promote the conditions necessary for a world without nuclear arms, contributing to the advance-



Archbishop Paul Gallagher pictured at the UN in 2017 when he signed the treaty on behalf of the Vatican

ment of peace and multilateral cooperation, which humanity greatly needs today."

The Holy See was the among the first to ratify the treaty, which was approved by 122 UN members. Netherlands was the only country to

vote against it, while Singapore abstained.

Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Vatican secretary for relations with states, signed it at the United Nations in New York the first day it was open for signatures in September 2017.

The treaty comes into force on 22nd January, three months after the required 50th nation ratified the historic document, which resulted from months of negotiations led by non-nuclear countries.

The Holy See was a key participant in the process that led to drafting the treaty, providing encouragement and advice to negotiators, according to Jesuit Father Drew Christiansen, a nuclear weapons expert who is professor of ethics at Georgetown University in the USA.

The nuclear nations and those under the US nuclear umbrella opposed the measure and played little if any role in negotiations.

The countries known to possess nuclear weapons are the USA, Russia, China, United Kingdom, France, Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea.

Data from various sources, including the US Department of State and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, show that the nine countries hold an estimated 13,440 nuclear weapons.

Francis asks us all to walk a mile in the trafficked's shoes

Pope Francis has encouraged people to put themselves in the shoes of victims of human trafficking and not to pass judgement on them.

He was sure that once a person learns about these victims' experiences, "it will be impossible to remain indifferent when we hear talk about boats adrift, ignored and even driven back from our shores," he wrote in the preface to a new book.

The pope's remarks appear in the book, *I Am Joy: A Cry of Freedom from the Slavery of Trafficking*. The book, was released on 27th January. Its pub-

lication is on the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking – 8th February

Written by Mariapia Bonanate, the book offers a first-person narrative of a woman from Benin City named Joy. Trusting the advice of a friend, Joy leaves for a promised job in Italy, hopeful she would be able to work, study and send money home.

Her journey quickly unravels however, and she recounts her ordeal as she survives a desert crossing, violence and deprivation in Libyan detention camps and then risks capsizing on

an overcrowded boat.

Once on Italy's shore, Joy is forced into prostitution, extorted with a huge debt and threatened by her 'madam'.

However, she never lost her faith in God, whom she felt was always in her heart and by her side, and she eventually found help at a safe house in Caserta for trafficking victims.

In the book's preface, the pope said that Joy's 'Way of the Cross' is just one tile embedded in a vast mosaic of other tiles – other lives of so many vulnerable women and men – that are invisible to others.

Anonymous and unseen, these victims are exploited by 'unscrupulous traffickers who grow rich off the misfortune of others, taking advantage of people's desperation, subjecting them to their authority,' he wrote.

Pope Francis then poses a question to the book's readers, asking, 'How much does this reprehensible reality of countless young women forced onto the streets as sex workers result from the fact that many men, here, request these "services" and are willing to buy another person, crushing them in their inalienable dignity?'



Mourners gather near the coffin of a man killed in the bombing
Photo: Alaa Al-Marjani, Reuters

Baghdad blast casts fresh doubt over pope's Iraq visit

Pope Francis expressed his condolences to Iraqi President Barham Salih after two suicide bombings in Baghdad claimed the lives of dozens of people in a crowded commercial area.

In a telegram sent to Salih, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, said the pope "was deeply saddened to learn" of the attack at a clothing market in Tayaran Square. "In deploring this senseless act of brutality, he prays for the deceased victims and their families, for the injured and for the emergency personnel in attendance," Cardinal Parolin said.

"Pope Francis invokes upon the nation and its people the blessing of the Most High," he said.

The two bombers blew themselves up in the crowded market area after being pursued by security forces.

Khalid Al-Mahna, spokesman for the Iraqi Interior Ministry, said one

bomber feigned illness to attract a crowd before detonating his explosives. The second bomber detonated himself as people came to help those wounded by the first explosion.

While no group has taken credit, it is suspected the attack was carried out by a group associated with the Islamic State.

Despite the Iraqi government claiming victory over the terrorist organisation in 2017, remnants of the Islamic State continue to carry out smaller attacks on security forces in the country.

The attack also raised concerns about the pope's safety during his planned visit to Iraq March 5-8.

In an interview with Italy's Canale 5 broadcast on 10th January, Pope Francis said that although he is still moving forward with the planned visit, he did not know "if it will happen."

Manchester's own 'Mother Teresa' on path to sainthood

Pope Francis advanced the sainthood causes of eight men and women, including English Sister Elizabeth Prout, founder of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion.

The pope signed the decrees on 21st January during a meeting with Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes.

Sr Prout was recognised for her 'heroic virtue' after working with poor women and children in 19th-century Manchester, England.

She set up the Sisters of the Cross and Passion, which now has more than 300 sisters working in the UK,



Sr Prout was recognised for her 'heroic virtue' and work in Manchester

Ireland, the USA, Botswana, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Peru and Chile.

She left the Church of England and became a Catholic nun in her 20s after she was influenced by Blessed Dominic Barberi, an Italian Passionist priest working in England. She died in 1864 in St Helens from tuberculosis at the age of 43.

Among the other decrees, the pope recognised the martyrdom of Fr Giovanni Fornasini – a 29-year-old Italian priest who was killed "in hatred of the faith" in 1944, during Nazi Germany's occupation of Italy during World War II.

He served as a parish priest near Bologna, a city of strategic military importance during the war. He aided those affected by Allied bombings, digging people out of the rubble and offering shelter to those made homeless. He provided Christian burials to

Italians murdered by the Nazis and persuaded German soldiers to spare the lives of at least 30 people taken prisoner in revenge for partisan attacks against German positions.

He was found shot a week after a massacre in nearby Marzabotto, where at least 770 Italian civilians were killed by Germany's Waffen-SS forces.

The pope also recognized the heroic virtues of Jerome Lejeune, a French Catholic physician and researcher who was one of the three discoverers of the extra chromosome that causes Down syndrome.

Born in 1926 in Montrouge, France, he established the first specialised clinic for Down syndrome patients at Necker Children's Hospital near Paris. He devoted his life to protecting unborn children with Down syndrome from so-called 'therapeutic abortion', which he regarded as a grave corruption of medicine.

He was a strong opponent of abortion and unrestricted experimentation on human embryos.

In 1989, he established the Jerome Lejeune Foundation to continue his work in research, advocacy and health care for those with intellectual disabilities. He died of lung cancer at the age of 67 in 1994.

The formal recognition of a miracle attributed to his intercession will be needed for beatification.

Others recognised included Adelaide Bonolis, an Italian laywoman, who established summer camps for at-risk youth; Santiago Masarnau Fernandez, who established the lay Society of St Vincent de Paul in Spain; Italian Father Michele Arcangelo Vinti, a famed confessor; Italian Father Ruggero Caputo, known for his devotion to the Eucharist; and Pasquale Canzii, an Italian seminarian who died at 15.

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World News

Racism: the inheritance of slavery

Fr Shay Cullen



The most powerful and richest nation on the planet is still arguably the poorest in moral values and social and racial equality. It is suffering a shock to its democratic systems. The days when black people in the southern states of America had to live segregated from white people may be over, but the racist attitudes still persist. President Joe Biden has a mighty challenge ahead of him.

Racism has many facets and causes much hurt and social unrest. It is exclusion and exists in the minds and hearts, beliefs and attitudes of a single dominating group that treats the other group as inferior. It perpetuates itself everywhere when social and economic and cultural equality is absent. Racism and discrimination oppress another group by exposing their economic weakness. The dominant deny the other the opportunity of equality and education to rise out of poverty. It is a vicious circle of the oppressed.

When the Black American community did prosper and proved them wrong, they were annihilated by the white supremacist groups. That is what happened in the thriving, prosperous black community in Tulsa, Oklahoma, whose members were well off and owned property, banks and businesses and had a superior school system for higher education. Some rich families owned their own airplanes. In 1921, racial violence broke out and the community was attacked by white supremacists. They bombed 35 city blocks, killed 300 black people, seriously injured 800 more, and thousands were left homeless.

It goes on elsewhere. In South Africa it was not the majority in charge but a minority, the descendants of the former European rulers. In the Philippines, the indigenous people of different ethnic heritage and darker skin color, such as the Aeta or Manobo people, suffer racial discrimination and racial slurs and bullying. Most remain in poverty. In Myanmar, the ethnic group of Rohingya has been so discriminated against that accusations of genocide are levelled against the Myanmar ruling class.

European colonialists imported captured people from Africa into North America. Over 300 years, 13 million Africans were shipped across the Atlantic in slave ships. The black descendants of these slaves are today's victims of institutional racism. It is this culture of exclusion, discrimination and racial bias that is the open wound of America today.

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US Church plunged into unholy row after bishops attack Biden

Rob Beswick

Deep splits have arisen within the US Catholic Church already over how it should respond to the presidency of Catholic Joe Biden.

While congratulating Mr Biden on his inauguration, the official response from the the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) was decidedly icy in parts, with its president, Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles, picking apart the new president's support for abortion and gay rights as reasons to suggest deep rifts exist between him and the Church.

However, staunch Biden admirers and two of the US's most senior clerics, Cardinal Blase Cupich, the Archbishop of Chicago, and Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark rejected the official Church line. Cupich turned to Twitter to launch a scathing criticism of the USCCB, suggesting that the official statement had not been signed off by the rest of the conference and that Gomez and a handful of other clerics had set out a Church position without discussing it with their colleagues.

Cardinal Cupich said that the statement was "ill-considered" and that it had "come as a surprise to many bishops, who received it just hours before it was released."

"It was crafted without the involvement of the Administrative Committee, a collegial consultation that is a normal course for statements that represent and enjoy the considered endorsement of the American bishops," he added.

Cardinal Cupich then added a host of his own thoughts about President Biden, none of which tallied with the official position but which suggested the Church should get full square behind the new man in the White House.

Other bishops told the media that they were aware Cardinal Cupich had pushed for a supportive pro-Biden statement, and that he spent most of the day before last week's inauguration trying to get other bishops to support an alternative to the official line. Cupich pointed out that much of Biden's initial forays were virtually copied from the Church's own manifesto, particularly on social justice, tackling racism and immigration.

In his defence, Archbishop Gomez stressed his job was not to be political,

“

“What is unprecedented, is the situation of a president of the United States who professed a devout and heartfelt Catholicism and yet was publicly committed to facilitating grave moral evils in abortion...”



President Biden delivers an address from the White House, overlooked by a portrait of Abraham Lincoln

but to preach the truth. He said that while there are numerous issues of concern to the bishops' conference, abortion is the pre-eminent issue that cannot be ignored.

While acknowledging that much of Biden's early work was to be applauded, particularly his clear stance on Covid-19, rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement and the World Health Organisation and his offer to help migrants, "abortion is a direct attack on life that also wounds the woman and undermines the family," said Archbishop Gomez.

"It is not only a private matter, it raises troubling and fundamental questions of fraternity, solidarity, and inclusion in the human community. It is also a matter of social justice.

"We cannot ignore the reality that abortion rates are much higher among

the poor and minorities, and that the procedure is regularly used to eliminate children who would be born with disabilities."

"Rather than impose further expansions of abortion and contraception, as he has promised, I am hopeful that the new President will work with the Church and others of good will to address the complicated cultural and economic factors that are driving abortion and discouraging families," he added.

"My hope, too, is that we can work together to finally put in place a coherent family policy in this country, one that acknowledges the crucial importance of strong marriages and parenting to the well-being of children and the stability of communities," Gomez said. "If the President, with full respect for the Church's religious

freedom, were to engage in this conversation, it would go a long way toward restoring the civil balance and healing our country's needs."

Others also leapt to defend Gomez. He had showed "episcopal courage" in releasing the statement, according to papal biographer and long-time Church observer George Weigel.

In a dig at some established northeast US Church figures, Weigel added that Gomez's message came at a time when others seemed to be demanding "a reprise of the accommodationist approach to Catholic public officials long championed by [now disgraced former cardinal] Theodore McCarrick."

Weigel said that Biden's Catholic faith presented a unique challenge for the Church as Biden not only supports legal abortion but has pledged to increase taxpayer funding for it.

"The bishops believe abortion violates human dignity, and they urge the new president to reassess his positions on this question."

"By any reasonable standard, Archbishop Gomez's statement was balanced and measured," Weigel said.

However, he said, "Cardinals Cupich and Tobin put intense pressure on Archbishop Gomez to make no statement, as did the apostolic nuncio to the United States, Archbishop Christophe Pierre."

Weigel said the controversy "underscored the statement's firm, clear, and unambiguous stance on the pre-eminent priority of the life issues."

He added that Cupich's suggestion that Gomez was somehow acting against the norms of the bishops' conference "is unfair and irresponsible."



President Biden pictured at the inauguration Mass, held at St Matthew the Apostle in Washington



'Dreamers' can believe in America again, the Church has said



Critic: Archbishop Gomez of Los Angeles

Dreams can begin again as Biden axes Trump policies

President Joe Biden has signed a raft of executive orders and proclamations aimed at undoing policies set in place by his predecessor, Donald Trump.

Many were cheered by US Catholics. Chief among them was a boost for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) programme created by Trump's predecessor, Barack Obama, and which Trump sought unsuccessfully to end. The decision to preserve and strengthen DACA was welcomed by Archbishop Gomez, who said the move "ensured that immigration enforcement in our country is balanced and humane."

There was also support for the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act (Dreamers), which offers a chance of conditional residency with the right to work for unauthorised migrants who enter the US as minors. Many say this act is the modern embodiment of the original 'American

dream' but it was roundly attacked by President Trump for offering, he claimed, an incentive for people to illegally enter the US.

There was also praise for the decision by the Department of Homeland Security to pause deportations and rescind the 'remain in Mexico' policy that required those seeking asylum in the United States to stay in Mexico until their case came up for review.

Work on the infamous Trump Mexico Wall was also suspended and all state funding stopped.

President Biden has also rescinded the Muslim state travel ban and restarted processing visa applications from Islamic nations.

These decisions ensure "those fleeing persecution and seeking refuge or seeking to reunify with family in the United States will not be turned away because of what country they are from or what religion they practice," said Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York.



The remain in Mexico policy has trapped thousands of would-be immigrants in unsafe camps across Central America

Relief as US back on board with Paris climate accord

Catholic leaders welcomed President Joe Biden's announcement that the United States would rejoin the Paris climate change agreement.

It means the US will work to the goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, as the US Conference of Catholic Bishops has called for.

The Trump administration argued the agreement was not beneficial to US interests and hindered economic growth.

However, the USCCB, the Catholic Climate Covenant and other Catholic organisations criticised the move, arguing that climate change posed a serious threat to the planet and in particular the poorest and most vulnerable.

Environmental groups also cheered news that the controversial Keystone XL oil pipeline from Canada to the US would be scrapped.

"To suggest that there was something unprecedented here is to falsify history," he said. "What was indeed unprecedented, as Archbishop Gomez pointed out, was the situation of a president of the United States who professed a devout and heartfelt Catholicism and yet was publicly committed to facilitating grave moral evils."

New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan was even more blunt. He told the New York archdiocesan newspaper that "Biden speaks with admirable sensitivity about protecting the rights of the weakest and most threatened but ran on a platform avidly supporting this gruesome capital punishment for innocent pre-born babies."

News that President Biden is looking to place the *Roe vs Wade* Supreme Court in a stronger position isn't helping ease Church concerns. It is rumoured he will 'codify' the ruling, meaning that even if the now conservative leaning Supreme Court does find against the original judgement that allowed abortion, individual states could still allow abortion to take place within their boundaries.

It is also accepted that the so-called 'Mexico City policy' will be overturned. This blocks US funding of foreign non-governmental organisations that perform and promote abortion as a form of family planning.

It was introduced by President Reagan in 80s while on a visit to Mexico City, and is routinely upheld by Republicans and overturned by Democrats when new presidents take office.

Critics of the policy call it a gag order against foreign Governments but the Trump administration said it had proven effective in channelling US funding to poorer nations' essential healthcare services, such as vaccinations and maternity care.

The Biden team is also repealing the long-standing Hyde Amendment, which outlaws federal cash from directly funding abortion except in cases of rape, incest or when the life of the woman would be endangered, in a further boost for abortion.

It's clear from this initial row that several issues could drive a wedge between the Catholic President and his Church unless some common ground can be found.

As one priest put it: "When a man comes to the White House pledging to reach out to immigrants, challenge institutionalised racism and improve healthcare for the vulnerable, the Church has to get behind him... only we have to work hard to convince him that his abortion policies are not fir for a Catholic."

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NJPN Comment

A weekend to put Earth first

Geoff Thompson



The next annual conference of the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN) will be held at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire 23-25th July 2021.

Yes, it's a bit of a leap of faith in the context of the pandemic, but the planning group feels that the issues of the conference should not be postponed for another year.

'2021: Life on Earth - moment of truth' is the theme. As climate change, the biodiversity crisis and Covid-19 make clear, ecological conversion is becoming a matter of life and death. Decisions to be made this year at the November COP26 summit in Glasgow, and in the context of recovery from the pandemic, are critical for salvaging a viable future. This is a year of opportunity.

We will take inspiration from the encyclicals *Laudato Si* and *Fratelli Tutti* and secular thinking on integral ecology. We must seize this moment of grace to look at choices and changes confronting us.

Why not join us to: be inspired for transformative ecological conversion for yourself and for our communities, nation and World; update our shared Christian witness in light of the climate emergency and Covid-19; and re-imagine the justice and peace movement and our Church to meet the challenges ahead.

The conference will be chaired by CAFOD's director Christine Allen. Marty Haugen, the liturgical composer and pastoral musician, will lead our liturgy. Speakers will include Lorna Gold from Faith Invest, the Spiritan priest Fr Eamonn Mulcahy and the integral thinker Mark Rotherham.

Workshops and activities will cover topics ranging from COP26 to Divestment, Conflict and the Environment, as well as look at biodiversity loss and the extractive industries.

There will be age-appropriate parallel programmes for young children and teens, as well as provision of a creche. Our JUST FAIR consists of more than 20 stalls with goods and resources, as well as information and ideas about practical action.

Book at www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference. For further information or to book a Just Fair stall, contact admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk. All are welcome.

Though planned as an in-person event at Swanwick, if continued Covid-19 restrictions prevent the conference going ahead face to face, NJPN will present the programme, or similar, as a bookable only online conference.

Geoff Thompson is the administrator of the National Justice and Peace Network.

WHO chief laments year lost at Covid-19's 'anniversary'

The director general of the World Health Organisation, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, has lamented what he called "a year lost for the world" as he marked the anniversary of Covid-19 being recognised as a major threat.

This week in 2020 it was revealed that China had over 1,500 cases of a new variant of a respiratory infection – a coronavirus. 23 cases had been reported outside China.

Soon to be renamed Covid-19, it has now infected over 100 million people – leading to 2.14million deaths.

Dr Ghebreyesus told a media briefing in Geneva that the numbers are so daunting that they can "make us numb to what they represent: every death is someone's parent, someone's partner, someone's child, someone's friend."

"Our response must be twofold: to mourn those we have lost, and to resolve that each one of us will do everything we can to stop transmission and save lives."

He praised the work of scientists, saying their vaccines "are giving us hope... and we must take heart, take hope and take action."

But he repeated his call for the world to share vaccines equitably, adding that failure to do so would be "a catastrophic moral failure".

But, he added, it would also be an economic failure. Data from the International Labour Organization had highlighted the impact of the pandemic on the global labour market. Nearly 10 per cent of all global working hours were lost last year, resulting in a decline in global labour income equivalent to US\$ 3.7 trillion.

The ILO report projects that most countries will recover in the second



A deserted St Mark's Square in Venice at the height of the first lockdown illustrates the impact on economic activity of the pandemic

half of 2021, depending on vaccination rollout. But it recommends international support for low- and middle-income countries to support vaccine rollout, and to promote economic and employment recovery.

The second study, commissioned by the International Chamber of Commerce Research Foundation, makes a strong economic case for vaccine equity.

It finds that vaccine nationalism could cost the global economy up to US\$9.2 trillion, and almost half of that – US\$ 4.5 trillion – would be incurred in the wealthiest economies.

In contrast, properly funding the Access to Covid-19 Tools Accelerator this year to supply vaccines globally would cost US\$ 26 billion.

Therefore, Dr Ghebreyesus said, "if we fully fund vaccines and share them equally, every \$1 invested would return \$166 for every dollar invested."

He added: "Vaccine nationalism might serve short-term political goals. But it's in every nation's own medium and long-term economic interest to support vaccine equity."

"As we speak, rich countries are rolling out vaccines, while the world's least-developed countries watch and

wait. Every day that passes, the divide grows larger between the world's haves and have nots.

"I spoke to President Ramaphosa of South Africa, and told him we are doing everything we can to accelerate the rollout of vaccines in Africa, to save lives and get their economies back on track.

"The rest of the world must play its part.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has reminded all of us that health and economics are closely connected, and that we are all in this together. We're family."

Ethiopian Church hit by savage attack

Fredrick Nzwilli

Massive damage and looting has occurred in Adigrat, a diocese in Ethiopia's semi-autonomous region of Tigray, where the Government launched a military offensive nearly two months ago, the Ethiopian bishops' conference has said.

Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel, conference president, sent the delegation to the diocese in mid-January, with instructions to visit and see Bishop Tefaselassie Medhin of Adigrat.

Fr Teshome Fikre Woldetensae, secretary-general of the bishops' conference who led the delegation, said the bishop is safe and in good health, but his diocese is reeling from destruction that will take a long time and cost the church millions to repair.

Fighting in Tigray began in November after Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali sent the federal army to fight the Tigray People's Liberation Front, which he accused of attacking an army base in the capital, Mekele. The Government recaptured the city on 28th November.

Bishop Medhin's safety had become



an issue of concern after he was cut off from the rest of the Church due to fighting.

The delegation reported a church compound in the diocese was used as a military command centre, even when the parish priests and the Daughters of St Ann were staying there. The priests and the nuns witnessed heavy fighting.

"Adigrat minor seminary building and water tanker (are) partly damaged by the shelling fragments of the explosives, chapel at the cemetery is partly damaged, and windows ... of the high school are damaged and bro-

ken," said the delegation.

It also spoke of damage to a nearby Orthodox church and mosque as well as damages to church buildings.

The Catholic Church report comes amid international media reports that churches and mosques in northern Tigray were attacked, with sacred treasures, including ancient manuscripts, damaged or looted.

The team also said the administration offices and classroom buildings at Wukro St Mary's Catholic College were broken and looted, with laptops and computers stolen.

Trees in the college were dying, the report indicated, after the solar panel, which provides power to supply the college with water, was stolen.

Delegation members spoke to officials of the US-based Catholic Relief services, which had reached 50,000 people with food in Mekele. More people were targeted for food distribution.

At a meeting with the interim administration, Government officials said 4.5 million people needed emergency support all over Tigray.

Priest's body discovered after car theft

Church officials in Burkina Faso have confirmed that the body of a man found in a remote forest is that of missing priest Fr Rodrigue Sanon.

Fr Sanon had been missing for four days before his body was discovered after he disappeared while driving to a meeting of priests.

Police say it is likely he was waylaid by car thieves known to operate in the region.

"It is with deep sorrow that I confirm that the body was that of Fr Rodrigue Sanon," Bishop Lucas Kalfa Sanou of Banfora announced last weekend.

Bishop Sanou called on the faithful of the diocese "to pray intensely for his soul and remain confident in the merciful love of the Lord."

Fr Sanon, a priest from Souba-kaniedougou, disappeared on 19th January. His vehicle was found in the Toumousseni forest, located 11 miles from Banfora; his body was discovered nearby soon afterwards.



Fr Michael Collins

The legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. - p24



David Torkington

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Fr Francis Marsden

The Gospel of St Mark - p28

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A CATHOLIC UNIVERSE SUPPLEMENT

Green New Deals need to respect diverse cultures, says archbishop

Carol Glatz

With a number of nations considering some form of a “Green New Deal” for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, it is important that these efforts respect diverse cultures and economic policies, and avoid imposing a “uniform” model that ends up causing division, said Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Vatican’s foreign minister.

Current political debates about the issue seem, on the one hand, “to lead to a discordance of opinions and, on the other, favour imposing that singular cultural model” that “unifies the world, but divides persons and nations,” he said.

It is important that promoting human and social development and well-being also includes “the defence and care of culture, especially if we feel it as an indispensable instrument for understanding the world and for seeking the common good.”

The archbishop spoke last Saturday during a daylong course sponsored by the Centesimus Annus pro Pontifice Foundation, which seeks to implement the teaching of St John Paul II’s 1991 encyclical on social and economic justice.

The foundation’s monthly series of speakers and lectures will focus this semester on *The Church’s Social Doctrine for a Green New Deal*, and Archbishop Gallagher’s lecture looked at how the Church’s social doctrine related to Green New Deal proposals and to discerning the common good.

In his talk in Italian, the archbishop noted the various Green New Deal proposals being looked at by the European Union, the United States and the World Economic Forum, among others.

In general, most proposals seek to: reduce carbon pollution; direct government investments in infrastructure improvements and wind and solar energy; boost efficiency of transportation systems and energy usage; promote advanced technology; and favour new financial instruments.

In fact, many of the programmes “do not call into question either the industrial system, which historically is the source of pollution, or the financial (system) of the international markets,” but are actually programmes that tend to respond to existing economic trends with industrial solutions, he said.

“We also understand that improvements in the scientific and technological fields help us to reduce the very serious environmental problems that afflict the world,” he said. “However, we can never be credible environmentalists without a critical eye on the modern idea of progress understood as a reassuring linear progression of human possibilities by way of unlimited technological advancement.”

Any culture that imagines the things humanity can produce will be the best solution or will save the world, he said, will end up “destroying mankind and its environment.”

For the Catholic Church, the archbishop said, humanity is asked to care for creation for the common good, showing there is an inextricable link between natural law and the social order and harmony, between creation and morality, between environmental resources and the responsibility of the human family.

“The rule for the relationship between human beings and nature, therefore, is not the pursuit of profit, but the pursuit of the common good through the reasons of faith. It would

be a mistake, however, to reduce the economic and social teachings of the Church to a generic invitation to deference towards the values of freedom and social justice because, as Christians, we are called to charity and universal fraternity as a joyous observance of God’s will,” the archbishop said.

While many Green New Deals being looked at represent the hope for a historical change of course for a better future, he said, there is also a focus on “certain themes that seem to narrow rather than broaden environmental reflection,” thereby risking an environmentalism that becomes “uniform and even.”

Pope Francis highlighted a similar tendency in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* when he wrote: “Local conflicts and disregard for the common good are exploited by the global economy in order to impose a single cultural model. This culture unifies the world, but divides persons and nations, for ‘as society becomes ever more globalised, it makes us neighbours, but does not make us brothers.’”

That is why, the archbishop said, he proposed people do their utmost to safeguard and promote the wealth of human cultures that have a role to play in promoting the common good.

The Church, which yearns for world peace and fraternity, strongly supports “an environmentalism that is healthy, profound and respectful of the human being,” he said.

He asked people to make a commitment to “constructive dialogue” that includes all sides, including the Christian perspective, which emphasises the desire to help people open their hearts to God who creates all things and who teaches to take care of the human family and the world it lives in.



The presentation of the infant Jesus in the temple 40 days after his birth is depicted in a stained-glass window. The feast of the Presentation of the Lord, also known as Candlemas, is celebrated on 2nd February.

(Catholic News Service photo/Gregory Shemitz)

More women scholars added to Pontifical Biblical Commission

Renewing the membership of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, a body of scholars that engages in research for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Pope Francis added two more women experts.

With the addition of Benedicte Lemmelijn, an Old Testament scholar from Belgium, and Maria Armida Nicolaci, a New Testament scholar from Italy, five women are now part of the 20-member commission. The Vatican announced the nine new members Pope Francis appointed, and the commission posted the names of the 11 members who were ap-

pointed to another term.

Pope Francis appointed the first women to the commission in 2014 and renewed their appointments. They are: Bruna Costacurta, an Old Testament scholar who taught at Rome’s Pontifical Gregorian University; Spanish Sister Nuria Calduch-Benages, a member of the Missionary Daughters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, who specialises in Old Testament Wisdom literature and teaches at the Gregorian; and Mary Healy, a professor of Sacred Scripture at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit.

In brief

MADRID: A young priest ordained only six months ago was among the casualties of an explosion at a parish centre in Madrid. The Archdiocese of Madrid confirmed on 21st January that Father Ruben Perez Ayala, a priest at the Church of Our Lady of La Paloma, died in the early hours of the morning due to internal hemorrhaging he suffered after the blast.

According to the Spanish newspaper *El Pais*, Fr Ruben's death brought the death toll from the explosion to four. David Santos Munoz, 35, an electrician, died in the explosion after he was called in to inspect the boiler room because of a strong smell of gas. Munoz, a married father of four, was an active member of the parish.

SEOUL: The Seoul Archdiocese is helping homeless people with a soup kitchen run out of Myongdong Cathedral. The energy and chemicals division of SK Group, the third-largest conglomerate in South Korea, is sponsoring the programme by supporting 1,400 packed lunches each week.

"When Pope Francis visited Myongdong Cathedral in 2014, he blessed us to be the yeast of the Gospel," said Father Francis Kim Jeong-hwan, executive director of the archdiocese's One Body One Spirit movement.

"I hope that the soup kitchen will be a small yeast that changes the Church and the world into a world of warm love beyond Myongdong and the archdiocese."

VATICAN CITY: In a video message sent to Peruvian Bishop Miguel Cabrejos Vidarte of Trujillo, president of the Latin American bishops' council, also known as CELAM, Pope Francis said the council's upcoming meeting with the laity highlights the importance of remaining "together with the people of God. This ecclesial assembly should not be a gathering of the elite, separated from the holy, faithful people of God," he said. "Do not forget that we are part of the people of God."

The message was sent to participants of a virtual meeting at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City in preparation for the November 21st-28th Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean. According to CELAM, the weeklong assembly will be "an experience of listening, dialogue and encounter" that seeks to address the "challenge, within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, to revive our pastoral commitment and to look for new paths so that we may all have life in abundance."

TALKING POINT

El Salvador struggles 29 years after peace accords

The civil conflict left 75,000 dead and at least 8,000 disappeared, **Rhina Guidos** reports



(left) The mural "from rifles to corn" depicts what happened in this part of the Salvadoran countryside, as it evolved from a theatre of war in the late 1970s and 1980s to a thriving agricultural area. Even though the 1992 peace accords stopped the bloodshed from the civil war, they have recently come under attack by the country's president. (Catholic News Service photos/Rhina Guidos)

(below) Salvadoran bishops, along with Archbishop Santo Rocco Gangemi, apostolic nuncio, celebrate a Mass for peace at the cathedral in San Salvador on 14th January, days ahead of the 29th anniversary of the signing of the 1992 peace accords that ended the country's civil war.

The mural in the town of La Laguna depicts a rifle firmly planted into the ground but one that, with time, becomes a tall corn plant with a dove hovering nearby.

The mural "from rifle to corn" depicts what happened in this part of the Salvadoran countryside, as it evolved from a theatre of war in the late 1970s and 1980s to a thriving agricultural area, after rifles and other weapons were laid to rest with the signing of peace accords in 1992.

Almost three decades since the documents were signed on 16th January, 1992, ending decades of conflict and 12 years of civil war, the accords have come under criticism, mainly from the nation's current president and his supporters.

On 17th December, 2020, Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele called the accords a "farce," saying they had done little to provide a sense of safety, made no advances in the areas of justice or meaningful reforms in education, health care or other social programmes for Salvadorans.

"Why, if they were so good, did they not benefit the Salvadoran people?" Bukele asked. "Ah, the war stopped," he added with sarcasm.

The violence of the civil war was replaced by crime and violence from Salvadorans who had become gang members in the US and were later deported, returning to their country with a system of extortion that took root and flourished among the largely unprotected poor and middle class of El Salvador.

Politicians from the two main political parties that held power following the accords abused the system for their financial gain while doing little to resolve the lawlessness that affected the lives of the majority. As a result, gangs established deep roots in Salvadoran society.

It's a problem that Bukele and his administration have not been able to solve. In a December 2019 interview with the CBS news show *60 Minutes*, Bukele admitted that the gangs "have a de facto power, a real one. They charge taxes. They actually say, 'OK, if you pay this, we'll provide security for your business.' They have a quasi-security force."

But many say the failure of the parties that took part in the accords is not a reason to deny that the documents provided a foundation for a nascent, if imperfect, democracy in El Salvador.

In an interview published on

16th January in El Salvador's *La Prensa Gráfica* newspaper, Hector Lindo-Fuentes, a Salvadoran historian and retired Fordham University professor, said the accords provided a way towards the peaceful transfer of power that did not exist before in the country.

"Before the accords, those who controlled the reins of government would not let go of them without violence," he said in an interview published by journalist Ernesto Mejia. "Power would not change hands from one (political) group to the other without violence."

Those who challenged the government were met with violence, jailed, tortured or murdered. Catholic clergy and laity were among them, most famously, the archbishop of San Salvador, now St Oscar Romero, who was martyred at the start of the war in 1980 after speaking out in defence of the poor and government-sponsored violence.

Some say the war officially began with the killing of the



archbishop, who was fatally shot as he celebrated Mass. With his killing, the scant opportunity to dialogue and call out injustices died, too.

An independent press, just as fair elections, also did not exist, nor did an independent Supreme Court or legislative body. Those problems ultimately led the nation on a path towards civil conflict that would leave 75,000 dead and at least 8,000 disappeared.

Lindo-Fuentes said that while the accords did not solve all of El Salvador's problems, in 1992 the killing from the war stopped. The agreements between a coalition of left-wing groups and El Salvador's repressive right-wing government also provided a framework to work through political and ideological differences without violence.

The accords also sought to change the role of the military, which had taken part in atrocities ordered by those in power, and instead reimagined a new role for it as an institution to protect the populace, not harm it. They also established a national office to handle human rights violations, which were rampant during the war.

On 16th January, almost 200 prominent Salvadorans signed a statement published in full-page ads in two of the country's largest national newspapers supporting the accords, in which the Catholic Church played a significant role. Signers included Cardinal Gregorio Rosa Chavez and Bishop Oswaldo Escobar of Chalatenango, along with three well-known Jesuits and representatives from the Lutheran, Anglican and Baptist Churches.

Those with different points of view say Bukele poses a greater threat to the nation and its fragile democracy than any unfulfilled ideals.

In the interview with *La Prensa Gráfica*, Lindo-Fuentes said that while he did not know what was behind the narrative of detracting

from the accords, a 9th February, 2020 event orchestrated by Bukele showed "a flagrant violation" of the spirit of the documents.

That's the day Bukele entered the halls of the country's equivalent to the US Congress – the general assembly – flanked by soldiers armed with machine guns as he tried to pressure legislators to approve a £80 million package for security.

The use of the military in an attempt to coerce lawmakers, an action condemned internationally, sought to "place the army as a political actor in an action that sought to take away independence from the legislative power," Lindo-Fuentes said.

Some worry about what Bukele's attacks signal for the future of El Salvador, particularly if his party succeeds in gaining a majority of seats in upcoming elections for the Legislative Assembly on 28th February.

Such a win "could further enable Bukele's worst instincts, boding ill for El Salvador's democracy," wrote Robert Looney, a distinguished professor at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, in an article earlier this month for *World Politics Review*.

On 14th January, the country's bishops gathered in San Salvador at the cathedral where St Romero is buried and participated in a Mass to mark the World Day of Peace that the Vatican observes on 1st January.

"Our celebration almost coincides with the 29th anniversary of the Peace Accords that restored hope and trust to Salvadorans," said Archbishop Santo Rocco Gangemi, the apostolic nuncio to El Salvador, speaking favourably of the documents.

He said that "like all human endeavours, they are subject to be improved upon with practice, but they mark a milestone and a starting point."



A man prays in front of a painting of St Oscar Romero at the cathedral of San Salvador, El Salvador on 14th January, the day the country's bishops celebrated a Mass for peace, days ahead of the 29th anniversary of the signing of the peace accords that ended 12 years of civil war.

After outcry, Salvadoran archbishop grants investigators access to archive

The Archbishop of San Salvador reversed course and said on 20th January he would allow investigators to view Church archives related to a wartime massacre.

The announcement came following swift outcry after comments Archbishop José Escobar Alas made during a news conference on 17th January. The archbishop announced he would not grant authorities access to the archdiocese's archives on human rights abuses, even though a judge had issued a warrant.

Citing a "misunderstanding" about what the judge was asking, Archbishop Escobar said in a video released by the archdiocese on 20th January, that authorities were welcome to view documents the Church has

on the 1981 mass killing in the town of El Mozote, where 800-1,200 Salvadoran civilians, including many children, were slaughtered by government forces.

In 1977, when St Oscar Romero was Archbishop of San Salvador, the archdiocesan human rights office, Tutela Legal, was a place where the poor and disenfranchised could have their stories of disappeared or murdered loved ones documented. The hope was to house the information in the archive to locate the person, dead or alive, or at least document the abuses that led to his or her killing and eventually have the perpetrators face justice.

Archbishop Escobar abruptly closed the office in 2013 but,

after criticism, reopened it, though with greater limitations to those wanting to access it.



Salvadoran Archbishop José Escobar Alas of San Salvador. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)

An inspection of the documents relevant to the massacre took place on 25th January.

The archbishop had initially said the process would hurt victims and also voiced concerns that others would "kidnap" the documents.

"We spoke with the judge to precisely find out what he wanted with his visit to the archive," said Archbishop Escobar. "He clarified his intention to help the victims of the massacre of El Mozote and that at no time did he intend to take with him any document.

"The purpose of the archives, as we have said, is to uphold justice and we will support victims and we're ready to help any cases that can be adjudicated."

The judge will be issued certified copies of any material he considers helpful so authorities can pursue justice, the archbishop said.

David Morales, a lawyer with the human rights group Cristosal, who has prosecuted the El Mozote case, had pleaded with archbishop to reconsider his initial refusal, saying the prelate's statements were "lamentable" and based on "disinformation."

The initial refusal by the prelate was seen as a second blow to those attempting to prosecute the crime since armed forces, backed by Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele, have refused to allow authorities to view any records the institution might have on the mass killings in which its members participated.

Cindy Wooden



Lectors, acolytes: formal installation means more than service at Mass

More than 40 years ago, then-Archbishop William Borders of Baltimore, USA, issued a pastoral letter signalling his intention to ask that the “official ministries” of lector and acolyte be opened to women.

Of course, in parishes and dioceses around the world, women were already reading the Scriptures at Mass, and some women and girls were altar servers and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist.

But when the *Code of Canon Law* was promulgated in 1983, six years after Archbishop Borders’ request, it still specified that permanent installation in those ministries was restricted to men.

Pope Francis issued a document, *Spiritus Domini* (The Spirit of the Lord) on 11th January, changing canon law to allow both women

and men to be installed formally or “admitted on a stable basis through the prescribed liturgical rite to the ministries of lector and acolyte.”

The pope cited the request made by members of the 2019 Synod of Bishops for the Amazon, asking that the Church “promote and confer ministries for men and women in an equitable manner. The fabric of the local Church, in the Amazon as elsewhere, is guaranteed by small missionary Church communities that cultivate faith, listen to the Word and celebrate together close to the people’s life. It is the Church of baptised men and women that we must consolidate by promoting ministries and, above all, an awareness of baptismal dignity.”

Over the years, many bishops requested such a change,

particularly during meetings of the Synod of Bishops at the Vatican.

The requests, like the prayers written for the installation rite for each ministry, make it clear that reading the Scriptures or serving at Mass is only the most public part of the two ministries.

For example, the Vatican-approved text of the bishop’s instruction to those about to be installed as lectors describes the ministry as a “special office within the Christian community.”

The bishop tells them: “You will be given a responsibility in the service of the faith, which is rooted in the word of God. You will proclaim that word in the liturgical assembly, instruct children and adults in the faith and prepare them to receive the sacraments worthily. You will bring the message of salvation to

A young woman reads during Pope Francis’ celebration of Mass on the feast of Christ the King in St Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on 22nd November, 2020. (Catholic News Service photo/Stefano Dal Pozzolo, pool)

VATICAN LETTER

Pope Francis issued a document, *Spiritus Domini* (The Spirit of the Lord) on 11th January, changing canon law to allow both women and men to be installed formally or “admitted on a stable basis through the prescribed liturgical rite to the ministries of lector and acolyte.”

those who have not yet received it.”

When instituting acolytes, the text has the bishop tell them: “As people chosen for the ministry of acolyte, you will have a special role in the Church’s ministry. The summit and source of the Church’s life is the Eucharist, which builds up the Christian community and makes it grow.”

The instruction notes that they serve priests and deacons at the altar, but also that they are instituted to distribute Communion at Mass and to the sick.

“In performing your ministry bear in mind that, as you share the one bread with your brothers and sisters, so you form one body with them. Show a sincere love for Christ’s Mystical Body, God’s holy people, and especially for the weak and the sick. Be obedient to the commandment which the Lord gave to his apostles at the Last Supper: ‘Love one another as I also have loved you.’”

In most dioceses around the world, seminarians are the only men formally installed as lectors and acolytes.

When Pope Francis changed canon law to open the ministries to women, he asked the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments to implement the reform by amending the installation rites and connected norms.

On 21st January, Archbishop Arthur Roche, secretary of the congregation, told *Catholic News Service* he did not know how long it would take.

Once the amendments are completed, it is unclear how many dioceses would move to a widespread, formal installation of lectors and acolytes or how many women would want to be installed.

Pope Francis, in a letter accompanying his change to canon law, highlighted both the symbolic importance of the move – recognising the equal dignity of baptised men and women – but also how its concrete importance could vary from place to place.

“The choice to confer also to women these offices, which entail stability, public recognition and a mandate on the part of the bishop, renders more effective in the Church everyone’s participation in

the work of evangelisation,” the pope said.

Welcoming the pope’s move, the women’s International Union of Superiors General said: “In many places women, and especially consecrated women, fulfil different pastoral ministries” in accordance with the guidelines of local bishops. The pope’s document, “with its universal character, is a confirmation of the Church’s path in acknowledging the service ‘of so many women who have cared and continue to care for the service of the word and the altar,’” the statement said.

Mercy Sister Sharon Euart, who became a canon lawyer with Archbishop Borders’ encouragement, said she thought some people would see the change “as a further recognition of the role of women in the liturgical life of the Church; others may see it as unnecessary or even undesirable.”

However, she said: “I don’t think the change is meant for every girl or woman who is currently a lector or altar server in her parish. It is likely that there will be some discernment of call, gifts and suitability for the ministry.”

Phyllis Zagano, an expert on women in the Church, particularly on the history of women deacons, told *CNS*: “This is the first time the Church has legally affirmed that women can be near the sacred, an important commentary that underscores the Church teaching that all are made in the image and likeness of God. Until now, there has only been a finding in the early 1990s that women were included in ‘all laypersons’ in the canon that allowed a bishop to temporarily allow any layperson to fulfil the ministries of lector and acolyte.

“The ‘message,’ if you will, is one of the common baptism of men and women,” she said, but when read alongside Pope Francis’ frequent comments “about not ‘clericalising’ women, it can also be seen as an affront.”

Still, Zagano said, “it is important to regularise canon law so that it recognises the equal humanity of men and women, especially for areas of the world where women are still considered chattel.”

■ See page 30 - Journey in Faith

Questions and answers... with Fr Francis Doyle

The Holy Family: Egypt or Nazareth?

Q. We have just read several accounts of the birth of Christ during Masses after Christmas. In reading Luke 2:39-40 and Matthew 2:13-15, it appears that there is a difference as to what happened after Jesus was born. My question is this: Did the Holy Family flee to Egypt or did they return to Nazareth?

A. My answer would be that both things happened: Following the birth of the Christ Child and the visit of the Magi, the Holy Family fled to Egypt to avoid Herod's persecution and then they eventually returned to Nazareth, which was their family's home.

Attempts to find a contradiction in Luke's and Matthew's infancy accounts are based on a false understanding of the Gospels. None of the evangelists claimed to have written an exhaustive chronological account of every event in the life of Christ; they wrote for different audiences (Jewish Christians and gentile Christians) and highlighted different things.

My own view of the sequence of events – and this seems to harmonise the Gospel accounts of both Matthew and Luke – is that Jesus was presented in the Temple a few weeks after his birth; then the Holy Family fled to Egypt and, after the death of Herod, returned to Palestine and settled in Nazareth.

Nowhere does Luke say that they returned to Nazareth 'immediately' after the birth of Jesus. Luke 2:39 simply says of Jesus, Mary and Joseph: 'When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.'

Each Gospel writer was selective about the details of Jesus' life, according to his purposes. Matthew, for example, doesn't mention the presentation or the finding of Jesus in the Temple.

Q. I was recently asked whether an infant can be baptised into the Catholic Church even if his parents, although Catholic (non-

practising), were married in a civil ceremony. The parents were told by a priest that they had to be married in the Church before the infant could be baptised. I don't think this is correct. What does Church law say?

A. There is nothing in Church law that requires that parents be married in a church ceremony prior to having their child baptised – although that, of course, would be the ideal.

In 2014, the Italian press reported that Pope Francis had baptised the child of an unmarried couple in a ceremony in the Sistine Chapel; and in 2009, while still a cardinal in Argentina, the pope was quoted as telling the Italian magazine *30 Giorni* that "the child has absolutely no responsibility for the state of the parents' marriage".

Canon law does say, though, that for a baptism to take place, 'there must be a founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic religion' (Canon 868). That same canon goes on to note that 'if such hope is altogether

lacking, the baptism is to be delayed...after the parents have been advised about the reason'. (The baptismal ceremony itself includes a pledge by the parents to raise and educate the child in the beliefs and practices of the Catholic faith.)

What I normally do is to meet for half an hour individually with each couple who are having their first child baptised. If I have not seen them regularly in church, I am particularly direct in highlighting their own responsibility to support the child's growth in faith by their own Catholic practice. (Only a couple of times – in more than 50 years – have I sensed that this commitment was 'altogether lacking'.)

Q. Our parish priest has preached for years about how loving, forgiving and merciful God is. But in the Old Testament, there are many occasions in which God destroys men or threatens their destruction (Noah's ark and the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, the avenging angel with the firstborn in Egypt, etc.).

So did the nature of God change after the birth, death and Resurrection of his son? Or am I supposed to disregard the readings of the Old Testament?

A. You raise a perennial question. Not infrequently, readers of the Scriptures point to what they see as a contradiction: a wrathful, violent God of the Old Testament versus the loving, compassionate Father of the Christian Scriptures. That, though, is an oversimplification and creates a false dichotomy.

The Old Testament does not portray a primitive, warlike God who delights in destroying wrongdoers, and the Christian Scriptures do not present a 'soft' God who refuses to judge and to punish sinfulness.

Justice and mercy are twin attributes of the Lord of all ages. Think, for example, of the Lord's nearly endless patience with the Israelites despite their recurring infidelities. Consider, too, the story of Jonah, whom God called to preach a message of repentance to Israel's enemies in Nineveh; despite his reluctance, the Lord used him as a messenger of divine mercy.

Then move forward to the New Testament and see clear warnings of God's wrath against unrepentant sinners. In Matthew 23:13, for example, Jesus says: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You lock the kingdom

of heaven before human beings. You do not enter yourselves, nor do you allow entrance to those trying to enter."

Paul is even more graphic, observing that those who do not obey the Gospel of Christ 'will pay the penalty of eternal ruin' (2 Thes 1:9).

All sides of God's personality are on display across the pages of the Old and New Testaments. That having been said, it's a fair observation that, in the providence of God's progressive revelation, compassion and forgiveness come across most clearly when Jesus arrives on the scene – both in the loving acts of Christ and in his words. See, for example, John 14:1-2: 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places.'

Q. I have been asked many times why Catholics end the Lord's Prayer with "deliver us from evil", while Protestants continue on with "for thine is the kingdom", etc. Is it because the additional phrase was not said by Christ when he taught the prayer to the apostles?

A. The original manuscripts of the Gospel (Mt 6:9-13) end the Lord's Prayer, as taught to the apostles by Jesus, with "deliver us from evil", and this has been the Catholic version of the prayer. All the official 'Catholic' texts of the Bible down through the centuries have never appended the additional verse, and Catholic and Protestant commentators are in general agreement that it was never a part of the original text.

As early as the year 100AD, though, the doxology beginning "for thine is the kingdom" had been added to some manuscripts, and it was included in the *Didache*, a first-century manual of morals, worship and doctrine in the Church. (A doxology is a short hymn-like verse that exalts the glory of God.)

The doxology found its way into the standard Protestant version of the Lord's Prayer during the 16th century Reformation in England under Queen Elizabeth I and has remained a part of it ever since.

In the Catholic Mass, after "deliver us from evil", the priest recites the prayer that begins, "Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil..." before saying, with the congregation, the concluding doxology.

■ Please note that Fr Doyle cannot answer readers' personal questions through this column.



The Flight into Egypt, by Giotto di Bondone (1304–1306, Scrovegni Chapel, Padua).

Fr Michael Collins



Inspiration on the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.

A man who dedicated his life to the non-violent struggle for racial equality in the United States, Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy remains crystal clear more than 50 years since his death

Over the past few weeks, anybody with an interest in American politics has been glued to events in Washington.

The storming of the Capitol on 6th January by a rioting mob both shocked people and instilled fear for the future.

In the drama of these days, there is one image which stands out in particular. On the evening before his inauguration, President-elect Joe Biden and Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris, with their spouses, gathered at the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool to honour the memory of all who have perished as a result of the corona pandemic. At the time, the figure of the dead had just surpassed 400,000.

A young nurse from Michigan, Lori Marie Key, gave a beautiful rendition of the hymn *Amazing Grace* and the new cardinal-archbishop of Washington, Gregory Wilton, read a prayer. In itself, these two figures may not have caught our interest, but there was one thing which was impossible not to note; both were black.

America seems to be made up of every colour and race. Indeed, it is this "pot-luck" which makes the United States so interesting and is also the cause of justifiable pride.

The national motto, *ex pluribus unum* – from the many comes the one – is apt. On the surface, one might admire the apparent integration and harmony. But the events of the past few months, beginning with the death of George Floyd last summer, reminds us that bigotry and intolerance simmer only slightly below the surface of those united states.

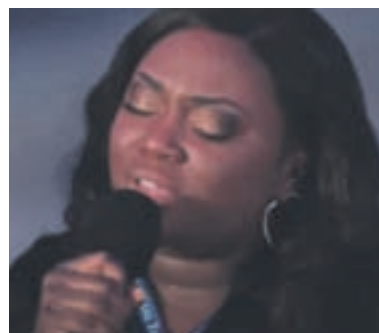
While there is a degree of harmonisation of skin tones, what has been achieved is the result of horrific suffering.

For those with a long memory, the name Martin Luther King Jr. stirs up particular feelings. Now regarded as something of a hero, in his day the controversial human rights activist stirred up visceral emotions.

Born in 1929, Michael King Junior – his father changed his name to Martin Luther as a boy – was the son of a Baptist preacher from Georgia, who for four decades led a black congregation church in Atlanta. This was a period of racial segregation and blacks were seen by many white people as second-class citizens. They were treated as inferior and often subjected to violence. In addition, the black people were



Civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on 28th August, 1963, in Washington.



Lori Marie Key performs *Amazing Grace* at Lincoln Memorial to honour the victims of Covid-19.

President-elect Joe Biden, his wife Jill Biden, Vice President-elect Kamala Harris and her husband, Doug Emhoff, stand in front of the Washington Monument on 19th January, ahead of Biden's remarks on Covid-19. (Catholic News Service photo/Tom Brenner, Reuters)



less well educated than their white counterparts and lived in great poverty.

One of Martin's earliest recollections was the way in which he was often forbidden to play with white children. Racial discrimination was a way of life in the South, with blacks not allowed to use restaurants, toilets or travel equally on public transport with white people. Segregation was a fact of life.

As a teenager, Martin spent a summer on a tobacco farm in Connecticut, he was surprised to see how well blacks and whites got on together.

American slavery, which began in the 16th century under European invaders, persisted for three centuries until its abolition in 1865. But corrupt attitudes do not change quickly and inequality persisted. There is evidence that some attitudes still flourish today in small pockets of American society.

Although he first thought of studying law or medicine at university, Martin decided to become a preacher and joined his father as a minister at the popular

Ebenezer Baptist Church.

It was while studying for the ministry at Crozer Theological College in Pennsylvania that the young man came in contact with the life and teachings of the Indian pacifist, Mahatma Gandhi. King was encouraged by the college to earn a doctorate which he was awarded in 1955.

In that same year, the racial laws in Georgia were challenged by a young woman, Rosa Parks, who was arrested following her refusal to give up her seat to a white man on a bus in Montgomery.

This proved the catalyst for black people, who were often accused of not standing up for themselves, to take matters into their own hands. A boycott of the bus system resulted and several marches took place to challenge the discriminatory state laws.

Martin was among the volunteers who helped organise the demonstrations which, more than a year later, achieved their goal of allowing black people travel equitably with white people on the bus system.

Even when the police used force, Martin urged the protesters



Holy Cross Father Theodore Hesburgh, second from left, joins hands with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the Rev. Edgar Chandler and Mgr Robert J. Hagarty of Chicago, far right, in 1964 at the Illinois Rally for Civil Rights in Chicago's Soldier Field. King once said: "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

(CNS photo/courtesy University of Notre Dame)

to remain peaceful and respectful. His gravitas diffused several heated situations and helped achieve a degree of liberty. But he was by no means alone, for many leaders emerged to encourage the people to stand up for their basic human dignity.

Even when Martin Luther Jr. was praised for his part in ending racial discrimination, the preacher always acknowledged Rosa Parks as the "true mother of the Civil Rights movement."

Martin married a fellow racial rights activist, Coretta Scott, in 1953 and the couple had four children. Despite his many marital infidelities, Coretta was her husband's staunchest ally and supported him when police began to target him for breaking State laws. Her bravery in the face of intimidation and death threats matched her husband's determination.

The culmination of the movement to end segregation and obtain equal working conditions came on 28th August, 1963, when close on quarter of a million people marched on the Capitol in Washington. While three quarters of the marchers were black, a quarter were white.

The event had been planned for two years and the organisers were anxious that it would pass off peacefully. Two months before the march, on 22nd June, the organisers met with President J.F. Kennedy, who warned them of the dangers of bringing large numbers to the city. He also expressed fear that Communists, broadly disliked in political circles, would infiltrate the crowds and incite violence. But in the end, Kennedy did not stand in their way.

Despite differences of priorities among the organisers, a number of

goals were set, including a minimum wage and proper education.

In excess of 20,000 security forces drawn from the state police and national guard were put on alert as tens of thousands of marchers arrived from all over the United States from dawn on 28th August.

Cardinal Patrick O'Boyle of Washington led the invocation after which nine speakers, all male but one, gave orations, culminating in Dr Martin Luther King's speech.

As he concluded his impassioned plea, King laid aside his text and spoke of his dream in which slavery and hatred would be replaced by freedom and peace. It was to become a speech which caught the popular imagination. People chanted their approval as he repeated the refrain: "I have a dream." As he repeated his rhetorical dream, did the preacher look to the steps of the Capitol and see a vision of a black Asian woman sworn in as the first female Vice-President of the United States, or could he hear a young

black American girl, the poet laureate Amanda Gorman, overcome a speech impediment to recite a powerful poem:

*"When victory won't
lie in the blade,
but in all the bridges we've made.
That is the promise to glade,
the hill we climb if only we dare.
It's because being American is
more than a pride we inherit.
It's the past we step into
and how we repair it."*

Martin Luther King Jr.

continued to protest peacefully for human rights inside and outside the black community. In 1964, he was named *Time* magazine's *Person of the Year*, the same year that he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

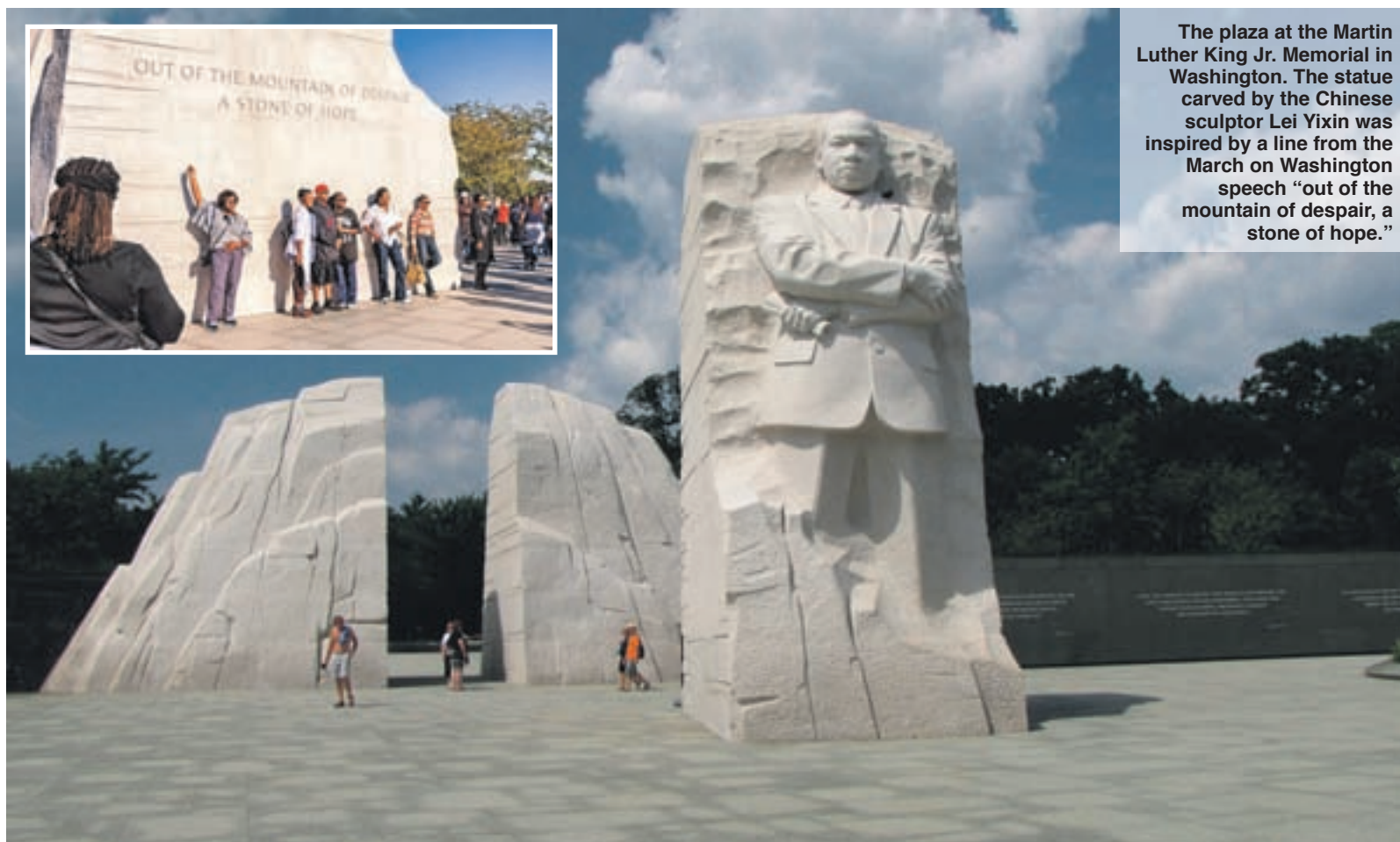
On 4th April, 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on a visit to Memphis. A 40-year-old escaped fugitive, James Earl Ray, confessed to the murder although he later recanted. President Lyndon B. Johnson called for a national day of mourning on 7th April.

In the latter months of his life, several of Martin's friends and supporters abandoned his philosophy of non-violence as they protested against America's involvement in the Vietnam war. The group began to splinter. Martin decided to organise another March on Washington, this time to fight poverty. Struck down in his prime, his legacy lives on.

The United States finally honoured Martin Luther King Jr. when President Jimmy Carter posthumously awarded the Medal of Freedom at a ceremony in Washington in 1977. Present at the emotional event was the Reverend Martin Luther King Sr, the activist's wife and children.

Without Martin Luther Jr, Nurse Lori Marie's voice would not have soared into the night sky above the Mall and Archbishop Wilton Gregory of Washington would never have become the first native African American cardinal to offer a public prayer as the lamps lit for the dead and bells tolled across America.

And from Ireland we watched as one of our descendants turned in prayer to ask God to help him serve his fellow Americans, whatever colour their skin colour.



The plaza at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in Washington. The statue carved by the Chinese sculptor Lei Yixin was inspired by a line from the March on Washington speech "out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope."

David Torkington



MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

Knowledge alone is not enough

At their last meeting, the academic James Robertson was deeply moved by the hermit Peter Calvey whose advice he sought, but there was one question that remained in his mind to ask Peter the following day. Peter had said: "There is all the difference in the world between knowing that we are loved and experiencing being loved." Without hesitation Peter said that he meant what he said, but the distinction has important implications for the spiritual life. He went on to explain.

I was at Strawberry Hill at the teachers' training college near Twickenham Station in London, staying with a lecturer and his wife. There were six other students and a young psychology lecturer called Mark, all staying in the same house. Mark and I found we had a lot in common and a deep friendship grew up between the two of us. He was a brilliant lecturer and I often went with him to the many outside engagements that he accepted.

A major security problem

Wherever he went he would always begin by belittling his competence, assuring his audience that he felt sure they knew far more about the subject than he did. If the contents and delivery of his material did not blatantly belie his preamble, you could not have blamed his audience if they stood up and walked out before he even started.

I think it was what I originally took for genuine humility in Mark that initially drew me to him. It was only later that I came to realise that he took a morbid delight in denigrating himself. It was only because we had grown close that I was able to ask him why he always apologised and ran himself down in front of others. "I suppose I have what we psychologists call a security problem. I am a classic case."

He told me something about his childhood, about his parents and how he believed they did try their best for him. There was no doubt that they loved him. He was sure of it. However, because of some Victorian hang-up, they were prepared to go to any lengths to avoid spoiling him. They shunned all manifestations of affection. He was never kissed, never caressed, never held close or cuddled. All physical expressions of love were prohibited, even though it went against the grain. Naturally, all this came out during his training.

As he looked back over his past, he could see quite clearly, without a shadow of doubt that his parents loved him. He was absolutely convinced of it, but they never showed their love. He never experienced their love and that made a big, big difference to his life. Because he

had not received love, he found it difficult to build up friendships, difficult to let others love him, never mind love them. That is why he felt insecure and behaved so immaturely on occasions. He was quite aware of his character problems and knew the reasons why. But as he explained himself, knowledge alone is not enough. It may give insight into yourself, but it does not give you the power to change.

Her love made him believe he was loveable

Mark went to the States to do a postgraduate course. It was there that he met his future wife. I met him just before coming out here to live the life of a hermit, and he told me what falling in love did for him. He said that for the first time in his life, he did not just *know*, but rather he *experienced* through her love that he was loveable. He said the experience was like someone breathing the breath of life into him for the first time. He came alive through her love and was beginning to discover a deep security, an inner strength to throw away the defence mechanisms with which he had surrounded himself over the years, and really start becoming himself.

It is exactly the same with our relationship with God. Through faith we believe God loves us. We know he loves us; there can be no doubt about that. We can list all the gifts that have been showered on us to prove it, enumerate not only what he has said, but what he has actually done. No matter how indisputable it is, or logically incontestable or even scientifically provable, it will not deeply affect us. Knowledge alone is not enough. Knowledge alone will never change anyone permanently for the better. But the experience of being loved will.

Knowledge alone is not enough

James Robertson begins honestly to give an account of himself to Peter.

I believed that knowledge alone was enough. But I could see now that no amount of knowledge without love would ever enable me to find the true wisdom for which I yearned. Before I went to Harvard to study for my doctorate in law I spent three years studying theology at Notre Dame. It was there that I relentlessly searched for the truth, for spiritual wisdom. I identified wisdom with knowledge and sought it out with all the urgent intensity of an alchemist in search of the philosopher's stone.

The haphazard plundering of dusty mystical tomes gradually gave way to the feverish desire to lay hands on the latest theological paperbacks.

After several years of intensive reading I emerged with a wholly new and exciting vision, only to realise with disappointment, that the visionary remained unchanged. If knowledge of God could not change me, what about knowledge of humankind? Christ had after all identified himself with man and surely this was what the Gospel was all about? Wasn't this the meaning of the Incarnation? That God had identified himself in Christ with the neighbour in need.

I became a dedicated exponent of the tenets of the social Gospel with all the verve and vigour of a new convert. However, my practice did not measure up to my preaching. My enthusiasm changed with the seasons, only to become snowed up in winter when my inner reserves of philanthropic energy hardened and froze over. There was still a flicker of flame in my head, but no fire in my belly. Knowledge of God had failed me. Knowledge of humankind had failed me too. Then it suddenly struck me like a flash of lightning. Why hadn't I seen it before? The words of the Delphic Oracle rang out loud and clear in my mind. 'Know thyself'.

Know thyself

Of course, it was obvious. I had been blind all along. The real problem was within *me*. Knowledge of myself would set me free. Surely this was the spiritual philosopher's stone for which I had been searching: it was self-knowledge.

I went away for a year before going to Harvard to do a course in pastoral psychology and counselling. You name it, we did it: Group dynamics, sensitivity sessions, personal analysis tutorials and counselling techniques. I know the course did me a lot of good, My faults, my failings, my problems of character, even my personal idiosyncrasies could be explained with detailed analysis of my childhood. At first, the experience was shattering. After the first few weeks I ended up like Humpty Dumpty in pieces on the floor, but bit by bit I was put together again, the better for my experience, I am sure.

At the end of the year I felt liberated. The truth had indeed set me free. It was only gradually as the weeks went by, that I realised once more that knowledge alone was not enough. The psychological knowledge I gained about myself was true, but it did not give me the power to change myself. It showed me all the blemishes but it did not remove them. At the end of it all I was back to square one.

Peter smiled and nodded when I told him something of my odyssey



"Through faith we believe God loves us. We know he loves us; there can be no doubt about that."

in search of wisdom, as if my experience was a carbon copy of his own, which it could not possibly have been.

"When will we ever learn?" Peter said.

Believe me every age has its own solutions to the world's problems, with its own secular prophets, each with their own brand of infallibility and their own political correctness that you challenge at your peril. They always think they can change the world when they have not even begun to change themselves.

Peter paused for a moment, gently moving his head from side to side, his lower lip lapping tightly over the upper lip as he mused sadly on the tragedy of the human predicament.

Love to give, not just dreams to share

You would wonder how generation after generation of rational animals could fail to see a truth so obvious, so simple, that even a child knows it by instinct, even before the age of reason. We want to know fulfilment; we want to experience joy, we want to be lifted out of ourselves into endless ecstasy and share our completion with others. The only drink that can slake our burning inner thirst is the living waters of uncreated love. It is only under the influence of this intoxicating draft that we will ever be able to see ourselves, not only as the psychiatrist sees us – as we are – but as we are meant to be. It will give us the strength to grow into our true selves from the ruins that we are now. Then we will be able to reach out to others with the genuine hand of fraternity, to give of ourselves totally in love to the neighbour in need, because we have love to give, not just dreams to share.

I do not want to give the impression that I am anti-intellectual, he said, or that I despise contemporary learning. On the contrary, I have advised many correspondents to go on for higher studies and several to study sociology. Only a month ago I told someone to consult a psychiatrist because I realised she needed the sort of competent professional help that I was unable to give. All I am trying to do is to reiterate and underline that no branch of human learning will ever answer our deepest needs. They may expose them, but they will never fulfil them.

After listening intently, James Robertson told Peter that he agreed with him and was grateful for everything he was learning, but he was a bit disappointed when he found that the truth did not set him free. "Oh, but it does!" said Peter. "Truth is not just a body of facts, Truth is a Person. In God, Truth and Love are one and the same, both light and life. The Ultimate Truth not only shows you yourself as you are, but as you ought to be. But further to this – it not only gives you vision, but also the inner power and strength to fashion that vision into reality."

Once again Peter's wisdom astounded James Robertson. He spent the night going over what Peter had said and what he wanted to ask him the following day. The story will be continued next week.

■ David Torkington's latest book, *How To Pray - A Practical Guide to the Spiritual Life*, published by Our Sunday Visitor is on sale from today (29th January). He is also the author of *Wisdom from the Western Isles - The Making of a Mystic*, *Wisdom from The Christian Mystics - How to Pray the Christian Way and Wisdom from Franciscan Italy - The Primacy of Love*. See www.davidtorkington.com

FOOD FROM SCRIPTURE

Fish – at the centre of New Testament stories, a symbol of Christianity

Nancy Wiechec

Fish stories capture our attention with suspense and metaphor. We love to hear about the big catch or the one that got away.

In fact, fish are at the centre of some favourite Bible stories – Jonah and the great fish, the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, Jesus appealing to fishermen to become his disciples.

Among the oldest of trades, fishing flourished along the Sea of Galilee at the place and time of Jesus' public ministry. Fish, fishers and fishermen are specifically mentioned more than 30 times in the New Testament.

After the Resurrection, the fish became a symbol of faith. Fish depictions were used as secret signs to mark the meeting places and tombs of early Christians who did not want to be discovered by their persecutors.

It was Christ himself who made the connection between fishers and followers.

“Jesus said to them: ‘Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men’” (Mk 1:17).

Anyone who fishes knows it requires commitment, skill and patience. As the rod and reel folk like to say: “Good things come to those who bait.” Discipleship demands similar traits.

Fish was a prominent protein of Jesus' time. Yet, because fish

perished quickly, it was often preserved by salting and drying or pickling. Although the Bible comes up short in providing actual recipes, the last chapter of John's Gospel recounts how fresh fish was cooked.

“When (the disciples) climbed out on shore, they saw a charcoal fire with fish on it and bread. ... Jesus said to them: ‘Come, have breakfast’” (Jn 21:9-12).

This recipe requires a fresh catch and follows that method. Both fish and bread are subtly flavoured with olive oil, sea salt and a hint of smoke.

GRILLED FISH AND BREAD

Start to finish: About 1 hour.

Servings: 4.

Fresh-caught white bass, perch, trout or mackerel work well with this recipe. You can substitute fish fillets. Put the lemon slices and thyme on top of the fillets, use a grill basket to keep everything together and adjust the grill time as noted below.

2 lemons;
4 whole fish about 12-14 inches long – gutted and cleaned;
3-4 tablespoons quality olive oil;
8 sprigs of fresh thyme;
Sea salt;
4 thick slices of sourdough or ciabatta bread.

Cut one lemon in half crosswise. Cut the other lemon into eight thin

slices. Pat the fish dry with a paper towel. Drizzle olive oil over the outside and inside the fish. Season each, outside and inside, with a few pinches of sea salt. Place two sprigs of thyme and two lemon slices inside the fish, cover them with plastic wrap and set aside at room temperature while you prepare the grill.

Clean the grill grate well to prevent the fish from sticking. Prepare a fire using wood or charcoal briquettes. It's ready for cooking when the coals are glowing, about 25 minutes after starting the fire. Using long tongs, carefully spread the hot coals in a single layer under the grill plate. If using a gas grill, preheat it to 500°F (260°C), then turn the temperature to medium before cooking.

Brush olive oil onto both sides of each bread slice. Sprinkle a bit of sea salt on one side of each.

Place the bread and the lemon halves (cut side down) on the grill. Flip the bread slices after about two minutes and grill the other side. When the bread is nicely toasted, remove it and lemon halves from the grill and set aside.

Place the fish on the grill and cook each side for seven to 10 minutes. Use a large metal spatula to turn the fish. Grilling time will depend on the size and thickness of your fish and the temperature of your grill. The fish are done when

the meat flakes easily away from the bones. Fillets will cook much faster, about four to six minutes on each side.

Place the fish on a serving platter and squeeze the juice from the grilled lemon over the top of the fish. Serve with the grilled bread and a green salad.

Grilled rainbow trout is accompanied by toasted bread. Fresh trout are perfect for cooking over an open fire.
(Catholic News Service photo/ Nancy Wiechec)



Ellis Heasley

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

In Nigeria young children from Du Merci centres are forcibly relocated to an unknown area

On 18th January, authorities in Nigeria's Kano state forcibly relocated Emmanuel, Mercy and Destiny Tarfa, all aged four, from the government-run children's home in which they were staying to an unknown rural location. The relocations mark the latest in the authorities' lengthy campaign of targeting of the Du Merci orphanages, where the children were initially seized from, and more are expected to take place.

Emmanuel, Mercy and Destiny were among 27 children seized in armed police raids on the Du Merci orphanages in Kano and Kaduna states which took place in December 2019. As regular readers of this column may be aware, Professor Richard Solomon Musa Tarfa, who co-founded the orphanages with his wife Mercy in 1996, was detained during the first of the raids, which took place on Christmas Day.

While eight of the older children were released into the custody of the Kano Chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in April 2020, the remaining children have been housed in the government-run Nasarawa Children's Home ever since. During this time they have been prevented from leaving the home to attend school or church.

Some of the children have also reported experiencing mistreatment and even violence whilst in the home, including one instance in which one of the older Du Merci residents was physically assaulted by security officers in the presence of a government official.

Another child remains hospitalised following a fire in the government orphanage in which he suffered first degree burns to the face, hands, body, and legs. Following the accident, other residents in the home falsely accused the Du Merci children of having started the fire deliberately.

Professor Tarfa was finally released on bail in December 2020, after repeated and excessive delays in his case;

however, these recent developments make it clear that the Kano state authorities have no intention of ceasing their campaign against the Du Merci centres.

Reports initially suggested that all of the Du Merci children aged between four and ten were to be taken to an unspecified rural area on 18th January, while the others aged between ten and 15 would be sent to a separate rural facility at an unknown date. While it seems that most of the younger children were not transferred on 18th January as expected, there is still serious concern that they will be moved soon.

The relocations only heighten concerns for the children's physical and psychological wellbeing, as they continue to be separated from the adults they consider their parents, and have now been taken away from their older siblings.

Please pray for all the children from the Du Merci centres, asking God to draw near to them and comfort them. Pray especially for Emmanuel, Mercy and Destiny as they face intense fear at such a young age. Please also ask God to comfort and strengthen Professor Tarfa and his wife Mercy, and all those fighting to reunite these parents with their children.

Finally, please pray that God would change the hearts and minds of those in power in Kano state so that they would end their campaign against the Du Merci centres, dropping all charges against Professor Tarfa, and returning all the Du Merci children to their rightful homes.



Four of the youngest children with Professor Tarfa.

(Photo: CSW)

Fr Francis Marsden



CREDO

The Gospel according to Mark

Green vestments on Sundays signifies that we are back in Ordinary Time. In this Year B, our Gospel readings are taken mostly from St Mark, so some background points about Mark may be helpful.

In the three-year Lectionary cycle, Year A takes readings mostly from Matthew, Year C from Luke. In Advent and Christmas, Lent and Eastertide the pattern is broken, and the Gospel of John is read where appropriate.

According to the *General Instruction on the Lectionary*, the Sunday readings were chosen according to principles of “harmony” and of “semi-continuous reading.”

However, not all Sundays in Ordinary Time appear in any one year. For example, this year, after the Sixth Sunday (14th February) we hit Ash Wednesday and Lent. We emerge back into the Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time on 13th June. This year Ordinary Sundays 7-10 are suppressed by Lent/Easter, Pentecost, Trinity and Corpus Christi. Certain Sundays – the 9th and 10th – are hardly ever celebrated, only if Easter is unusually early or late. This disrupts the “semi-continuous” Gospel readings.

Those of a critical mindset check the verse numbers of the readings at Mass, and grow suspicious when particular verses are omitted. The complete Bible enables us to see what the 1970 *Lectionary* compilers were reluctant to let us hear at Sunday Mass.

Looking through the Year B Sunday extracts from Mark’s Gospel, it becomes apparent that some sections are reasonably omitted because they duplicate readings from year A (Matthew) or Year C (Luke).

After all, Mark’s Gospel has only 661 verses. Of these 606 also appear in Matthew, and 320 in Luke. Both Matthew and Luke probably had Mark’s Gospel – the earliest – in front of them when they were writing. This leads to the exhaustively over-examined Synoptic Problem – the interrelationship of these three Gospels – which I will pass over today.

Additionally the Marcan sequence is broken for five Sundays (17th-21st), when instead we hear Jesus’ discourse on the bread of life, the Eucharist, from John 6.

However, the 1970 *Lectionary* compilers puzzlingly omit some sections either unique to Mark, or even common to all three Gospels.

Were these paragraphs which they really didn’t want Sunday Massgoers to hear? They include: The exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac. The beheading of St John the Baptist. The Corban dispute with the Pharisees. The Feeding of the Four Thousand. Jesus heals a blind man at Bethsaida in two stages. Jesus heals a boy possessed by an unclean spirit. Third Prophecy of the Passion. The cursing of the fig tree. The question of authority. Is David’s Son the Messiah?

It is true that some of these passages are difficult to explain pastorally. Does that really justify their complete omission? One of the boasts of the post-Vatican II Sunday *Lectionary* was its inclusivity, yet it seems deliberately to censor out certain hard passages. Enough said. Let us return to St Mark:

In the early second century Bishop Papias of Hierapolis wrote: “Mark, having become Peter’s interpreter, wrote down whatever he [Peter] remembered of what was said or done by the Lord, however not in order. For he [Mark] was not a hearer of the Lord or a follower of his. He followed Peter, as I have said, at a later date, and Peter adapted his instruction to practical needs, without any attempt to give the Lord’s words systematically. So that Mark was not wrong in writing down some things in this

way from memory, for his one concern was neither to omit nor to falsify anything that he had heard.”

Most scholars place the writing of Mark’s Gospel in Rome, around the time of Peter’s death (64-67 AD) but before the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. It is basically Peter’s memoirs, his vivid unpolished eye-witness account, via the pen of Mark.

He is probably the John Mark who accompanied Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey, then went with Barnabas to Cyprus. Later he was with Paul during his imprisonment in Rome. Paul asked for him in 2 Tim 4:11, his last letter, while he was awaiting execution.

Mark writes for a Gentile Christian audience, not for converted Jews. The Roman location is supported by the use of Latin loanwords in the Greek text. Mark explains for his Roman readers Aramaic terms like Ephphata (Be thou opened) and Talitha kumi (Little girl, rise up).

For its first 40 years the Church had no written Gospels. The faithful depended upon the oral preaching and teaching of the Apostles and disciples – Sacred Tradition. The most important parts of this Oral Tradition – but not all – were crystallized for posterity by the writers of the New Testament books. Oral and written Tradition ran in parallel during the

early centuries.

Mark aimed to provide a simple report of Jesus’ life and character. It is popular storytelling, the most direct of the Gospels, “a transcript from life” (Westcott). It begins with a stark declaration of faith: “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

It is full of human realism. Jesus is moved with compassion, with strong displeasure (1:43), surprise at disbelief (6:5), he sighs deeply (8:12), indignation (10:14) and love (10:21). Matthew and Luke, in comparison, are inclined to tone down or omit Mark’s eye-witness details, and smooth over any criticisms of the Apostles.

The first few chapters of Mark portray Jesus’ activity bursting like a whirlwind upon the somnolent Galilean countryside. It is the sudden irruption of Divine Power into our fallen human world – healings, exorcisms, preaching with authority, miracles, the display of a higher wisdom, follow each other in rapid succession. Jesus is mighty in word and mighty in deed.

The crowds flood in, yet Jesus remains curiously reticent about his true identity. He silences the demons who cry out: “I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” Mark is often called “the Gospel of the Messianic secret.”

Jesus did not announce His Messiahship publicly, because the



St Mark the evangelist. This window by Charles Eamer Kempe in Wells Cathedral depicts the saint with his symbol, the lion.

term had political and military overtones for his Jewish contemporaries. Furthermore, He wanted to allow people to come to their own realisation of his identity. “But who do you say that I am?” He asks his apostles at Caesarea Philippi (Mk 8:29). The real meaning of his Messiahship, of his role as the Anointed One of God, becomes clear only with his Death and Resurrection.

Mark’s theology focuses – as does Jesus’ – on the Kingdom of God. “Repent and believe the Good News!” is the opening cry. That Kingdom is the influx, the rule of divine grace in the hearts of human beings.

Mark uses various Christological titles: Son of God, Son of David, Suffering Servant, the Suffering Just One.

Jesus’ favourite title for Himself was “Son of Man.” In Hebrew this was *bar adam*, signifying a genuine member of the human race. In the *Book of Daniel* (7:13-14), however, it refers to a glorious eschatological figure who will return at the end of time, upon whom eternal dominion and kingship will be bestowed by God, the Ancient of Days.

Mark gives us Jesus as the healer, the wonderworker, the teacher, the exorcist, the forgiver of sins, and finally the Crucified and Risen One, as we shall see during this year.



The Beheading of St John the Baptist (1608) by Caravaggio. The imprisonment and brutal death of St John the Baptist is recorded in three of the Gospels, although St Mark’s (6:17-29) account is the most detailed.



Such authority is to be found in Jesus

31st January, 2021
Fourth Sunday in Ordinary
Time

**First Reading: Deuteronomy
18:15-20**

Moses predicts the coming of a future prophet greater than himself.

Moses said to the people: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. This is what you requested of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: 'If I hear the voice of the Lord my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die.'

Then the Lord replied to me: 'They are right in what they have said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die.'

Responsorial: from Psalm 94
(R.): *If today, you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

Come, ring out our joy to the Lord; hail the rock who saves us. Let us come before him, giving thanks, with songs let us hail the Lord.
(R.)

Come in, let us kneel and bend low. Let us kneel before the God who made us for he is our God and we the people who belong to his pasture, the flock that is led by his hand.
(R.)

O that today you would listen to his voice! 'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, as on that day at Massah in the desert when your fathers put me to the test; when they tried me, though they saw my work.' (R.)

**Second Reading: 1 Corinthians
7:32-35**

Paul promotes celibacy, to focus one's undivided attention to the Lord.

I want you to be free from



Jesus restores a man possessed of a demon.

anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman or girl is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

Gospel: Mark 1:21-28
When Jesus heals the man in Capernaum, people recognise the power of his message.

Jesus and his disciples went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out: "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." But Jesus rebuked him, saying: "Be silent, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.

They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another: "What is this? A new teaching—with

authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

The authority that liberate sets us free

We have all had teachers in the course of our lives, at primary school, at secondary school, at third level or in other less formal educational contexts. Some of those teachers we might prefer to forget, but others we remember with great fondness. Some of them had a significant influence for good on us. They inspired us with a love for the subject that they taught and we may have gone on to study it ourselves. They shared some expertise with us and encouraged us to head off in a direction of our own.

In today's gospel the people of Capernaum recognise Jesus who had come to their synagogue as a teacher, and not just another teacher but a teacher who was very different to the teachers they had grown used to, the scribes, the experts in the Jewish Law. His teaching, we are told, 'made a deep impression on people, because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority.' The people in the synagogue exclaimed: 'Here is a teaching that is new and with authority behind it.'

This journey of Jesus to the synagogue where he taught with authority and healed a man with an unclean spirit is the first public

act of Jesus in Mark's gospel. According to Mark, Jesus first appeared on the scene as an authoritative teacher, as someone whose teaching, whose word, could deliver people from their demons, from the forces that were oppressing them and leaving them diminished as human beings.

Jesus was recognised as someone who taught with authority. The word 'authority' has received a rather negative press in recent times. Various 'authority figures' have been criticised, often with good reason. Yet, in Jesus people experienced an authority that they found attractive, an authority that, in the words of the gospel, left them so astonished that they started asking each other what it all meant.

Jesus was recognised as a person of authority because of the word that he spoke and the impact for good of that word on others. Ultimately, his authority was rooted in God, in the Spirit of God that descended upon him at his baptism. The first public words he spoke after his baptism were, 'the reign of God, the power of God, is at hand.' God's life-giving, liberating power was working through him, and, so, he was recognised by others as authoritative. The power of God's love working through him gave him that authority which people found so attractive and so new.

Jesus defines authority as the exercise of God's life-giving and liberating power, the power that

raises the lowly and fills the hungry with good things, that includes within the community those who have been living on the edge, the power that forgives those who have done nothing to deserve forgiveness. This is the power of the good Samaritan who took care of his fellow traveller even though he was a Jew; it is the power of the Father who welcomed his returning son, the prodigal, who had messed up; it is the power of the widow who in giving two copper coins to the temple treasury gave everything she had. Within the gospel's vision of life, these are the exercises of power that confer authority.

Not all power is worthy of being recognised as authoritative. The imposing figure of G.K. Chesterton, the English writer and wit, was, apparently often seen squeezed behind a table in London restaurants. During one of his literary lunches, Chesterton was expounding on the relationship between power and authority. He described the difference in these terms: 'If a rhinoceros were to enter the restaurant now, there is no denying he would have great power here, but I should be the first to rise and assure him that he had no authority whatever.'

For us as Christians, Jesus remains the ultimate authority. Like the people of Capernaum, we recognise his authority, the authority of his teaching and his deeds, the authority of his life, death and resurrection. That is why we confess Jesus not just as our teacher but as our Lord. We are happy to submit to his authority, to his lordship, because we recognise that in doing so we will have life to the full, and, like the man in the gospel, be freed of those spirits that prevent us from becoming the person God intends us to be. There can be great reluctance today to submit to anyone. The value of personal autonomy is highly prized and sought after. Yet, it is not possible to live without submitting to some authority even if it is the authority of the self. What matters is to submit to the right authority and today's gospel suggests that such authority is to be found in the person of Jesus. [Martin Hogan]

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Chris McDonnell



An open door?

I make no apology for returning to a subject that I have mentioned a number of times in recent months, our parish life for the parish is a place of belonging, a place where roots often search deep into the soil, where birth has been given, life passed and death experienced. At least, it used to be.

At one time it was not uncommon for a person to have lived their whole life within the boundaries of a particular parish, lived, worked and loved on one particular patch of land. There they knew the lanes and fields, the hills and streams that gave them sustenance week by month by year. It is worth remembering that beyond our Catholic parishes the whole of England is divided into over 10,000 areas of land defined by legally drawn parish boundaries.

With the industrial development of our towns and cities, things changed. Churches were established in urban communities to meet the needs of an ever-growing population. That greater mobility has continued apace and attachment to a geographical locality diminished in consequence.

We often talk of the 'Parish Community' without bothering to examine just what it is, how it functions and if it is fit for purpose.

I would suggest that there is not a single parish community but a number of groups gathered together to form a larger whole. The experience of the Covid-19 crisis has led to a re-examination of terms and relationships in a quite fundamental manner.

Consider for example, our Sunday Eucharist, that time when we came together to share in spoken word and sung praise the Gospel message, a time to share in the Eucharistic presence of the Risen Christ. What about the rest of the week, how do we use our churches, what is their place in a secular society? It is heartening to see that cathedrals are now offering their great space as vaccination centres.

A number of parishes have resorted to the internet to offer those unable to attend Mass an opportunity of prayer. Without doubt, this has met a particular need. But it has consequences. The 'togetherness' of the community has not been experienced in the physical presence of others, the exchange of a smile or the touch of a handshake or hug, have been missed. It has led to the realisation that sharing in the Eucharist is

much more than the words we utter or listen to. Community is built on mutual experience and we are poorer when that is missing. The gathering of different parish groups in the Eucharistic community brings sustenance to all who participate.

So what of the future? How will parishes function when easier times return? How big will they be? How big do we want them to be? In so many aspects of life there is an optimum group size. When that is reached, the group divides and smaller groups follow a sustainable pattern, renewed and refreshed by the experience.

Such group identity depends on relationships that aren't just a matter of number totals but thrive on the knowledgeable understanding, one with another.

It comes as no surprise that over many years there has been a drive to reduce class sizes in our schools. The teacher-pupil bond is enhanced in smaller groups which encourage learning. Questions can be asked and answers offered with confidence.

Isn't parish life an instance of learning, a place where we feel safe to ask questions and hopefully listen in expectation to some honest answers? Maybe it should also be considered a place to give. So the issue of their size and the nature of the smaller constituent groups becomes important. Many may not return to a regular Mass attendance after the current hiatus. Many will question the integrity of the parish as a viable unit of practice.

Priests in past years were often tasked by their bishops with two targets; build a church for the people and establish a parish school. It was the focus of so much communal activity.

With the growing crisis in the priesthood, the advancing age profile has led to difficult decisions. Gone are the days when a parish had a priest assisted by two or three curates. Parishes have been treated as 'units of numbers' as one without a priest has been pressed into a hastily arranged marriage of convenience with their next door neighbours. And this solution to a real problem is no real solution at all. We have experienced the diocesan-parish model for so long that it has blinkered our vision.

If the elderly do not resume their place in the pews in coming months, then their absence will be noticeable, for so many others have already walked away. For

them, the parish community has not met need and is seen at superfluous to the requirement of their daily lives. Add to that the mobility of families who can just as easily drive to another parish should the mood so take them.

This exercise of choice has had a counterpart in the parish hopping from one televised Mass to another.

We might live within the boundaries of a parish, but more than likely our work takes us farther afield. Where we work is within another community of interest, it is another call on our time, another allegiance.

The image that accompanies these words is of an open village church door with a key in the lock, my own parish church. It gave rise recently to this brief poem.

Door ajar

*Lying on its back,
white against the mid-evening sky,
the thin curve of a lost Moon
hung over the fence.*

*Lying lost in early May
motionless without speech
silent in the desert, a door ajar
in this darkness of night.*

Parish communities have reacted in a great variety of ways to the coronavirus pandemic, some showing an enormous care and concern for each other, others a lack-lustre response to what is a major crisis. The jury is out on whether or not the closure of church buildings should be part of present lockdown requirements.

Will we have learnt anything from the painful experience of recent months or, when it is over, will we seek to rebuild an outdated structure not really fit for purpose?

Whose parish is it? People and priests come and go, each making a contribution a community gathered round a church. For those parishes that have the space for suitable burial land it becomes a significant resting place when their days are done, a place of memorial can be found for families and friends to visit, lay flowers and offer prayer.

Hopefully the fuss over girls serving Mass and women reading the liturgy of the word in parish celebration has finally been settled by the recent change in canon law to allow women to serve as lectors and acolytes. The recent papal document *Spiritus Domini* should be seen as the latest moment in a long-term process to de-clericalise the Catholic Church, another small

JOURNEY IN FAITH



step on the way.

As so many parishes have already moved in this direction, this is only a matter of legality catching up with practice, but an important one. At least, those few recalcitrant priests and bishops who wished to adhere to traditional ways no longer have



Rome as a final appeal backstop.

Before this change, the law said that "lay men who possess the age and qualifications established by decree of the conference of bishops can be admitted on a stable basis through the prescribed liturgical rite to the ministries of lector and acolyte."

Lector and acolyte are publicly recognised ministries instituted by the Church. 'Men' have become 'persons' as another small step is taken in recognition that half of the world's population is female.

The key in the lock of the Church door must remain unturned and the door ever open to welcome anyone who may wish to walk through and share in the Gospel invitation of the Risen Lord.

Alexis Carra proclaims the first reading during a Mass for young adults at St Patrick's Cathedral in New York City in this December 2016, file photo. On 11th January, Pope Francis ordered a change to the Code of Canon Law so that women may be formally instituted as lectors and acolytes.

(Catholic News service photo/
Gregory Shemitz)

Bishops see 'less cause for optimism' after virtual tour of the Holy Land

Judith Sudilovsky

Bishops who spent six days visiting virtually with Christians in the Holy Land said "it has become painfully clear that there is today less cause for optimism than at any time in recent history."

The bishops, drawn from the US, Europe and South Africa, also said the international community should "hold Israel accountable for its moral, legal and humanitarian responsibility" to make Covid-19 vaccines accessible for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and countries should encourage co-operation by the Palestinian Authority.

They also noted the lack of political progress and the continuing expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank along with the impact of Israel's Nation-State law, which establishes 'Jewish settlement as a national value' and the Jewish nature and character of the state without mention of democracy or human rights, as "eroding any prospect of a peaceful two-state solution."

Although the Palestinian Authority appears to not want to be seen as abdicating its health care responsibility toward the Palestinians as stipulated in the Oslo Accords agreement, officials have yet to publicly ask Israel to

take responsibility for providing the vaccines. The Palestinian Authority has given conflicting reports on when they expect to receive vaccines following agreements with pharmaceutical companies and the World Health Organisation.

Health challenges such as the pandemic, the lack of international pilgrims, continued conflict, occupation and blockages have exacerbated economic hardships and compounded the situation in the Holy Land during the pandemic, the bishops of the Holy Land Co-ordination said in their final statement, released on 21st January. They began their virtual visit on 16th January.

"This is the first time we have been prevented from meeting physically in the Holy Land," said the bishops, who have visited each year since 2000. "Yet we remain resolutely committed to supporting our sisters and brothers in the homeland of Christ. Over the past week we have been privileged and moved to hear from Christians across the West Bank, Gaza and Israel about their mission, resilience and witness in these unprecedented circumstances."

Stressing the importance of Israeli and Palestinian leadership recommitting themselves to direct negotiations,

they called on their Governments to renew their active participation in a "search for a just peace supporting dialogue between all sides, upholding international law, and reaffirming the plurality of Jerusalem, given its unique significance for Jews, Christians and Muslims."

Lauding the work of Christian institutions – including schools, clinics, hospitals and charity organisations such as Caritas – the bishops said they were "models of charity, justice and peace."

"These Christian institutions are vital in bringing together people from many different backgrounds to serve the common good of all," they said, urging people to strengthen their expression of solidarity with the people of the Holy Land during this "critical time."

"While many of our own countries continue to face severe hardship amid the pandemic, we have a profound responsibility to support our fellow Christians in the Holy Land," they said.

Right, bishops pictured during their 2020 visit to the Holy Land, celebrating Mass at Holy Family Catholic Church in the Gaza Strip
Photo: Marcin Mazur, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales



Lang criticises China on Uighurs and backs UK trade deal review

Simon Caldwell

Bishop Declan Lang of Clifton has led faith leaders in condemning the persecution of Muslim minorities in China and supported an amendment to allow the courts to review UK trade deals with countries suspected of genocide.

Bishop Lang, chairman of the international affairs department of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, added his name to a letter ahead of a vote on a Trade Bill going through the House of Commons.

The faith leaders' intervention put pressure on the Government to take a position on the alleged genocide of Uighur and Turkic Muslims in China's Xinjiang province at a time when Mike Pompeo, former US secretary of state, and President Joe Biden have each indicated that they believe China is committing "crimes against humanity."

The 'genocide amendment' to the bill was defeated 319-308, even though it was broadly supported by the House of Lords, the second political chamber. A revised but similar amendment is likely to be introduced to the bill when it returns to the House of Lords.

In a letter to *The Times*, two Christian, one Jewish and two Muslim leaders said they stood united in their denunciation of the treatment of the

minorities in Xinjiang, where 11 million Uighurs live.

They said the Government had a 'rare chance to act' in the face of 'mounting evidence of a targeted birth prevention strategy which, along with the destruction of cemeteries, reports of mass incarceration, indoctrination, extrajudicial detention, invasive surveillance, enslavement and forced

Bishop Lang backed calls for UK courts to have oversight on trade deals with states suspected of genocide



labour, can no longer be ignored.'

'In line with long-standing government policy that genocide recognition is a matter for judges, not politicians, the amendment would give UK courts the chance to review evidence of genocide and, where that high threshold is met, for trade agreements with the offending country to be reviewed,' the letter said.

'Critically, the amendment would provide a sound legal basis for Government action, something that is at present unobtainable through the United Nations,' it said.

China has rejected claims of a genocide as "outrageous lies."

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World Insight

Hong Kong screams out in pain: is anyone in the world listening?

Nick Benson

"I don't know for how long you can still hear my voice. So please pray for us."

This is the sobering and alarming message shared by Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun, which highlights the true severity Hong Kong faces as it battles for the survival of its democracy and fundamental basic human freedoms.

These freedoms remain under serious threat of extinction and the new year has brought no promise of hope for them; in fact it has only confirmed that they are becoming victims of an all-out massacre.

A sense of fear and uncertainty gripped Hong Kong last year, as Beijing imposed its draconian National Security Law on the region. Many have warned this would see rights and freedoms, including religious ones, quashed.

The controversial law was rushed through the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress on 30th June, the eve of the 23rd anniversary of the handover of Hong Kong from Britain to Beijing.

The law targets secession, subversion and terrorism with punishments up to life in prison. However, many have voiced their concerns that it could be used as a vehicle to end Hong Kong's freedoms and target peaceful activism and democracy in the Chinese-ruled city.

These fears became a reality just hours after the law was implemented, as 10 people were held accused of violating the law, including a man arrested for showing a pro-independence flag.

The law has since resulted in an onslaught of arrests, including that of Catholic pro-democracy media entrepreneur Jimmy Lai and Catholic activist Agnes Chow.

However, the biggest single mass arrest of recent times occurred earlier this year, as some 53 political activists, academics, legislators, councillors and lawyers were detained under the National Security Law on 6th January.

Liz Throssell, of the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), said the arrests were the latest in a series of detentions related to the exercise of fundamental freedoms, including the right to peaceful assembly in Hong Kong. "These latest arrests indicate that the offence of subversion under the National Security Law is indeed being used to detain individuals for exercising legitimate rights to participate in political and public life," she said.

Ms Throssell stressed that exercise of the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly and through freely chosen representatives, is one protected by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which is incorporated into Hong Kong's Basic Law.



Left, a protester holding a banner reading 'Chinese communist party is shameless, break the promises,' shouts during a protest against the new national security law in Hong Kong. Photo: Tyrone Siu, Reuters

Inset, Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun, retired bishop of Hong Kong, has vowed to "endure all the suing, trials and arrests" if he is targeted by a new security law. Photo: Paul Haring.

Below, demonstrators march against the national security law. Photo: Tyrone Siu, Reuters

"We call on the authorities to uphold their obligations under the IC-CPR, and to refrain from using the National Security Law to suppress the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association," she added.

UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said the arrests were a "grievous attack" on rights applied under the joint declaration signed with Britain when the territory was handed over in 1997. He also reiterated the UK's offer to holders of British national (overseas) passports in the city to come and live in the UK.

"These arrests demonstrate that the Hong Kong and Chinese authorities deliberately misled the world about the true purpose of the national security law, which is being used to crush dissent and opposing political views," he said.

"The UK will not turn our backs on the people of Hong Kong and will continue to offer British nationals the right to live and work in the UK."

Lord David Alton of Liverpool said the mass arrest of the pro-democracy politicians and activists for the simple act of holding a primary election to choose their candidates represented "another mortal blow" to Hong Kong's fundamental freedoms.

"This is the biggest single attack on any remaining vestiges of freedom in Hong Kong, and takes the city even further into the darkness of draconian repression by the Chinese Communist Party," he told *The Catholic Universe*.

"This is everything which China's most senior Catholic, Cardinal Joseph Zen, prophesied would happen – grave warnings which have

been shockingly ignored.

"Not only has democracy been dismantled in Hong Kong, and the rule of law trampled on, but all basic human rights are now threatened, including religious freedom. This should be a matter of urgent concern for the international community, including the Church. Cardinal Zen has been right throughout in insisting that it cannot be justified or in anyone's interests to stay silent in the face of such brazen repression," the Catholic peer added.

Last year, Cardinal Zen warned that the National Security Law could lead to a clamp down on religious freedom and said he was prepared to suffer arrest and trials under it. His comments came as International Christian Concern warned that under the law, "vocal clergy who have been supportive of the democ-

racy movement, such as Cardinal Joseph Zen and Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Ha Chi-shing, could be extradited to mainland China to be tried, since Beijing considers them to be threats to the regime."

Hong Kong's Justice and Peace Commission also signed an open letter with 85 other social justice organisations, decrying the law ahead of its implementation.

However, last August, just two months after the implementation of the law, Cardinal John Tong Hon worryingly told priests not to resort to using "slanderous and offensive statements" in their sermons. Some priests believe his instruction was influenced by the Beijing-controlled administration and the diocese did not want to confront the government.

The cardinal also refused to oppose the rollout of so-called 'patri-

otic' education in Catholic schools in Hong Kong and stopped a public prayer campaign in support of the pro-democracy movement.

Another troubling incident concerned Beijing's views on religious freedom, as two Chinese nuns, who work at the Vatican's unofficial diplomatic mission in Hong Kong, were arrested by mainland authorities during a visit home to Hebei province last May.

Three clerics with knowledge on the matter told Reuters that the nuns, in their 40s, were detained for three weeks before being released into house arrest without being charged. The nuns are forbidden to leave the mainland.

Western diplomats say that Chinese security agents have stepped up surveillance of the Hong Kong mission in recent months, while top clerics in China and in the Vatican view the arrests of the nuns as a sign that Beijing wants the mission shut.

Meanwhile, since the mass arrest of the pro-democracy politicians and activists on 6th January, Hong Kong has seen further arrests under the National Security Law, including 11 people for allegedly helping 12 young pro-democracy activists accused of attempting to flee the city by boat for Taiwan last year.

Benedict Rogers, Hong Kong Watch's Chief Executive, branded the arrests "a mockery" of previous claims that the National Security Law would be used sparingly and applied only to cases with a direct and imminent threat to security.

This latest arrest "has never had anything to do with national security," he said.





Migrants from Central America seeking asylum in the US are pictured through a fence in Nuevo Teapa, Mexico, on 21st January. Asylum-seekers along the border are expressing hope with US President Joe Biden now in office. (Catholic News Service photo/Tamara Corro, Reuters)

Asylum-seekers along Mexican border express hope with Biden in office

David Agren

Idalia Reyes remembers the desperation that drove her to seek out smugglers to take her children, unaccompanied, to the United States. Reyes and her children lived in a tent camp along the Rio Grande, where they endured crime, cold snaps and infestations of insects and snakes.

After her children, ages seven and four, suffered an outbreak of sores, she sought out smugglers, who floated the children across the river in the dead of night to the US side. The children promptly surrendered to immigration officials and were reunited with their father, who was already residing in the United States with an older son.

"It's difficult seeing your children suffer," Reyes recalled on a rainy night in the camp. "That's why I decided to send them across the river."

Despite the difficulties of remaining in the tent camp and desperately missing her children, Reyes spoke somewhat hopefully of being reunited with her family. She cited a simple reason: President Joe Biden, who promised an overhaul of US immigration and asylum policies.

"We've had our hopes in Biden because he said that he was going to help us," Reyes said. "We hoped that

he would win."

Reyes is stuck living in Matamoros – opposite Brownsville, Texas – as part of the Migrant Protection Protocols, which forces asylum-seekers to wait in Mexico as their cases are heard in US courts. Biden has promised to scrap the protocols and announced new participants would not be enrolled after 21st January, though few people were being processed due to restrictions on entry implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Details on what comes next for

the asylum-seekers remains uncertain, and many still have US court dates, which had been pushed repeatedly into the future during the pandemic.

Catholics working with programme participants are urging them to remain patient. Some are encouraging the Biden administration to wind down the programme, which they describe as "unjust" and designed to discourage asylum-seekers.

"It should be eliminated. It doesn't make sense for anyone," said Scalabrinian Father Pat Murphy, director

of a migrant shelter in Tijuana. "An asylum process that is fair should be started after so many years of injustice on the part of the Trump administration."

Despite the dearth of details, the prospect of an overhaul under a new US administration has buoyed spirits among asylum-seekers stranded in unsafe Mexican cities the length of the US-Mexico border.

"Biden is their hope," said Juan Sierra, a lay volunteer with the Diocese of Matamoros' migrant ministry.

Adding to the expectations, he said: first lady Jill Biden visited the camp in December 2019 and served them lunch.

Sierra and the local diocese – along with volunteers, mostly from the United States – have attended to the camp, which once hosted an estimated 3,000 asylum-seekers. Its population has dwindled to roughly

Adalia Reyes, an asylum-seeker from El Salvador, poses with a friend's child outside a Mass celebrated on 9th January in a tent camp for migrants along the US-Mexico border in Matamoros. Reyes said, out of desperation, she sent her two children unaccompanied to the United States, where they were reunited with their father. (CNS photo/David Agren)



700 as people found other housing, applied for asylum in Mexico, returned to their countries of origin or risked the Rio Grande, according to volunteers.

Residents said in interviews that criminal groups had infiltrated the camp and charge \$500 for permission to cross the river. Migrant activists in other parts of the border report similar situations of criminal control and desperation among asylum-seekers.

"Many people, in their desperation, go to the river and try to cross. But many drown," said Dominican Brother Obed Cuellar, director of the diocesan shelter in Piedras Negras, opposite Eagle Pass, Texas.

Br Obed, two Franciscan sisters and a social worker have tried to assist asylum-seekers in Piedras Negras, but encountered resistance. The local government closed the diocesan migrant shelter early during the pandemic and later prohibited providing hot meals for takeout.

"It's an extremely difficult situation for the shelter because we're being prohibited from providing charity," he said.

For Br Obed, the situation reflected a broader trend in Mexico: local populations showing scant interest in the asylum-seekers' plight and broken promises from the federal government.

"The Mexican Government has not fulfilled what it promised upon receiving the migrants here. They're not giving access to doctors, health care, not giving the work or giving them poorly paid work," he said.

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has disputed claims of migrants being mistreated, saying last month: "We have respected migrants. There have been no violations of their human rights."

Br Obed regularly checks in on the asylum-seekers, bringing food – when there are donations – and, during a cold week earlier this month, blankets.

At a flophouse full of migrants and asylum-seekers, he fielded questions on the front patio, including one from a young Honduran woman, who asked about a "law" allowing children to be admitted, a rumor spread widely in Central America. Br Obed told them everyone was being sent back, including pregnant women, some of whom "wait until they are in labour to trying crossing." He urged them to wait until there is more clarity from the Biden administration.

Sandro Hernández, 21, an Afro-Honduran, travelled to Mexico in a caravan and obtained a humanitarian visa to remain in Mexico legally for one year. He expressed optimism and some exasperation: Police detained him, he said, and stole 2,000 pesos (£73.)

Hernández had been working at a grocery store in the city of Saltillo, 200 miles south, but quit his job and headed for the border because of the prospect of migration policy changes under Biden.

"When I heard about Biden, I headed here," Hernández said outside a noisy bar, where he worked as a bouncer. "I'm looking for a better future. Hopefully, I can fix my paperwork, like the US president is talking about."

Universe weekly pullout Around the Parishes

CATHOLIC NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM ACROSS THE UK AND IRELAND



Moderator Rev Sebastian Jones
Cong. Orat with Eric

Celebration as Eric joins Oratory ranks

Cardiff: On Saturday, 16th January, the Cardiff Oratory in formation marked the Oratorian Feast day of St Joseph Vas, who was the 'apostle of Ceylon' (Sri Lanka).

St Alban's Parish had further cause to celebrate as Eric Pratcher, who had completed his three-month postulancy, received the habit of St Philip Neri at the Rite of Clothing and was given the name Brother Joseph Mary.

Brother Joseph has already completed his philosophical and theological studies with distinctions. During his three-year noviciate the living and study of the Oratorian life; the writings of the desert Fathers and the study of Latin will occupy his time outside of his work as the sacristan.

The community has five clothed members, and a growing fraternity of lay men and women who join the Oratory for prayer and devotions.

Diocese to host online retreat for altar servers

Salford: Salford Diocese is running an altar servers online retreat on Saturday, 27th February. Sessions for different age groups are available. From 10am-12pm it will cover ages 8-11, and from 1pm-3pm, ages 12-17. Servers aged 18 and over should email the address below.

The day will include a keynote from Bishop John on the ministry of serving during this time and in the future, times of prayer, a recommissioning service and workshops on 'Challenges & Opportunities', 'Prayer – A Friendship with Jesus', and 'Called to Serve'.

To register or for more information email formation@dioceseofsalford.org.uk. An under 18 consent form must be downloaded, completed by parents/carers and returned to the above email address. The retreat will take place on Zoom.

You can download a poster and videoconferencing consent form from the Salford Diocesan website.



Cambridge Song School keeps young people in harmony

East Anglia
Young people in Cambridge are sustaining a social life through lockdown thanks to the Song School at Our Lady of the Assumption and the English Martyrs. Julia Caddick and Mgr Eugène Harkness report.

Our junior choir rehearsals started back in September. We rehearse online via Zoom once a week for 40 minutes (the duration of a seven-year-old's concentration span online, so the experts say).

In addition, each week Julia, who directs the school, creates a video of herself teaching one of the new songs the choir is working on. This is emailed out to parents on a Thursday or Friday and enables the child to practice with her for the next week. They have proved very popular with parents and with children.

The number of children we've had joining us regularly each week from the Junior Choir ranks is 20.

We are learning a Mass setting and an anthem in readiness for

when the Covid crisis is past, so that we can be ready to do a Junior Choir Mass within weeks of restrictions lifting. In addition, Julia has taught the children 10 other songs with the intention of leaving them with an uplifting song in their hearts that they can share around the house with their parents.

To end the Autumn Term, the choir held an online concert which was not a choral concert as such, due to the limitations of Zoom. However, 11 children sang solos, and thanks to the Youth Choir having learned and recorded a harmonised arrangement of one of the Junior Choir Carols, the Junior Choir were able in their own homes to sing along to the accompaniment of the Youth Choir.

Our Youth Choir also started back in September but was able, because of their age and slightly smaller number (18) to meet in person with good social distancing in the church. They loved this, and worked really hard on a Mass setting in readiness for more normal times.

But Julia has really used this year to teach the Youth Choir to move from being a three-part choir, to being a full SATB choir.

The choir has worked on Latin Motets, and in the coming term, will be making the move towards more complex polyphonic pieces, such as *Viadana, Exultate Justi*; *Palestrina, Sicut cervus*.

You can listen to the Youth Choir's recording of *Oculi Omnium* by Charles Wood by typing 'Music at Our Lady & the English Martyrs, Cambridge', into YouTube.

The new lockdowns forced a change to some of our sessions, with the Youth Choir switching back online. But it is using the time to have sectional rehearsals. Julia prepares recordings of their individual lines, and recordings of a choir singing the whole piece for them to practise with. She also prepares a digital copy of the music for them, so that they can practise at home in lockdown. Then when they come back in person to rehearse, they each have their own individual hard copy of the mu-

sic that they use only when in the church – to avoid virus transfer!

When back together in person, the Youth Choir really enjoyed making 'in progress' recordings of their pieces.

It's hard for them to hear each other when they are spread out around the church (as is necessary for Covid safety), so it was a very pleasant surprise for them to hear how good they are getting.

We are really looking forward to the coming term. For so many teenagers who have lost their social lives due to the virus, the chance to come together and sing in Our Lady of the Assumption and The English Martyrs Youth Choir provides a unique ensemble singing opportunity. We have been one of the only places in Cambridge offering real face-to-face rehearsals for this age group.

We hope that other parishes might find similar ways of keeping our young people involved in parish life and with each other, especially during this period.

Prayers asked for Fr Patrick

Birmingham: It was with deep regret that the Archdiocese of Birmingham announced the death of Fr Patrick Joyce on 13th January, aged 83. The Archdiocese asks *Universe* readers for their prayers for the repose of his soul.

Fr Pat was ordained on 8th January 1972 and served at Our Lady of Lourdes, Yardley Wood, from 1972 to 1974; at St John the Evangelist, Banbury from 1974 to 1980; at St Francis of Assisi,

Handsworth from 1980 to 1981; at St Joseph, Nechells from 1981 to 1985 and SS Mary and John, Gravelly Hill, from 1985 until his retirement in 2017.

Prayers are also asked for Fr Pat's family and friends and for all who mourn him, including the parishioners of SS Mary and John where he served as parish priest for 32 years.

Details of Fr Pat's funeral will follow as soon as they are known.



Restored Alban rings out for those lost to Covid

Chloe Kelly

The sound of bells is deeply rooted in British culture and many of us live within hearing range of bells. Traditionally, they have been used to call us to wake, to pray, to work, to arms, to feast and, in times of crisis, to come together.

The sound of bells can be for the purpose of celebration, or for reasons of solemnity. Above all, bells are the sound of freedom and peace as in World War II they hung silently until the day they could ring in the peace.

The early missionaries used small hand bells to call people to worship and were later introduced to Christian Churches on a wider scale. By the middle ages, bells were thought to have supernatural powers and to drive away evil spirits. There is a story of bells being rung as a warning of impending attack in the 7th century, which had the unexpected result of scaring the enemy attackers into retreat. Later, it was believed that bells could ring themselves, further fuelling this belief.

In the beginning, bells hung on a simple spindle and were chimed using a rope, however before long, bell ringers were experimenting with different ways to ring the bells with better control, and things have been progressing since then.

The Reformation sadly saw the removal of many bells, but afterwards they were reinstalled, and we still enjoy the glory and poignancy of the sound of bells to this day.

At St Albans in Hornchurch our bell was installed in 1959 by Mears London. For reasons unknown, the bell was out of use for many years. This year, 2020, it was decided that it would be fitting to restore and re-install the bell in memory of all those who have lost their lives as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The bell was taken down on 3rd December 2020 and taken to Bridport in Dorset for two weeks of restoration by Nicholson Engineering Ltd, to be returned on 10th December, and on 11th December 2020, the bell was blessed with oil of Chrism and given the name Alban, in order to set it apart from other bells in a ceremony much like a baptism.

Later that day, 'Alban' was rehung and now proudly rings out as a symbol of our faith. The bell has been kept intact but has been modified for modern use and is automatically set to ring at 9am, midday and 6pm. There is an electronic fob with pre-programmed settings that can be used for weddings, funerals and other occasions, a far cry from the original spindles and ropes of early bells!

On 17th December a special liturgy was held to celebrate the unveiling of a plaque in memory of those who died of the covid-19 pandemic. We were joined by Reverend Amanda Keighley and Reverend Tom Keighley from the St Nicholas Church of England parish, along with two councillors from the Hornchurch resident association, Councillor Barry Muggleston and Councillor Stephanie Nunn who unveiled the plaque for us.

During the Liturgy, Ann, Francie and Julie Nolan lit candles to remember all those who have lost their lives to the Covid-19 pandemic, which included their mother Frances, one of our parishioners, who sadly passed away in April.

The celebration was sombre, but full of hope for better days ahead, as well as faith in our Lord and the knowledge that we are stronger when we pull together for the sake of the community. As the Angelus bell rings out each day all those we have lost will be in our prayers.



Sandra takes on key diocesan role



The diocese of East Anglia has appointed Sandra Portas as its new part-time stewardship and fundraising co-ordinator. This is a new role created specifically to help parishes undertake stewardship campaigns and to be a key point of contact for colleagues seeking help with fundraising.

Sandra has lived in North Norfolk for 20 years with her husband and two sons. Prior to joining the diocese, she worked in the City of London. She also has several years' experience of investigating external funding sources and of writing grant applications.

The Church stewardship and fundraising programme seeks to

invite parishioners to share the gifts that God has given them, be that prayer, time and talents and their financial blessings. Above all else, it focuses on stewardship and it has delivered impressive results with an increase in the Gift Aid and offertory income of over 30 per cent.

Sandra is keen to hear from any parish in the diocese that would like to find out more about the 'time, talents and treasures' approach to stewardship.

Please get in touch with Sandra at stewardship@rcdea.org.uk.



Pictured above, from the top, the old bell and once restored; the anointing with chrism; the unveiling ceremony by Councillor Barry Muggleston and Councillor Stephanie Nunn and, left, Ann, Francie and Julie Nolan light candles to remember all those who have lost their lives to the Covid-19 pandemic, including their mother, Frances

Education

Schools promised fortnight's warning on re-opening

Schools in England will be given two week's notice ahead of their full re-opening, the Education Secretary has promised.

Gavin Williamson said that although he is "not able to exactly say" when pupils will return to class, he hopes it will be before Easter.

"I want to see them, as soon as the scientific and health advice is there, open at the earliest possible stage - and I certainly hope that would be before Easter," he told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme.

He said schools and parents would have "absolutely proper notice" of when children are going to return,

which he said would be a "clear two weeks" for teachers and families to get ready.

Mr Williamson stressed that the Government wants to give schools as much notice as possible so "teachers can get ready, children can prepare, and parents know in order to manage their lives".

"We would want to give all schools a clear two weeks' notice period in order to be able to ready themselves," he said.

Primary and secondary schools remain closed in England, with exceptions for vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers.



Children's social care target in Williamson review aims to improve life for the young

A wholesale independent review of children's social care will set out to radically reform the system, improving the lives of England's most vulnerable children so they experience the benefits of a stable, loving home, the Government has said.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson has launched the review, which aims to raise the bar for vulnerable children across the country, delivering on a manifesto commitment to look at the care system and make sure children and young adults get the support they need.

Josh MacAlister will lead the review. A former teacher, Mr MacAlister founded the social work charity Frontline in 2013. He will step down from his role as chief executive to work with Government on this review.

The Government hopes his work will reshape how children interact with the care system, looking at the process from referral through to becoming looked after.

It will address major challenges such as the increase in numbers of looked after children; the inconsistencies in children's social care practice; outcomes across the country; and the failure of the system to provide

enough stable homes for children.

Running throughout the review will be the voices and experiences of children, young people or adults who have been looked-after, or who have received help or support from a social worker. Their experiences will be considered and reflected sensitively and appropriately, with their views included in full in the work.

Mr Williamson said: "We have known for some time that despite the best efforts of hardworking and dedicated social workers, the children's social care system is not delivering a better quality of life and improved outcomes for those it is designed to help.

"This review will be bold, wide-ranging and will not shy away from exposing problems where they exist. Under Josh MacAlister's leadership, it will benefit from his understanding of the challenges facing the system and his experience of improving outcomes for children and young people.

"It is part of the golden thread that runs through everything we are doing to level up society, especially for those who are too often forgotten or marginalised.

"It is going to help us raise the bar

for these vulnerable children, improve their life prospects and most importantly, it's going to help give them the chance to achieve their potential and not be held back from the futures they deserve."

During the virtual launch event, Mr MacAlister launched a 'Call for Advice' to help shape the early work of the review and invited applications for an 'Experts by Experience' Group to advise him on how to include the

Review is part of Government pledge to level up society, Gavin Williamson said



voices of people with a 'lived experience' of children's social care.

Mr MacAlister said: "If 2020 showed us the grit, commitment and creativity of social workers, teachers and other professionals, then 2021 is our chance to think afresh about how we support children without the safety, stability and love that many of us take for granted."

He vowed that the review "will listen deeply and think boldly."



Academy Principal

Full-time role, Grade: L11 (£52,643) to L15 (£57,986)

St Mary's Primary, Whitstable is a Catholic primary academy and part of the Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership (KCSP), a multi-academy trust (MAT) established by the Archdiocese of Southwark for Catholic education across Kent. Currently a MAT comprising 24 academies (19 primary and 5 secondary), KCSP is seeking to appoint an inspirational and dedicated Academy Principal from September 2021 due to the promotion of the current post-holder.

Reporting to the Executive Principal, the Academy Principal will be responsible for the day-to-day leadership and management of the academy and will lead a team that strive together for children under the academy's values of "Joy, Courage, Honesty, Excellence & Community".

The successful applicant will take the lead role in providing inspirational Catholic education based on our shared Gospel values, and will be seen by pupils, parents and carers, and the wider parish as the person directing their learning, and as the academy's pastoral leader. We are therefore seeking to appoint a practicing Catholic to this role.

St Mary's, Whitstable is an inclusive academy. Its dedicated staff, helpers and Governors work hard to ensure that every student is supported and challenged to be their very best. In an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust and care, the St Mary's team works together in the spirit of the Gospel to serve the local community, wider parish and the Diocese as a whole. Through mutual respect, responsibility and self-discipline each individual is encouraged to grow spiritually and intellectually so that unique and positive contributions can be made to society and the world.

St Mary's Whitstable is a two-form primary academy located in Whitstable, serving the Parish of Our Lady Immaculate, Whitstable and the local area. Its most recent denominational inspection in November 2016 judged it as 'Good' and its most recent Ofsted inspection in April 2018 also judged the academy to be 'Good' in all areas.

St Mary's, Whitstable and KCSP are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and require all staff, helpers and Governors to share this commitment. Offers of employment are subject to an enhanced disclosure and barring service check and section 128 check.

The full job description and person specification for this role, together with an application form and all other related documents can be found by visiting our website: <https://www.kcsp.org.uk/academy-principal/>

Please send your letter of application together with a completed Catholic Education Service (CES) Application Form, completed CES Recruitment Monitoring Form, CES Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 Disclosure Form and CES Consent to Obtain References Form to the Executive Principal at: vohalloran@kcsp.org.uk

Your letter of application should be limited to 1,000 words max. and should outline why you feel you are suited to this role, what you believe you can bring to the academy and also detail your experience to date, skill set and qualifications.



St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Northwood Road Whitstable, Kent, CT5 2EY

Contact: 01227 272 692
office@st-marys-whitstable.kent.sch.uk
<https://www.st-marys-whitstable.kent.sch.uk/>

Closing date for applications:
05 March 2021
@ 5pm

Interviews will be held on: 19 March 2021

Start date: 01 September 2021

To see your Catholic school or college featured in *The Catholic Universe*, send your stories in to **Michael Winterbottom** at michael.winterbottom@thecatholicuniverse.com or call him on 07949 987771

Busy bees, get drawing a logo for Salford's Laudato Si centre

The Bishop of Salford is calling on young artists from schools around the diocese to get creative to draw, illustrate or paint the Laudato Si Centre's new logo.

The diocese is home to the Laudato Si Centre which, when open, will welcome visitors to learn about protecting our planet and will encourage all to share actions and ideas 'to protect our common home' following on from the letter that Pope Francis wrote to every person on the planet – *Laudato Si*.

In order to take part, entrants must attend a Catholic school in the Salford diocese. There will be three age groups and three prizes: two runner ups and one overall prize. Each prize winner will receive a bookshop voucher for £15 and the overall winner's logo will be digitally transformed and turned into the Laudato Si Centre logo.

The diocese would like entrants to draw a logo based on what the Laudato Si Centre means to them. The winning design will be transformed into a digital design which will be front and centre at the Laudato Si Centre.

For more information, including a competition brief and competition entry template, see:
<https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/calling-young-artists-the-laudato-si-centre-needs-you/>



The Bishop of Salford, John Arnold, poses for a photo with beehives at the Laudato Si Centre. Photo: Simon Caldwell

Newman reaches out to help Beirut school programme

A Brent school has launched a two-year long fundraising drive to help displaced Syrian refugees.

Newman Catholic College, Harlesden, aims to fund an afterschool education programme based in Beirut, Lebanon. The money will go towards creating a three-year higher education vocational and technical training programme based at two centres in Beirut. It will also support disadvantaged Lebanese students.

The school is working with Catholic charities The Constantinian Charitable Trust (TCCT) and their partner Caritas Lebanon to support the project.

Newman Catholic College is among a handful of schools nationwide recognised as a school of sanctuary for refugees by charity City of Sanctuary UK. It is also a UNICEF Rights Respecting school.

Headteacher at the school Danny Coyle, who is also a TCCT trustee, said: "I am delighted that the superb work of this school over the last few years in supporting refugees from Syria here in Brent, as well as from other parts of the world, will now embrace children in Lebanon.

"I am convinced that the relationships that will develop as a result of

this project will be of great benefit to all these children and their communities."

Professor Ian Linden, the chairman of the TCCT said: "I was very moved, as were the other Trustees of The Constantinian Charitable Trust, that the Newman College Governors will be directing the school's fundraising activities in support for the Afterschool Programme. My hope is that this new Newman College and the disadvantaged Lebanese children and Syrian refugees attending the programme will be of real mutual benefit by further nurturing in Newman College students the practice of solidarity that Pope Francis speaks about so often."

The Chairman of the school Governors, Paul O'Shea, said: "Both Newman College and the TCCT project have thus far been involved in supporting Syrian children displaced and disturbed by terrible conflict in their country, albeit in different places and different ways.

"This speaks to the solidarity to which we are called in supporting those suffering the consequences of poverty in Lebanon and those wrenched from their homeland by war."



St. Bede's Catholic College, Bristol Principal, September 2021

Governors of St. Bede's Catholic College are seeking to appoint an outstanding and inspirational Principal to lead our college

St. Bede's, a Catholic Academy with 1177 pupils aged 11-18, has a superb reputation locally, within the Diocese and nationally. Our specialist subjects are those of Science and Sports. We are recognised by the Diocese as an Outstanding Catholic school and work closely with SSAT supporting the Leadership Legacy project. In addition, we hold Beacon status for Holocaust Education, the Geography Quality Mark and an award from the Incorporated Society of Musicians in recognition of excellence in Music. More recently we have been recognised for 'Leadership through moral purpose', 'engaging with evidence and research' and for our outstanding results by SSAT. The College has also recently been awarded the Leading Parent Partnership award in recognition of our work with parents and Investor in People accreditation.



The ideal person for this post must be a practising Catholic and will have:

- A track record as an outstanding teacher and leader
- Vision, creativity, energy and ambition
- A deep knowledge about teaching and learning
- A determination to ensure no student is left behind
- A good understanding of data, timetabling and the curriculum
- Experience and success within a leadership team
- An ability to lead in all academic, pastoral care and financial matters
- Excellent leadership, communication and interpersonal skills
- Total commitment to securing high standards from and through others
- The ability to lead and inspire colleagues

If you are an existing Head teacher or a member of a successful leadership team with a proven track record of success, a strategic thinker with the skills, ability and passion to help young people flourish within a great college, we would be delighted to hear from you.

To arrange a discussion with the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors, please email the Clerk to Governors, c.walker@stbcc.org

A relocation package may be available and salary negotiable for an appropriately experienced candidate.

Closing date is noon on Monday, 22nd February 2021
Short listing: Thursday, 25th February 2021
Interviews will be held on Tuesday 23rd and Wednesday 24th March 2021

Salary in the region of £88k depending on experience, academic qualifications and performance record.

St Bede's is currently a Group 7 school as outlined in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions document. Offers of employment are subject to Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks, excellent references without reservation and medical clearance.

Further information and application details are available from our website: www.stbedesc.org, by emailing c.walker@stbcc.org

St Bede's is a charitable company limited by guarantee. Company Number 07798550.

Work: A sacred space for people to flourish

Don Clemmer

For people who prefer to keep their job and their faith separate, the Catholic Church poses a massive challenge. Catholic teaching simply does not see it that way. This isn't about being a vocal believer at work, but about how work itself is an essential expression of human dignity.

The Church's body of teaching on work and the dignity and rights of workers bridges from the very beginnings of our tradition to contemporary phenomena and the most cutting-edge advancements in society.

The Genesis creation stories depict God as working and proclaiming the fruits of labour good. Being able to work and delight in that meaningful creative process is part of what it means to be made in the image and likeness of God. In his 1981 encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, St John Paul II wrote that the *Book of Genesis* is the first "gospel of work" and that God also experienced work on earth as Jesus, a carpenter.

Work played a central role in birthing the entirety of modern Catholic social teaching. Pope Leo XIII's landmark 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (*Of New Things*) addressed the challenges posed to working people and society overall by the Industrial Revolution.

He laid a foundation that reverberates through Catholic teaching to

present day. What we would now call wage theft, Pope Leo XIII addressed with: "To defraud any one of wages that are his due is a great crime which cries to the avenging anger of heaven."

Rerum Novarum was so influential to Catholic thought that it sparked numerous "sequels" – subsequent popes applying the Gospel to other signs of their times. The teachings enshrined in these and other encyclicals are enumerated in



"To defraud any one of wages that are his due is a great crime which cries to the avenging anger of heaven" – Pope Leo XIII

the 2004 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*.

This Vatican document describes work as a fundamental right and a good and that workers have certain rights. These include: the right to a just wage, to rest, to a safe work environment, to unemployment assistance, to senior pensions, to health care, to disability insurance, to parental leave and benefits, to organise and to strike.

These rights carry with them implications for how society should be structured, as well as what the Church advocates for in the public square. The principles of Catholic social teaching not only describe how individuals, businesses, governments and religious institutions can live in balance, but also challenges everyone, individually and systemically, to work towards the common good in solidarity with one another.

Catholic social teaching exists to promote human flourishing, which is one of those know-it-when-you-see-it concepts. Or not see it, as the case may be.

A person who cannot work because no jobs are available is not flourishing. A person who has to work multiple jobs essentially non-stop just to get by is not flourishing. A young adult who has no health insurance because their employment consists of a patchwork of short-term, part-time gigs is not flourishing. A family that is technically



meeting its need but also continually in a state of scarcity, insecurity and social marginalisation is not flourishing.

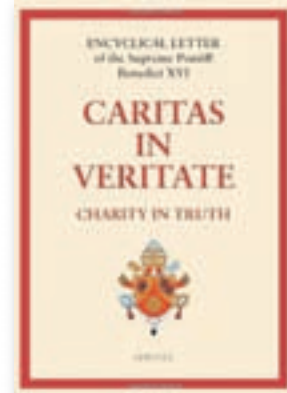
The compendium states: "The economic well-being of a country is not measured exclusively by the quantity of goods it produces but also by taking into account the manner in which they are produced and the level of equity in the distribution of income" (No. 303).

Income inequality, a reality that has worsened precipitously in

recent decades, has drawn criticism from Church leaders. The US bishops' 2013 Labour Day statement said that current imbalances "demand

boldness in promoting a just economy ... by creating jobs that pay a living wage and share with workers some profits of the company."

Pope Benedict XVI wrote prophetically of the perils of rampant inequality in his 2009 encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, noting that "not only does social cohesion suffer, thereby placing



democracy at risk, but so too does the economy, through the progressive erosion of 'social capital': the network of relationships of trust, dependability and respect for rules, all of which are indispensable for any form of civil coexistence" (No. 32).

This is why Pope Francis carries on the tradition of applying the Gospel to ever newer "new things," including the widespread disruption of Covid-19, which has thrown millions out of work, and developments in artificial intelligence that could make entire job sectors obsolete in decades.

In November 2020, Pope Francis said progress in artificial intelligence should always be "joined to the common good." He has endorsed universal basic income proposals – regular monetary payments from the government – as a way of helping people flourish. Whether it's the factories of the Industrial Revolution or lines of binary code, the Church opposes workers' humanity being sliced and diced by systems.

Work is a sacred space for flourishing, not a backdrop for exploitation and abuse. More than a way to pay the bills or sustain ourselves, the Church challenges us to make work where we become who God always intended us to be, and in doing so, get to know him better. The God who laboured to enjoy the fulfilment of his creation wants the same for all of us.



A Palestinian worker looks after flowers at a nursery in Ramallah, West Bank. Work is a sacred space for flourishing, not a backdrop for exploitation and abuse. (Catholic News Service photo/Mohamad Torokman, Reuters)



make any changes to your diet until advised to.

Finally, if the other possible causes of your symptoms have been excluded, you might decide to trial a gluten-free diet to see if your symptoms improve. This is a reliable way of establishing if you may be suffering from gluten sensitivity.

Despite little being known about this condition, researchers believe gluten sensitivity is more common than both coeliac disease and wheat allergy combined. It is estimated that gluten sensitivity may occur in up to six per cent of the population, compared to coeliac disease which affects around one per cent.

“You might decide to trial a gluten-free diet to see if your symptoms improve. This is a reliable way of establishing if you are suffering from gluten sensitivity.”

Gluten intolerance: How to manage a sensitive gut

Gluten intolerance is not just a digestive issue. Here are some common symptoms to be aware of and tips to reduce your guts sensitivity.

HEALTH

Most of us have experienced bloating, abdominal pain, diarrhoea and headaches from time to time, but if these symptoms are appearing more regularly than you could be one of millions potentially affected by gluten sensitivity, and you may benefit from a gluten-free diet.

Gluten is a protein composite found in foods processed from wheat and related grain species, including barley and rye. Most of us can digest this with no trouble but those suffering with gluten sensitivity will develop the symptoms.

This condition may affect up to six per cent of the population and can be easily confused with other gluten

related disorders. As a result, gluten sensitivity can be hard to detect and diagnose and so it is vital to go to your GP for a thorough medical assessment.

Therefore, it is critical to rule out any other possibilities. The following key facts will help you understand gluten sensitivity and how this emerging condition can be recognised.

Key ways to identify if you have gluten sensitivity

Gluten sensitivity exists alongside the other gluten-related conditions and shares many of the symptoms of coeliac disease, making it trickier to diagnose. Despite this, there are some definable ways of establishing this condition with guidance from a

medical professional:

- Bloating
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhoea and/or constipation
- Nausea and vomiting
- Swelling of tongue and colour changes
- Pain or burning sensation of upper stomach
- Headaches
- Confusion, numbness and/or pain in limbs
- Skin rash (dermatitis)

If you experience any of these symptoms, it is important to exclude the possibility that you are suffering from coeliac disease, a wheat allergy or any other conditions which cause similar symptoms. To exclude these conditions, you should seek advice from a medical professional and not

Why are people sensitive to gluten?

No one really knows why there is an increase in the number of people who seem to be sensitive to gluten. One school of thought is that in evolutionary terms, gluten is a relatively new food stuff for the digestive system, and we have noticed a trend of increased diagnosis of coeliac disease over the past decades.

If I do have gluten sensitivity, how is it managed?

Gluten sensitivity can be managed by excluding gluten from your diet. It is unknown whether this exclusion should be temporary or lifelong (as in the case for coeliac disease), but what we do know, is that cutting out gluten is a step in addressing the symptoms of gluten sensitivity.

• If you are experiencing any of the above symptoms, it is extremely important that you visit your doctor to rule out coeliac disease and wheat allergy before commencing a gluten free diet. It is vital that you remain on a gluten containing diet until you have visited a medical professional

For further information about gluten sensitivity, visit www.glutensensitive.co.uk



Gluten sensitivity can be managed by eliminating gluten foods from your diet

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The future of finance is digital

A shift in consumer habits shows we are choosing to take a digital approach to finances, all from the palm of our hand.

FINANCE

Recent research from Samsung Pay reveals that the UK is more willing than ever to go digital with their payments, as traditional methods begin to get left behind – and the impact of the lockdown has a transformative impact on the way people want to manage their money.

The UK's enthusiasm for digital payment methods has soared over the last year, as almost half (46 per cent) of Brits claim they are more willing to pay digitally following the lockdown period. With half of the respondents claiming to feel “anxious”, “overwhelmed”, or “scared”, when thinking about their finances, the nation is looking for new, simpler ways to manage their money. The survey suggests that traditional transactions could soon be coming to an end. With more than four in ten (42 per cent) people saying they have too many cards in their wallet – up to 15 in some cases – and many wanting to avoid using physical cash (45 per cent), a growing number of people (31 per cent) are now turning to their phone to make payments.

Benefits of going digital

While this attitude has, inevitably, accelerated due to this year's pandemic, evidence shows this was a pre-existing trend, with nearly half



(48 per cent) of respondents claiming they can't remember the last time they visited a bank in person. The flexibility of checking accounts and moving money around at the tap of a button is a key factor in this shift, as eight in ten state it is a major benefit of going digital. Surveying 2,000 people across the UK, Samsung's research also revealed the following insights:

- People want more control: More than six in ten (61 per cent) people between 18-64 wish they had more control over their finances, with almost a third (31 per cent) of Gen Z and Millennials admitting to feeling anxious when they think about it.

- Too many options: Four in ten consumers feel, “overwhelmed”, by the sheer number of different banking options currently available to them, suggesting a simple solution is in demand.

- Rewards are rare: Over eight in ten (82 per cent) consumers say that they want to get rewarded for using their card, but currently only two in five say they currently feel like they are doing so.

- Bringing cards together is the dream: Seven in ten people agree that having all their payment cards in the palm of their hands is an amazing prospect.

“These results exhibit a clear shift in consumer attitudes towards the way they make payments following this year's events. Research shows that customers want the option to control all of their finances from the palm of their hand,” comments Teg Dosanjh, director of Connected Services, UK & Ireland at Samsung Electronics.

Security still key

Despite the will to go digital with their payments, research results show that security is still a key concern for people looking to make the transition. Over half of respondents (54 per cent) admit to worrying about how secure their details are when using digital payment methods.



To renovate or move?

Give careful consideration to the choice between renovating your home or making the big move to a new home.

HOME

Most people, like hermit crabs, find they eventually outgrow their homes. While the hermit crab's only option is moving shells, people have the choice of renovating to either make better use of space or to add a little more room.

Give careful consideration to the choice between renovating your home and moving to a new one. It is a big decision that requires you to look carefully at the possible benefits and drawbacks of renovating as well as your long-term goals.

One of the main advantages of

“Be careful not to overcapitalise. This is where the cost of your renovation outweighs the market value it will add to your home.”

renovating an established home is that you can already measure the price performance over time. This determines how much the house has been worth over the past few years and allows you to estimate what the future potential growth will be with the added improvements.

Speak to your local estate agent for advice on how adding something such as an en-suite or loft conversion would affect your home's value.

If you decide to renovate, be careful not to overcapitalise. This is where the cost of your renovation outweighs the market value it will add to your home. Some believe that spending a great deal on renovating their home will reap thousands more in the re-sale. This is not always the case. Some homeowners make the mistake of overly extending their property. A five-bedroom house with all the mod cons may be hard to re-sell if it is located in a downtrodden area.

However, the area can also be a reason to renovate, particularly if you have children. Uprooting your family, leaving behind friends, the local school, neighbours, and nearby amenities can easily tip the scale on the side of renovation.

Part of your decision to renovate may hinge on the state of your current home. A building inspection can uncover potential problems such as dry rot, which may mean moving is more viable than the costs involved in serious renovation.

One vitally important part of the decision process is to be exceptionally clear about what you want to achieve with the renovation and how much you can spend as an absolute maximum. Knowing your financial boundaries and building requirements will help builders give you the most accurate quote. It is also wise to allow for an extra 10-15 per cent on top of your budget estimate to cover any unforeseen costs.

Overall, you need to do some homework and weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of each option. For example, if you decide to move house there are costs such as refinancing costs, agent fees, legal fees and moving costs and so on. On the other hand, if you decide to renovate, you will need to consider the costs for any finance that you may require for your project.

If you do decide to renovate instead of move, create a viable master plan, detailing your long-term goals, budget, and time frame.

One key piece of expert advice is to not think of renovation as a quick, one-off activity. Instead, start small and build up to major renovation over time.

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Involve the children to build perfect the family garden

Think about how your garden will really work for you and turn the backyard in to a family paradise.

■ GARDEN

Ever since we were told to stay at home back in March, many of us have rediscovered the joys of our garden as a safe family space.

Previously, when considering the perfect garden, many of us would have said we wanted a perfect manicured lawn, pretty, neat flower beds and perhaps a charming water feature. But recent events have made us think in more practical terms – how useable is a garden where everything has its place? And how much can kids enjoy it?

The traditional British garden that many of us grew up with was all about a nice patch of lawn and a good stock of summer flowers, perhaps a patio for BBQs and maybe even a swing. But thinking about how your garden will really work for you can turn the typical backyard in to a family paradise, whether large or small. Observe how children use a garden – they touch, smell, taste, they run around, and they pull up flowers. Little girls love daisies as

much as they love roses, little boys like getting down in the grass as much as playing on a swing.

Banish ideas about neat, straight lines, weekly mowing and co-ordinated colours. If you have a lawn, why not leave a section wild and unmown? Here bugs will breed, frogs might hide, and wildflowers and grasses will sow. Children and adults alike will love laying in the tall grass, and family pets will hide in it and bound through it.

When it comes to planting beds, pick plants for their colour and the way they feel, things that smell unusual or beautiful or are edible. Use tall, round alliums, spiky grasses, aromatic herbs, smooth, furry lambs ear, plumes of astilbe and cut and come again lettuces. Don't be afraid to mix vegetables in to flower beds, plant edible flowers such as nasturtiums, sweet peas or asters in bright, garish colours which can be picked without issue. Avoid those plants that are irritating or poisonous and learn the names of everything you plant to teach to small children learning new words – plant names



are exciting and unusual to curious little people.

Ponds are often considered a no-no in a garden where young children will play. However, it is a shame to miss out on lovely water lilies, an abundance of newts, croaking frogs, and their jelly like spawn. Children learn not to go near water if dangers

are explained to them and fencing can keep them away from an untimely splash. Supervised pond dipping can offer an afternoon of fun as can rearing tadpoles in a jar afterwards.

In the same way, fill your garden with piles of logs, upturned pots and large rocks under which spiders,

caterpillars, ants, and beetles can be found or even in which hedgehogs can hide. This will encourage young children not to be afraid of bugs and creepy crawlies and help to teach them about basic biology. Not to mention hours of fun catching butterflies or counting spots on ladybirds.

Beauty in a garden doesn't have to mean pink climbing roses, neat rows of cabbage or modernist sculpture - in a family garden its beauty should be in discovery, excitement and usability and there's nothing neat and tidy about that!

“Learn the names of everything you plant to teach to small children new words - plant names are exciting and unusual to curious little people.”

...and don't forget about the wildlife

Factoring in wildlife to your garden is incredibly important, as well as being surprisingly abundant. Here are a few ways to attract wildlife into your space.

■ GARDEN

Wildlife adds something extra to any garden, taking it beyond just a bit of grass or a flower bed, making a city garden a haven, bringing a suburban garden together with its surroundings.

Sadly, many gardens are losing their link with wildlife, we are so concerned with design that we don't consider nature. Encouraging wildlife can be as simple or complicated as you wish, you might like the idea of helping British bugs to thrive, encouraging birds, observing butterflies, giving shelter to mammals or giving a habitat to increasingly endangered aquatic species. What is important to remember is that animals of all kinds need food, shelter and safety – give them these

three things and you could be part of a push to save British wildlife from becoming as extinct as the dodo.

Bird Feeders

Bird feeders and bird houses are an easy way to encourage birds, many of which are in steep decline, in to your garden. Keep feeding tables close to shelter to avoid larger overhead predators but keep them away from fences or walls where cats can reach them. Avoid serving peanuts, which can choke smaller or younger birds.

Wood

Log piles in a quiet, undisturbed corner are just the ticket for hedgehogs, a creature that no Brit could not wish to see in their garden. Although hedgehog houses

are available a simple pile of old wood can also provide shelter for any number of other wild creatures. When it comes to planting, concentrate on native wild flowers which provide pollen and nectar that local wildlife can feed on.

Ponds

Ponds that are at least 18cm deep and surrounded by good plant cover are excellent to encourage frogs, newts, many of which are very endangered, insects and water snails. Stock well with oxygenating plant and dot leaf piles and rocks around the garden to allow frogs plenty of places to hide on their dusk hops about the place. Don't be too ready to obliterate slugs and snails which provide valuable food for amphibians.



A simple pile of old wood can provide shelter for wild creatures, including hedgehogs.

Bumblebee boxes

The good old British bumblebee is set to become a thing of the past if we don't begin lending it a hand. We need them: they are excellent helpers in the flower garden. So rather than running screaming in the opposite direction – bees are far less likely to sting than wasps as the sting will kill them – provide them with a shop bought bumblebee box or even get crafty to build your own. Add plenty of pollen-rich flowers for food and watch your garden start to buzz.

Provide bees with a shop bought bumblebee box or even get crafty to build your own.

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Tap into the health benefits of your daily coffee ritual

Did you know that your daily coffee break could be doing your health more good than you realise?

HEALTH

We all know that eating your greens, drinking plenty of water and taking regular exercise are good for us. But did you know that your daily coffee break could be doing your health more good than you realise?

If so, then you're not alone as the latest market research suggests that current perceptions about coffee in the UK are completely off the boil. But the truth is that your regular cup of coffee can count as part of your daily fluid intake and can help protect you against an array of diseases.

There are many misconceptions about coffee. For example, 61 per cent of us do not even realise that it can count toward our daily fluid intake. Its health benefits are also unknown, as 84 per cent of us do not know that coffee consumption has been shown to protect against cognitive decline and certain other neurological disorders such as

Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease. Not only this but coffee may protect against the development of Type-2 diabetes and 74 per cent of us have no idea.

GP Dr Sarah Jarvis says: "We need to be aware that there are many misconceptions about coffee that are simply not true. There is strong scientific evidence to suggest

that moderate coffee consumption (four to five cups per day) may confer a variety of health benefits and should be enjoyed when we take our breaks in the day."

As well as being enjoyable, and safe in moderation, caffeine can increase your levels of alertness, helping you to stay on top form when you are at your desk. Going for that well-

earned coffee break should be part of our daily routine, yet 63 per cent of us have tried to reduce the number of cups we drink each day because of myths about coffee.

However, it seems that far from having adverse health effects, coffee has even demonstrated a protective effect against cognitive decline and certain other neurological disorders. Research shows that coffee consumption is associated with a decreased risk of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. In addition, coffee has been shown to have a protective effect on the liver, lowering the risk of developing liver cirrhosis by 71 per cent in subjects drinking three or more cups of coffee each day. Similarly, an increase of two cups of coffee per day has been associated with a 43 per cent reduced risk of liver cancer.

Dr Sarah Schenker, dietitian and member of the British Dietetic Association, says: "Almost 70 per cent of us in the UK drink coffee to provide a break in our day. Coffee has become a major part of the nation's daily routine and we need to understand that coffee, in moderation, is perfectly safe for most people."

Top coffee myths debunked

Is coffee is an addictive drug?

Three out of four coffee drinkers have tried to reduce the number of cups of coffee consumed each day because they think coffee is addictive. However, there is no scientific evidence to support this claim when coffee is consumed in moderation.

Does coffee dehydrate you?

Over 50 per cent of coffee drinkers have tried to reduce their number of daily cups because they think coffee

is dehydrating. Scientific evidence shows that a cup of coffee will contribute to your daily fluid intake.

Can coffee increases the risk of heart disease?

Studies have shown that moderate coffee intake is not associated with any increase in the risk of heart disease.

A study published in June 2008 showed that women who drank three cups of coffee a day were 25 per cent less likely to die from heart disease.

Find the right frames for you

The right choice of specs should become an integral part of your face without drastically changing it. So, how do you pick the perfect pair of glasses for your face? Simple! By applying some of the basic tips shared by Pauline Voce, style consultant for glasses firm, Silhouette. According to Voce, following these three rules will guarantee you find the perfect glasses for you.

Voce believes many people wear the wrong frames for their faces because they are influenced by fashion trends rather than their personal features. "Your glasses are beyond fashion; they are a part of you. It's fun to have loads of styles to fit in with fashion, but not everyone can afford to replace their glasses with every passing trend. We all need a classic, timeless pair that suits every trend simply because they are ideal for you."



Analyse the shape of your face

The shape of your face is the best indication of which frames are right for you.

Round faces:

Angular frames are the best option as they add a flattering contrast. Glasses that are deep and wide are also ideal for round face. However, without sufficient width, deep glasses can actually make round faces appear short and should be avoided.

Square faces:

Curved frames will soften the structure of square faces. Therefore, choose round or oval frames and steer clear of harsh lines, as these will accentuate the square silhouette.

Heart-shaped faces:

Look at both angular and rounded frames to see which complements your face best. The main rule is to avoid styles that are wider at the top than at the bottom.

Oblong faces:

Wide frames look great on oblong faces because they add structure and distract the eye from the vertical length of the face. Steer clear of narrow and round styles, as these exaggerate the length of your face.





Give someone you love the Gift of Hope



What will be vital to sustain people in the weeks ahead is the gift of hope. Our human nature is comprised of body and spirit, and the spirit is sustained by hope. It is in the heart that hope is born and builds within us the resilience we need to face the challenges in our lives.

The Right Reverend Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds, from 1st November letter to Prime Minister Boris Johnson on proposed closure of churches

Dear Catholic Universe reader,

We do hope you are keeping safe and well in these challenging times. We would like to extend a personal thank you for your invaluable support as a regular *Catholic Universe* reader. We hope you are enjoying the paper and are gaining a lot of interesting benefits from reading its content.

As you are aware, Covid 19 has caused businesses in all walks of life great financial problems, and sadly many have had to close.

We have suffered also, but we have stretched every part of the company to continue to ensure that you receive a high quality Catholic newspaper every week.

Despite the current heavy pressures on our finances, we remain fully committed to our mission of spreading the interests of our Catholic faith, and sharing the good news with others across our Catholic community.

We would like to seek your help in doing this. Whilst it is always most appreciated to receive a donation, what is more important, and something we would be extremely pleased to receive from you, is your help in introducing new subscribers to *The Catholic Universe*.

Keeping our Catholic faith in the forefront of most Catholics' thinking is our main mission, and this is best done by getting people to read a Catholic newspaper regularly.

As you know, *The Catholic Universe* not only brings you the Catholic perspective on the main issues of the day, but it contains many uplifting and supportive articles to help keep our faith vibrant and relevant to our lives.

If you could just encourage at least two people you know to subscribe, or even consider gifting annual subscriptions yourself to your relatives and closest friends, that would be of immense help in every way – to our mission and to many fellow Catholics.

We hope you will consider this simple request to support our mission, and the Catholic faith.

You can gift a subscription to a friend simply by filling in the form on this page, or by contacting us directly with their details, and we will do the rest.

Our thanks to you for your continuing help and support for our mission in bringing the Catholic message each week. We will keep you in our prayers.

Clive W. Leach CBE KSG
Chairman
Universe Media Group Ltd

Joseph Kelly
Group Editorial Director
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Improve your balance and stability with dynamic pilates

If you're looking for a fitness activity that can give you fast results, then dynamic pilates could be for you.

■ FITNESS

Think traditional pilates with some fat-burning cardio moves thrown in, and you won't be far off describing the popular dynamic pilates programme offered by TenPilates.

Here we walk you through what makes the TenPilates routine special and why it's a favourite with many Hollywood stars.

Traditional pilates is famous for its power to sculpt the body and boost core strength, which is essential for a flat tummy and to help prevent back and neck problems.

The dynamic pilates routines offered at TenPilates were developed by sports scientist, David Higgins, who established the programme with Joanne Matthews, a former athlete who had consulted with him for rehabilitation after she had a car accident.

Dynamic pilates takes the original

system of pilates to a new level with a more intense style of workout that offers all the benefits of pilates but with a high-energy cardiovascular element.

More intensity

Ardent fans of traditional pilates won't be disappointed as Ten Pilates incorporates original pilates moves with techniques from circuit and weight training to work on specific muscle groups with extra intensity.

The result is a programme that burns fat, strengthens core muscle groups and slims the body. The dynamic pilates routines on offer at TenPilates can burn up to 650 calories an hour.

If you're thinking you'd like to give it a go but have never even been to a

traditional pilates class, don't worry as TenPilates has beginner, intermediate and advanced sessions. All you have to do is sign up for a suitable beginner's class online.

Also, this exercise programme isn't just for women. It's also great for men, especially those who would like to improve their flexibility.

The dynamic pilates sessions at TenPilates are particularly great for rehabilitation after injury or illness. This is how traditional pilates was created as founder, Joseph Pilates, originally developed the system of exercise while interned during World War I, and later used it to rehabilitate injured soldiers.

Today, dynamic pilates instructors at TenPilates, with their in-depth understanding of anatomy and physiology, can help tailor a regime specifically for a client's rehabilitation, helping to engage, retrain and re-programme muscles. Bad postural habits can be banished in the same way.

In fact, dynamic pilates can be used as a solution for everything from aches and pains to flattening a post-pregnancy tummy or to add variety to your training routine. One of the advantages of a dynamic pilates session is that they are constantly evolving, and no two classes are the same, unlike other fitness regimes which can be highly repetitive. This means you are more likely to stay motivated and not get bored. At TenPilates, instead of the usual preset routines, your workout programme is designed to be adaptable and flexible, so you end up with a tailor-made workout to match your specific abilities and needs, helping you see and feel the benefits faster.

Add flexibility and core strength

If you decide to try this form of pilates, you will be in good company as the exercise programme has become extremely popular with professional footballers, cricketers and rugby players, who are turning to dynamic pilates to add flexibility and core strengthening to their existing fitness regimes. It's even reported to be a favourite workout choice for Hollywood A-listers. So, if you've ever wanted the body of a celebrity and the fitness of an athlete, dynamic pilates could be the choice for you. For more information, go to <https://www.ten.co.uk/>



Leg strengthening exercises that can be done at home

Incorporate these targeted leg-strengthening exercises to give you an extra turbo boost on your next run

■ HEALTH

You would think that running itself would provide all the necessary muscular strength to improve your running. However, incorporating strengthening exercises can give you an extra turbo boost. Brian Clarke, a veteran running coach and author of *K and 10K Training (Human Kinetics)*, has designed this quick power workout to build leg strength. Carrying out these exercises in addition to your athletic training can help you achieve personal bests, whether you are racing, walking or just out for a long jog in the park on Saturday morning. These strengthening exercises can also help reduce the chance of sustaining injuries while running.

Workout before you run

For best results, start slowly then increase intensity as you get stronger. Do these moves three times a week, with a day of rest between sessions, increasing the reps as you get stronger. Allow at least six to eight weeks of training before any race. Begin with five to seven minutes of slow jogging and 10 jumping jacks to warm up. After the workout below, head out for your regular walk or run.

Twists

These strengthen core stability, feet, calves, and Achilles tendons. With your feet shoulder-width apart, jump slightly, landing gently with both feet pointing to the right; repeat, ending with both feet pointed to the left. This is one rep. Allow your arms, torso, and shoulders to balance the movement of your legs by twisting in the opposite direction. Start

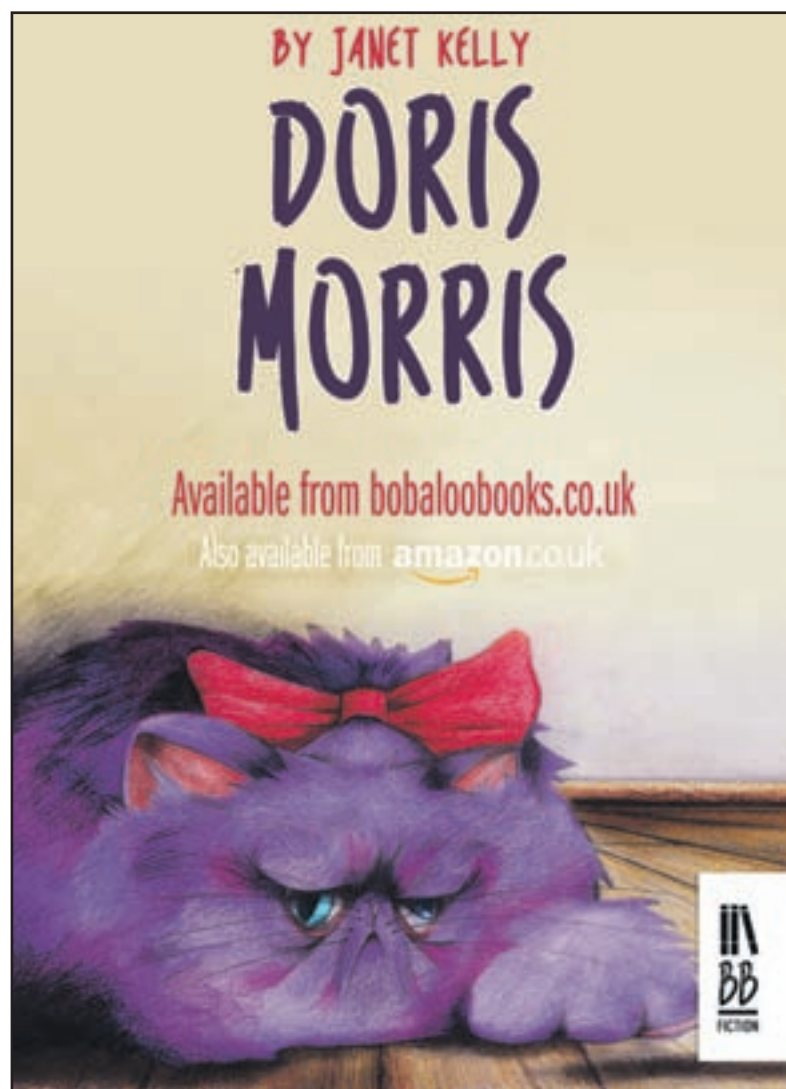
with one set of six to 10 reps, then add one rep per workout until you reach 20. After three weeks, add another set, beginning at six again and working your way up.

Side-kicks

These strengthen quads and hamstrings. To avoid a calf or Achilles injury, concentrate on using a smooth, relaxed motion. Standing with your feet a few inches apart, swing your right leg out to the side as you jump up on the ball of your left foot. Then, swing your right leg back in, landing on the ball of your right foot. When your foot touches down, swing your left leg out to the side and back to complete the rep. Start with one set of six to 10 reps, then add one rep per workout until you reach 20. After three weeks, add another set, beginning at six again and working your way up.

Rockers

These strengthen the core, calves, and Achilles tendons. Stand with your feet a few inches apart. Swing your right leg forward as you jump up on the ball of your left foot. Then, swing your right leg back in, landing on the ball of your right foot. When your foot touches down, swing your left leg back (your upper body will rock back and forth for balance). This is one rep. Repeat, using a quick, smooth motion. After your right leg swings forward three times, repeat with your left leg. Start with one set of six to 10 reps (three to five per side), then add one rep per side per workout until you reach a total of 20. After three weeks, add another set, beginning at six again and working your way up.



A shepherd who knew the smell of the sheep

The Church lost another of its favourite sons last week with the sad news of the passing of the *Emeritus* Bishop of Lancaster, Padraig (Patrick) O'Donoghue. Here his former private secretary, Fr Robert Billing, offers his own tribute

Padraig O'Donoghue was born in Mourne Abbey, Co Cork, on 4th May 1934, the middle of five children to farmers Daniel and Sheila. He was educated at the Patrician Academy in Mallow, Co Cork and came to Britain in 1959 for seminary training, first at Campion House and then, from 1961-67, at Allen Hall seminary when it was based at St Edmund's, Ware, Hertfordshire.

On 25th May 1967 Padraig was ordained priest for the Archdiocese of Westminster in St Michael's church, Analeentha in the Parish of Mourne Abbey by the Westminster Auxiliary Bishop Patrick Casey.

Fr O'Donoghue worked initially in the parish of Our Lady of Willesden as a curate from 1967-70 and served as local hospital chaplain. He was soon noticed by Cardinal John Heenan and was assigned to work on the Diocesan Pastoral Mission Team from 1970-73, where he gained experience in a total of 27 parishes across the entire archdiocese. From 1973-77 Fr O'Donoghue was appointed Pastoral Director at Allen Hall Seminary in Chelsea. Then, from 1977-78 he was part of the team ministry at the parish of St Thomas of Canterbury, Fulham. His varied pastoral experience led to his belief that renewal at every level in the Church, called for by the Second Vatican Council, was urgently called for, combined with his conviction in the need to grapple with the major issues facing both society and the Church.

He was appointed by Cardinal Basil Hume OSB as Sub-Administrator of Westminster Cathedral from 1978-85, an appointment that marked the beginning of a great respect and close friendship between himself and the Benedictine Cardinal who was a cherished mentor for Fr Padraig over the years. After this he was made Rector of Allen Hall Seminary from 1985-90 before the by-now Monsignor O'Donoghue was sent back to Westminster Cathedral again – this time as Administrator, from 1990-93.

The 20 years spent between the Seminary and the Cathedral further heightened his desire for play his part in the reform and renewal of the Church. But there were other challenges too, especially for those thrown to the peripheries of life in the inner city. Here Fr Padraig showed his desire to help combat the poverty of London, working in projects to aid the lot of the homeless, addict and the dispossessed. For Monsignor O'Donoghue it was necessary for the Church to be right at the centre of work that championed the plight and rights of the poor, and to this end he was a key player in the practical establishment of The Cardinal Hume and Passage Centres, which continue to flourish to this day in London.

Such was his work that few were surprised that he was named bishop by Pope John Paul II on 18th May 1993. He was duly ordained as Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Westminster (and titular bishop of Tulana) by his great friend and men-



tor Cardinal Basil Hume on 29th June 1993, and soon after was appointed Bishop to the West London Pastoral Area of the Archdiocese.

This eight-year appointment meant that he would make many pastoral visitations and confirmation celebrations to all 41 the culturally-mixed parishes of West London.

Across the archdiocese Bishop Padraig was well-known by priests and people alike, going by his nickname from Cardinal Hume: 'Pod'. He served as Chairman of the Westminster Diocesan Pastoral Board from 1996 and even before that, on the national scene, as Chairman of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales Committee for Migrants from 1993. He was constantly to the fore, not least in the national media and most regularly in *The Catholic Universe*, advancing the cause of this most vulnerable section of our community. He championed aloud the refugee, migrant and the asylum seeker. It was widely recognised that, the Office for Migrant and Refugee Policy, overseen by Bishop Patrick, was the most high-profile of the bishops' conference offices, thanks mainly to Bishop Patrick's unstinting work.

In May 2001, just a few months before his move from Westminster to Lancaster, he launched a strongly-worded document *Any Room at the Inn? – Reflections on Asylum Seekers* to mark the 50th anniversary of the UN Refugee Convention.

He was appointed a diocesan bishop in his own right on 5th June 2001 – as Fifth Bishop of Lancaster, a role he fulfilled until 1st May 2009. He took up as his episcopal motto: *'Blessed are the Poor'*.

As Bishop he quickly exuded great energy and stamina in getting to know his new diocese, which covered Lancashire north of the River Ribble and all of Cumbria. He arrived as a Pilgrim to a traditionally very Catholic part of the country; eager to

learn and to garner the ministry of his predecessors and the community of faithful priests and people who awaited him in Lancaster.

It took about two years for Bishop Patrick to survey the 'lie of the land', through a deanery-wide visitation programme throughout his new diocese, and to find his voice, but once he had done so he mandated many new and bold initiatives to strengthen the life and mission of the Diocese.

He was a shepherd who was often 'out and about' in the diocese; who knew well 'the smell of the sheep'. His personality of closeness and warmth allowed him to be a bridge across the aisle for very different kinds of people; different kinds of Catholic, ie, traditional and more liberal. While bishop he set about a number of wide ranging reforms to the benefit of the diocese, including selling off the 16-room Victorian Mansion of Bishop's House in Lancaster and settling in more modest accommodation. He also increased the profile of the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes, which increased four-fold in his time as bishop, as well as establishing a new Diocesan House of Formation at Cleator, Cumbria to serve as a preparatory House for pre-seminary students.

In 2004 he established the strong links that still exist with Syro-Malabar Catholics (from Kerala, India) in the UK. This work laid the foundations, to be taken up by his successor in Lancaster, Bishop Michael Campbell OSA to directly and practically assist in the erection, by the Vatican, of a Syro-Malabar Eparchy (diocese) for Great Britain with its cathedral set in Preston.

He also oversaw a comprehensive review of both finance and property services and education. Throughout his time in Lancaster he sought to address (through his *Fit for Mission?* programme of reviews) the contemporary challenges facing Catholic education, and won many accolades from the Holy See, from other diocesan bishops and from Catholic priests and people from all over the world.

Above all he will be remembered for the personal interest, care and pastoral kindness he showed all his flock, but particularly his seminarians and priests.

Bishop O'Donoghue retired, aged 75, on 1st May 2009 and left the UK to return to his native County Cork, Ireland. There he continued his ministry, working as an assistant priest of the parish of Bantry in West Cork, taking on duties in the hospital chaplaincy, too. In April 2013, with some health challenges, Bishop Padraig moved to be resident in the care of Nazareth House, Dromahane near Mallow so as to be much nearer to his family and relatives for whom he has always expressed his great affection, pride and loyalty.

It was in his beloved County Cork that he died on 24th January, sorely missed by all who knew and loved him.

Bishop Padraig O'Donoghue RIP
(4th May 1934 – 24th January 2021)

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The Catholic Universe Crossword

No. 682



- Across**
1. Silence (9)
 8. Hoot (3)
 9. Harmful (11)
 11. Stray (7)
 12. By ear (5)
 13. Brightness (6)
 15. Impede (6)
 17. Splendid (5)
 18. Jute cloth (7)
 20. Indifferent (11)
 22. Dog (3)
 23. Ruffian (9)

- Down**
2. Bind (3)
 3. Supple (5)
 4. Way out (6)
 5. Packing away (7)
 6. Remark (11)
 7. Seed leaf (9)
 10. Parliament (11)
 11. Assiduity (9)
 14. Made smaller (7)
 16. Gratitude (6)
 19. Sift (5)
 21. Conclude (3)

SOLUTION - see page 47

The Catholic Universe Sudoku

No. 282

Every Sudoku has a unique solution that can be reached logically. Enter numbers into the blank spaces so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.



Stuck? see page 47

Classified/Crossword/Liturgical Calendars

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For the Promotion of the Traditional Roman Rite

During the coronavirus outbreak, the LMS Office is closed and our staff are working from home. For details of Masses being streamed from around the country go to lms.org.uk/mass-listings

www.lms.org.uk 020 7404 7284

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THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

Dear Heart of Jesus in the past I have asked for many favours, this time I ask you for this very special one (mention favour). Take it dear Heart of Jesus and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in his merciful eyes it will become your favour not mine. Amen.



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Crossword Solution (from p46)

Across: 1 Stillness; 8 Boo; 9 Deleterious; 11 Digress; 12 Aural; 13 Lustre; 15 Retard; 17 Grand; 18 Hessian; 20 Unconcerned; 22 Cur; 23 Desperado.

Down: 2 Tie; 3 Lithe; 4 Egress; 5 Stowage; 6 Observation; 7 Cotyledon; 10 Legislature; 11 Diligence; 14 Reduced; 16 Thanks; 19 Sieve; 21 End.

Sudoku Solution (from p46)

2	1	5	3	4	9	6	7	8
8	6	7	2	5	1	9	3	4
3	9	4	6	7	8	2	1	5
5	3	2	8	6	4	7	9	1
4	7	9	5	1	2	8	6	3
6	8	1	9	3	7	5	4	2
1	2	6	4	9	5	3	8	7
9	4	8	7	2	3	1	5	6
7	5	3	1	8	6	4	2	9

OBITUARY

FR CLIVE BIRCH SM, former Director of the R.C. National Shrine of Our Lady, Walsingham, (whose Chapel of Reconciliation he helped design) from 1979-1985, and Superior of Notre Dame de France, Leicester Place, London, 1992-1996, died aged 82 in Hull.

Born in Accrington, Lancashire, Clive studied Theology in the Marist Seminary in Lyon, France, and was a graduate of St Mary's Twickenham and the London Guildhall School of Music. He taught RE and music, and helped with musicals production, in schools in Exeter, Sidcup, Middlesbrough and Hull. He suffered a debilitating stroke in 2003.

Fr John Hannan SM, writes: 'May the Lord reward his patient endurance during many years of disability and suffering. I spent two glorious years in Lyon with Clive, marvellous company with a creative approach for things 'outside the box'.

Another tribute: in Notre Dame de France in the 1990's: 'I witnessed Clive's inspiring level of commitment, energy and creativity put into relaunching the mission there. May all whose lives touched him through care and concern be blest'.

LITURGICAL CALENDARS

Ordinary Form Liturgical Calendar Sunday Year B, weekday cycle 1

January: Month of the Holy Name of Jesus
February: Month of the Holy Family
Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sunday, 31st January: Dt 18:15-20; Ps 94; 1Cor 7:32-35; Mk 1:21-28

Monday, 1st February: Heb 11:32-40; Ps 30; Mk 5:1-20

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord
Tuesday, 2nd February: Mal 3:1-4 or Heb 2:14-18; Ps 23; Lk 2:22-40

Extraordinary Form Calendar according to the Roman Missal of 1962 (Tridentine Rite)

Sunday, 31st January: Septuagesima
Sunday 1Cor 9:24-27, 10:1-5; Mt 20:1-16

Monday, 1st February: St Ignatius bishop & martyr Rom 8:35-39; Jn 12:24-26

Tuesday, 2nd February: Purification of Our Lady, Mal 3:1-4; Lk 2:22-32

Wednesday, 3rd February: Feria 1Cor 9:24-27, 10:1-5; Mt 20:1-16

Wednesday, 3rd February: Heb 12:4-7, 11-15; Ps 102; Mk 6:1-6

Thursday, 4th February: Heb 12:18-19, 21-24; Ps 47; Mk 6:7-13

Friday, 5th February: Heb 13:1-8; Ps 26; Mk 6:14-29

Saturday, 6th February: Heb 13:15-17, 20-21; Ps 22; Mk 6:30-34

Thursday, 4th February: St Andrew Corsini bishop & confessor Ecclus 44:16-45:20; Mt 25:14-235

Friday, 5th February: St Agatha virgin & martyr 1Cor 1:26-31; Mt 19:3-12

Saturday, 6th February: St Titus bishop & confessor Ecclus 44:16-45:20; Luke 10:1-9

Compiled by Gordon Dimon, Senior MC of the Latin Mass Society

A proposed European Super League shows a lack of sporting integrity

Dr Colm Hickey

The European Super League. It is a subject that will not go away. I wrote about it a few weeks ago and here we are again. The primary motivation behind it is, of course money and the plans represent a grave threat to lower league football and the very fabric of our game. It is elitist, divisive and will damage football. Let us explore the issues. The European Super League (ESL) initiative is led by Juventus chairman Andrea Agnelli and the European Club Association (ECA). It has the backing of some UEFA executives (but not necessarily the FAs who make up UEFA's structure). Founder members would receive £310 million each to join the competition. The league would have 20 teams 15 founder members and five qualifying each year, each team playing between 18 and 23 games per season. The main features of the proposal are:

- Founder clubs receive £310 million;
- Annual prize fund of £3.5 billion guaranteeing clubs a minimum of £130 million and a maximum of £213 million;
- Two groups of ten with the top four going into knock out quarter finals;
- Midweek matches;
- Clubs able to show four games on their own digital platforms.

Is this a good thing? Not according to Lar-Christer Olsson, President of the European Leagues who argues that: "This is a significant threat to European football and would lead to a closed European Super League for a limited number of clubs similar to the franchise models operating in the NFL." Meanwhile, UEFA and FIFA and the five other continental federations have issued a joint statement warning that any player playing in such a competition would be banned from playing in the European Championships or World Cup. FIFA said in a statement: "In light of recent media speculation about the creation of a closed European 'Super League' by some European clubs, FIFA and the six confederations (AFC, CAF, Concacaf, Conmebol, OFC and UEFA) once again would



FIFA and UEFA have threatened clubs and players who participate in any European Super League with a ban from their competitions.



like to reiterate and strongly emphasise that such a competition would not be recognised by either FIFA or the respective confederation. Any club or player involved in such a competition would as a consequence is not allowed to participate in any competition organised by FIFA or their respective confederation.' FIFA also stated that its Club World Cup, both in its current and future guise, and the confederations' respective tournaments were the only club competitions recognised. The governing body plans to expand its Club World Cup to include 24 teams from the six confederations. The forthcoming event in Qatar, postponed from 2020, will feature six teams.

Elsewhere, the Football Supporters Europe (FSE), the umbrella organisation for local and national fan groups across the continent, of which the Football Supporters Association (FSA) is a member, said: "The European sports model is based on sporting merit, qualification for Europe via domestic success, and fair revenue distribution. It should be strengthened by all stakeholders, not undermined." FSE will hold an emergency board meeting in the coming days to decide upon a re-



The likes of Liverpool and Manchester United could be immune to relegation.



The current champions of the EFL Trophy are Portsmouth, who beat Sunderland 5-4 on penalties in the 2019 final to win the competition for the first and only time. The impact of a European Super League may destroy the domestic game says Football Supporters' Association's Kevin Miles (pictured below).

sponse to the latest developments. The European Commission vice president Margaritis Schinas believes that the proposals incompatible with the 'European way of life' arguing: "There is no scope for the few to distort the universal and diverse nature of European football. The European way of life is not compatible with European football being reserved for the rich and the powerful."

In England the FSA has long opposed the concept of a European Super League, arguing that such a league would have a disastrous impact on the domestic game. The FSA believes European competition and domestic leagues should be organ-

ised around the following six principles:

- Promotion and relegation based on sporting performance – from the bottom of the pyramid to qualification for Europe;
- No to closed leagues or franchise football – qualify on results, not through history or heritage;
- Weekends are for domestic leagues – protect fan culture, home and away. No live broadcasts on Saturdays at 3:00pm;
- We want competitive leagues – no to even more concentration of wealth and on-going domination by a fixed few top clubs;
- Domestic football comes first – protect the pyramid and cup competitions;
- Share the wealth – the money from elite football should be shared across the whole game;
- These principles were backed by fans across the continent at the European Football Fans Congress in 2019.

FSA chief executive Kevin Miles said: "This is the most advanced proposal we've yet seen for a potential European Super League and it's something that should be of grave concern to supporters up and down the game." He continued: "Decisive action is now needed to protect the game we love. Football in all its forms in the UK, from grassroots to the top tier, occupies far too important a place in our society to be jeopardised by an even greater concentration of wealth in the hands of 15 big clubs across Eu-

rope."

In many ways it should not matter if you support a 'top six' club or not. Life should be about justice not self-interest. Sport should reflect life, so football should be fair. The fact that it is not; that the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' is almost impossibly wide and getting wider, is neither here nor there. Yes, the distribution of finance in football is unfair, but that should not mean that we allow proposals to make it even worse. This initiative is not what most of the football community want. Although some self-interested individuals who only care about their top six club may support it, they are not true fans. True fans are people who love football and see it as it really is: a wonderful sport that brings joy to so many, who understand the role that it plays in communities across Britain and who cherish the history and heritage of the game. They are people who, in the deepest recesses of their hearts, have the dream that one day, maybe, their club will climb the football ladder and win the league or cup. They know that the proposed ESL stinks.



If it goes through another piece of the romance of football will vanish. Do you really want this creeping corporatisation and globalisation of football? Do you really want football to be in the hands of rich businessmen who see our wonderful game as merely as a cash cow for their self-interests? Well, I for one do not, and I hope you do not too.