



MORE THAN 22 YEARS OF BRINGING THE NOTTINGHAM DIOCESE TOGETHER



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**Joyful return of Little Lambs Page 12**

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## SVP calls for a million gestures of kindness



Launching its Awareness Month campaign, which ran throughout last month the SVP is calling for parishioners in the Nottingham diocese to become a member, volunteer a few hours of their time, or donate to support people in need.

In 2017, on September 27, the Feast of St Vincent de Paul, Pope Francis said that charity is central to the Church's mission: "Charity is at the heart of the Church, it is the reason for its action, the soul of its mission."

SVP president Helen O'Shea says: "Acts of compassion and kindness don't always have to be grand, more often they are seemingly insignificant, something most people would view as 'ordinary'; a chat with a housebound older person, picking up some shopping or medication for a neighbour, sending a card, or even telephoning someone just to say 'hello'. It's through a million gestures of kindness like these that we can start to address the enormity of the mountain we must all climb.

**Who are the SVP? Turn to page 2 for more information.**

## Bishop's Open Letter on Assisted Dying Bill

*Bishop John Sherrington, our Lead Bishop for Life Issues, has written an open letter inviting Catholics to pray for the defeat of the Assisted Dying Bill to be debated in the House of Lords in October.*

In the next weeks, we face an unprecedented attack on the sanctity of life with Baroness Meacher's 'Assisted Dying Bill 2021' which is due its 2nd Reading in the House of Lords with full debate on Friday, 22 October. The term 'Assisted Dying' is euphemistic, the truth is that this bill seeks to introduce Assisted Suicide. If legalised, this Bill would allow a terminally ill adult with less than 6 months to live to be assisted in committing suicide. Catholic teaching opposes assisting suicide, since life is a gift to be cared for and preserved until its natural death. The Church is clear that we cannot directly choose to take the life of another, even if they request it. The solidarity of praying and caring for the most vulnerable at this fragile time of their lives is a profoundly Christian act which imitates Our Lady's prayer at the cross and Christ's service to the weakest.

Those in favour of the bill are making good use of language to confuse the issue and call it a compassionate and caring approach to redefine the question and obscure the actual reality and consequences of such legislation.

As Pope Francis has said, "Physician-assisted suicide is part of a 'throwaway culture' that offers a 'false compassion' and treats a human person as a problem... True compassion does not marginalise anyone, nor does it humiliate and exclude – much less considers the disappearance of a person as a good thing." He criticised "those who hide behind an alleged compassion to justify and approve the death of a patient."

### Dangers of the introduction of Assisted Suicide

Importantly, at this stage we need to argue

the dangers of the introduction of Assisted Suicide, which include the safety of people who are vulnerable due to external pressures, and the later liberalisation of the law which is evidenced by other countries which have introduced Assisted Suicide. Many voices from the world of disability-rights and other allies are also very fearful and fighting this bill. Whilst there are clear arguments to support Catholic teachings, it is important to remember that this position is not only a matter of faith but also human reason.

Later this month, the BMA will be debating whether to change their stance to support or neutrality on this matter. I hope that healthcare professionals will enter this debate and highlight the dangers of this Bill to change and skew the meaning of medicine.

### Take action

There are three important actions in the next weeks: **praying, writing and sharing.**

First, I ask you to pray that the Bill will be defeated.

Second, I ask you to write to the Peers from your personal experience and share stories which will argue the reasons for opposing the Bill as well as narrate the importance of precious time during



the final stages of life.

The testimony of healthcare and legal professionals will also be important. This needs to be done before the Second Reading on 22 October.

Third, I ask you to engage and share stories and reasons against the Bill on social media.

Briefing papers will be available on the bishops' conference website to assist you as this work develops.

Be assured of my prayers.

**+John  
Bishop John Sherrington**

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**MORE THAN 21 YEARS OF BRINGING THE NOTTINGHAM DIOCESE TOGETHER**

The monthly paper for the Diocese of Nottingham

**The Catholic News**

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**Wanted - Parish Correspondents**

The Catholic News is looking for a Parish Correspondent in your parish to send in local news for publication in this newspaper. All items to be emailed to

johnclawson@icloud.com before 10th of the month

**FRANKLY SPEAKING**

In last month's edition of The Catholic News I reported on the estimate of one million students applying to attend university by the year 2025. If this figure is correct it will represent a large increase on the current number with significant implications for many young people.

In recent times it does seem that there is a clear division of opinion over political trends in a number of our universities. I say in recent years because my 2011 dictionary refers to a university as an "institution of higher education with the authority to award degrees."

The same dictionary also gives a classification of the word "woke" only in the context of what happens after sleep.

Perhaps many people who did not get the opportunity to go to university like myself are left wondering about the role of free speech and the central role in national debates not least the freedoms to disagree which we used to take for granted.

If my observations are right and the political trend in some areas of university is spreading where does that

**Paralympian: Legalising assisted suicide could result in involuntary deaths**

Madeleine Strezynski

The introduction of physician-assisted suicide in England and Wales could lead to involuntary euthanasia, a leading parliamentarian and disability rights campaigner has warned.

In a Zoom address, hosted by the Diocese of Nottingham on Thursday, 9 September, former Paralympian, Baroness Grey-Thompson warned that there was a real danger of a legislative slippery slope, if the current Assisted Dying Bill before the House of Lords, were to become legal.

Reflecting on the Private Members' Bill, sponsored by Baroness Meacher which is due to have its Second Reading in the House of Lords on October 22nd, Baroness Grey-Thompson said: "There is no right to be killed.

"There is no right to currently involve someone in your death. There is a massive danger of a slippery slope and (if we open) the doors to voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide, I absolutely do believe it could lead to non-voluntary and involuntary deaths because you're giving doctors the power to decide whether a patient's life is worth living or not. I don't believe we can control it and the assumption that somebody should have the right to die would actually impose on doctors the duty to kill."

Baroness Meacher's Bill would allow physician assisted-suicide for terminally-ill patients with a prognosis of six months or less. The request for assisted suicide would need the approval of two doctors and a High Court Judge.

Baroness Grey-Thompson said that

evidence from jurisdictions which have legalised assisted suicide and euthanasia were a reason for caution closer to home. She described a case in Holland where a woman had a directive in place to prematurely end her life but when questioned, said that she wasn't ready to end her life at that moment in time. Sedatives were then slipped into her coffee and she was then held down by family members and euthanised.

Baroness Grey-Thompson explained: "So, some of these cases do very much worry me because of the power of some family members to become involved." The House of Lords member also raised concerns about the Meacher Bill's safeguards, specifically its reference to a 'settled wish' to die on behalf of the applicant for assisted suicide.

Baroness Grey-Thompson asked: "How are you going to measure it? What will it cost? How are you going to ensure there is no coercion? One of my colleagues said in the 2017 debate said 'where there's a will



Baroness Grey-Thompson

there's a relative' and for me that was a very interesting statement to make in terms of people's motivation for encouraging this." See the talk in full visit: Baroness Grey-Thompson: Assisted Dying - A win for autonomy or a loss for civil society? - YouTube

One of Britain's greatest Paralympic athletes, over 16 years and five Paralympic Games, Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson won 11 gold medals four silver medals and one bronze medal.



**The SVP – Who are we? (A Gospel driven organisation)**

The SVP, according to many of its members, is one of the best kept secrets in the Catholic Church. If someone mentions the SVP, there are invariably many blank looks.

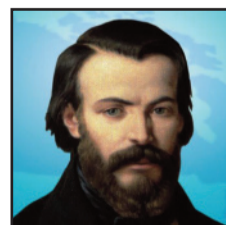
What is it? What do the initials stand for? Who is involved? How does it work? These are just some of the questions people ask when they learn of the existence of a worldwide organisation that has been in existence since 1833. This lack of awareness has prompted a series of articles about the SVP to appear in The Catholic News over the coming months to help raise awareness of the Society across the diocese.

This first article sets out the framework within which the SVP works whilst adhering to its spiritual values.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society in England and Wales is a registered charity that complies with all the legal requirements which are laid down for us by the Charity Commission.



St. Vincent



Blessed Frederic Ozanam

The word charity is often understood very loosely as "giving a person something for nothing, just gifting them". For the SVP this is not sufficient. St. Vincent (its patron) and Blessed Frederic Ozanam (its founder) both realised that and in the words of Pope Francis: "Christian charities are much more than 'compassionate non-governmental organisations' they have their source in

Jesus Christ, and look to him for their work to be fruitful".

Charity together with faith and hope are not acquired through human effort but, beginning with baptism, are infused within us as gifts from God. They dispose us to live in relationship with God, and such living is made evident by practical and effective love of others. The energy and life of the SVP is God given – and our task as Vincentians is to respond as generously as we can.

It is not always possible for us to solve people's difficulties, nor is it a matter of simply giving them funds, or creating a dependence on the SVP. Our essential task is to relate to people with love and respect, to befriend them, and let them feel that they are loved and that they matter to us. We recognise God made human in them, and in attending to them we are serving God. In the words of Jesus: "when I was hungry, thirsty, without even clothes, sick or in prison, and you cared for these least of my brothers, you did it for me" (Mt. 25:40). In the Words of Muhammad Ali: "your service to others is the rent you pay for your room in heaven".

Future articles will look at the inception of the SVP, its history in this country since 1844 and the type of work it does both nationally and locally. Should you require further information or are interested in finding out more about the SVP please contact Lance Philpott – Membership Support Officer for Nottingham Diocese on lancep@svp.org.uk





# The Chapter Corner



Canon Don Bowdren

## BENEDICITE

A lot of years ago I joined a number of my fellow priests in attending a time of recollection. This was perhaps six hours together in a very hot classroom. We were in the tropics because at that time I was working as a Fidei Donum priest on loan from the Diocese of Nottingham to the Diocese of Livingstone in Southern Zambia.

This time of recollection was led by a devout religious sister who had come from India to work in this faraway place. As part of the recollection, sister invited us to go outside to a shade tree nearby. This was blessed relief from being baked under the hot corrugated tin roof of the classroom. So outside we went and then sister invited us to do something unusual. We were all invited to join hands in a circle around the tree, and somehow circle-dance in celebration of the tree. I've never been much of a dancer and was glad when sister told us to stop, step forward and hug the tree. Never been much of a hugger either. I found this enterprise how shall I say, challenging.

Somehow this came back to mind when I was glancing through the documentation associated with the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and the almost five weeks of celebration of Creation leading up to the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi on Oct 4th. As I write we are journeying through this annual season of creation. CAFOD enjoins us of Family Fast Day (1st Oct) to engage with the allied topic of Climate Crisis; and I pause for thought.

Respecting creation is a right and proper thing to do. Caring for the environment is a right and proper thing to do; being

conscious of the climate is a right and proper thing to do. But I trouble to think what is the definition of 'creation' or 'environment' or even 'climate'. Creation is everything, including me; it automatically presupposes a Creator. The environment is I suppose everything that is not me. Still part of His Creation. The climate is, well, the weather. An all-encompassing universe.

Creation, the Environment, the Climate are all gifts of the Creator. Not of you; not of me.

From time to time and the prayer life of our parish we pray the Morning Prayer (Lauds) of the church. Frequently in Morning Prayer we are invited to pray the Canticum of my namesake Daniel (the prophet). This is known throughout Christendom from its first word in Latin: 'Benedicite'. This was written some 200 years before Christ. It is a wonderful poem of praise for creation, but more particularly, for the Creator of all things, God himself, the only 'Creator of Heaven and Earth' – as we pray every time we recite the Creed. Saint Francis of Assisi referred back to this when he wrote his magnificent hymn in praise of creation with Brother Sun and Sister Moon.

And before the end of the day, take a look at Romans 1.24-25 – the state of those who worship creation rather than the Creator!

Methodists think that it is not enough to dance around or hug a tree, however beautiful that creation is. Much more important to sing the praises everyday of its Creator – and no better way than to pray the 'Benedicite'.

## Pope to sick and elderly priests: You are bearers of dreams charged with memory

**Pope Francis writes to elderly and sick priests in the Italian region of Lombardy, reminding them of their role as bearers of dreams for younger generations, and encouraging them to live old age and illness as a privilege.**

By Benedict Mayaki, SJ

"You are living a season, old age, which is not an illness but a privilege." These were the Pope's words to the elderly and sick priests of the Italian region of Lombardy, gathered on Thursday at Caravaggio for a Day of Fraternity with the Bishops of the region.

In a letter, the Holy Father asked them to think of Simeon and Anna in the Bible, because it was only in their old age that the Gospel fully entered into their lives, and "taking Jesus in their arms, they announced to all the revolution of tenderness." The elderly: bearers of dreams Pope Francis said that the sick and elderly, beyond being "the object of assistance," are "protagonists in the community."

"You are the bearers of dreams, dreams charged with memory, and therefore very important for the younger generations," the Pope said. "From you comes the sap to flourish in Christian life and ministry."

Even the sick priests, the Pope continued, "experience a privilege: that of resembling Jesus who suffers and carries the cross." Then turning his thoughts to the dioceses and parishes that care for sick and elderly priests, the Holy Father pointed out that a community that takes care of the sick is one that is "well-rooted in Jesus."

Finally, the Pope invoked the Lord's blessings and Our Lady's protection on those gathered for the occasion, and requested prayers for himself, noting that he, too, is "a little old and a little sick – but not that sick."



Pope Francis greets an elderly man (Vatican Media)

# Life and Death

To help raise awareness and focus attention on the Season of Creation (an annual global ecumenical time of prayer and action for creation), the parish LiveSimply team decided, with the agreement of our priest Canon Geoffrey, to create a display for the Sanctuary. The inspiration for the display was Deuteronomy 30:19, in conjunction with the Doughnut Model designed by economist Kate Raworth and considered a compass for the journey to a sustainable, safe and just future for all.

Two streams of water cascade down the steps, one representing life and the other death. It aims to serve not only as a reminder that life comes from God and that when we impede the flow of life death ensues but also that the choice to impede the flow is ours to make, individually and collectively, and that these choices affect not only ourselves but the life (and death) of the whole world.

As the Season of Creation comes to a close the UN Climate Change Conference, also known as COP 26, approaches (November) and is being held in Glasgow. Pope Francis has been invited to attend and speak. Please pray for him, as well as other leaders and for there to be a positive, united outcome to the conference.

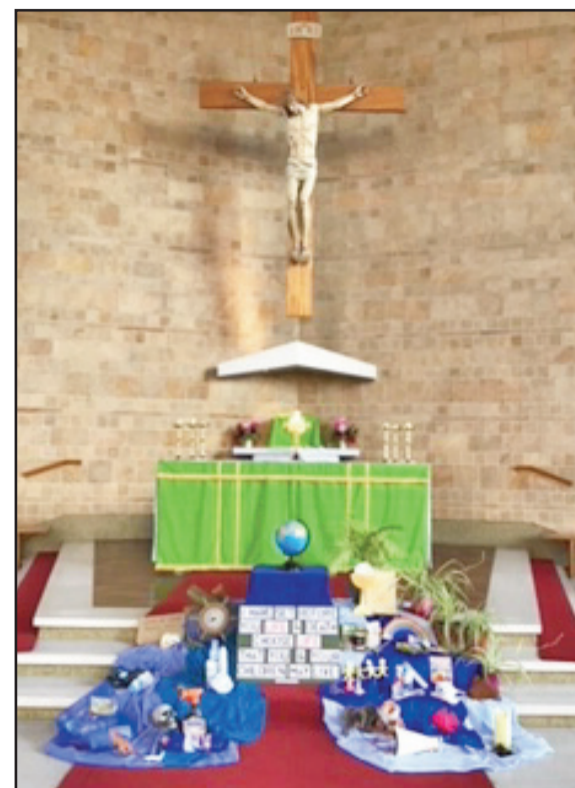
God has asked us to cooperate with Him in caring for His world, may the Season of Creation and COP 26, give us pause to

consider how we are doing that and what ways, if any, we can improve.

God is constantly offering each of us life but it is for each person to choose and accept it. Let us seek the grace to say yes to God and to help those who do not yet know Him, to know Him.

It really is a matter of life and death.

SSPP, Lincoln



## WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

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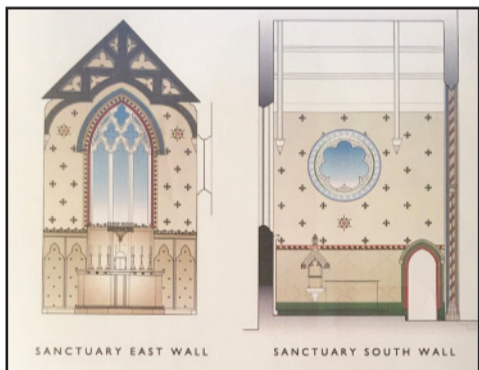
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# Transformation of Interior of St John's Church



St. John's church in Melton Mowbray is currently having an amazing redecoration, which is transforming its interior. The church was built in 1842 under the inspiration of the famous architect A.W.N. Pugin, and its intricate colourful artwork led it to be described as a "gem". Sadly, unsympathetic alterations over the years damaged the integrity of its design, and the artwork was over-painted. The current work involves repainting the sanctuary, using elements and motifs from the original Victorian design, but with a somewhat lighter touch. The artists are using traditional clay-based paints, and the project will cost £45,000.

Friends of St John's Church, an independent charity dedicated to conserving the building, has set to work to contribute towards the cost of this work. The Friends Group chairman, Frances Levett, explained, "We were limited in what we could do by the Covid restrictions, so we set up a JustGiving page for donations online and encouraged people to share the link. There have been various fundraising events as part of this such as a child's sponsored walk, and more are planned.

To encourage people I said that when donations reached £1,000 I would have my hair cut in a Mohican and coloured red and green to match the Victorian paintwork uncovered on the sanctuary arch. In just a few short weeks we raised £1,661, which has

now risen to £2,279, with some Gift Aid to be added to that. We are so grateful to all the donors, and of course I had to keep my promise! I added a blue colouring too, as this is the colour of the new design on that arch. These three colours are the dominant ones in all the stencil work and intricate artwork, so I match the church very well. I now answer to the name "Little Squaw!"



The JustGiving page is still open for donations and they are still coming in, from local businesses as well as individuals, and the group is hoping to raise £4,500: a tenth of the total cost of this work. More events are also planned, and it is hoped to invite people to an "online treasure hunt" as the autumn days grow shorter. There is much further work planned for the church, all of which will help preserve this important part of our heritage. So watch this space for updates! To learn more, or to donate, go to <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/fojmm>. Offline donations can also be made by phoning 07790 631635.

**Frances Levett**

## New CTE Presidents sign the Presidents' Covenant as they take up office



**CTE Presidents (left to right) are: Archbishop Nikitas, Archbishop Justin Welby, Bishop Tedroy Powell, Rev Dr Hugh Osgood, Cardinal Vincent Nichols**

Churches Together in England's incoming Orthodox and Pentecostal & Charismatic Presidents today signed the Presidents' Covenant as they started their new roles.

Archbishop Nikitas of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Diocese of Thyateira and Great Britain) and Bishop Tedroy Powell, leader of the pentecostal Church of God of Prophecy, met with their fellow CTE Presidents at Lambeth Palace.

Archbishop Nikitas replaces Archbishop Angaelos (Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London). Archbishop Angaelos represents the Oriental Orthodox tradition and, following custom, his successor comes from the Eastern Orthodox group of churches.

Bishop Tedroy Powell was elected by members of CTE's Pentecostal and Charismatic Forum to take over from Pastor Agu Irukwo of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, who is lead pastor of Jesus House in Brent.

CTE is represented by six Presidents from the major traditions of our 51 National Member Churches. They meet regularly to discuss matters concerning the churches in England, and together seek to serve as a sign of our unity. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, and Rev Dr Hugh Osgood the Moderator of the Free Churches Group also hold this role. The Fourth Presidency is currently not enacted. This follows a request by CTE's Enabling Group in November 2019, reflecting the lack of agreement within the churches in England regarding aspects of theological and moral discernment.

Presidents of CTE expressed their deep gratitude for the service of Archbishop Angaelos and Pastor Agu during this extraordinary period in the life of the Presidency and of CTE more widely. Wider ecumenical engagement in Thy Kingdom Come, wisdom about responses to the Covid pandemic, and especially their leadership in response to the death of George Floyd and the subsequent Black Lives Matter movement, were all priorities 'on their watch.'

Prayers were offered for their successors Archbishop Nikitas and Bishop Tedroy.

Bishop Tedroy Powell said of his new role at CTE, "It is an honour, great privilege and a truly humbling experience to be selected to serve as one of the six presidents of Churches Together in England.

"It is my aspiration and prayer that I can contribute the gifts, leadership experience and collaborative graces that God has bestowed upon me to fruition, in this sphere, as we serve the ecclesia of God, and our country in these uncertain times and seasons. Although uncertainty abounds, locally, nationally and globally, we the ecclesia of God have great opportunities to become even more transformational, building strategic constructs under the canopy of God's grace, as salt and light, bringing hope and reconciliation to our troubled seas of humanity."

Archbishop Nikitas said of his new role at CTE, "I am delighted to inaugurate my presidential tenure of Churches Together in England. Throughout my clerical ministry, ecumenical engagement and inter-Christian cooperation were always a personal priority and a major part of my diakonia. Now more than ever before, our world is in need of faith in action, and only through our own example will society experience the power of the message of salvation. Our world desires a "culture of solidarity" among all people, and most especially, among Christian sisters and brothers.

"Representing our Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the entire Orthodox Family and the Eastern Churches, I am ready to engage on every level with the boldness of Christian love and truth to sustain, strengthen and increase our collaboration, cooperation, and Christian solidarity in England."

Followed by Communion, this was a meeting where consideration was also given to the place of the Fourth Presidency Group within the Presidency, and how best to enable the contribution of the churches in that Group to be offered in the wider Presidency, in the absence of their appointed President.



# Loads of joy at the “Make & Take” Fun Days



A new idea of interest was borne over a cup of coffee with a friend, the Drop In “ Make & Take” Fun Day which took place on Friday and Saturday 27 & 28 September respectively at the Good Shepherd Church, Arnold. The idea was to encourage a slow build up of community once again after a very long drought of Covid 19 isolations. The item was advertised on parish Facebook and Twitter accounts as well as flyers printed for interest. The local Gedling Play Forum ( a charity) was invited to participate as well, helping with the making of craft activities for children. All were invited to attend...no age limit!

A total of over £700 was raised which will be a welcome relief towards our parish renovation fund.

The Gedling Play Forum is a really resourceful setup, very big on recycling with tremendous opportunities to explore by schools, parishes and individuals alike. Get in touch to find out and know more. [gedlingplayforum.org](http://gedlingplayforum.org)

*Submitted on behalf of the Good Shepherd Church*



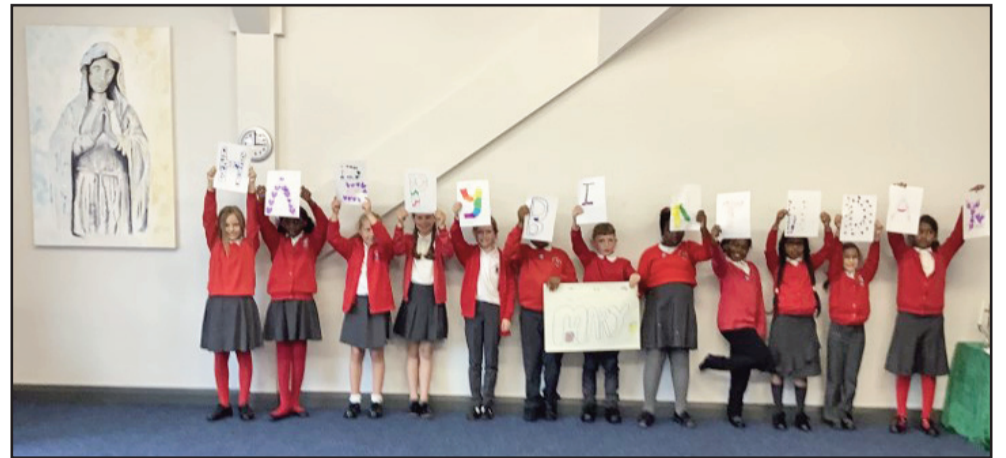
The activities included model painting, glass painting, jewellery making, making of dragonflies and much more. There were a few stalls available selling sturdy planters, pickled beetroot, a wide choice of jams, and locally grown veggies. A large range of children books from £1.50 each as well as beautifully made fabric bags by Chloe sold well.

Both days had a steady stream of young families visiting, relaxing and enjoying refreshments as well. We debut our new pop corn making machine mastered by the very capable Adrian.

Many of our parishioners supported the event as well, helped with the serving in the kitchen, we met new faces and the take home message has been....when's the next one?



# St Mary’s Derby Celebrate Our Lady’s Birthday



St Mary’s Parish and School enjoyed a great day of celebration to mark the Feast of Mary’s Birthday and Fr Tim O’Sullivan’s 60th anniversary of Ordination. The Lady Chapel was decorated with flowers to mark this special day and the children at school enjoyed making crafts connected to our Holy Mother.

celebration cake in the Presbytery garden.”

*Frances Hazel*

In the afternoon a beautiful Mass was sung by the Filipino Choir, with the readings by children from St Mary’s CV Academy. Fr Taz Lasola, the assistant parish priest, gave an uplifting homily about how birthdays are important to celebrate as each of us is a gift to the world and we should mark the day we were sent by God to earth with our own unique mission.

Mass was followed by refreshments and a



## Open with care in Hadfield

Restrictions that have prevented most parish activities taking place have now been relaxed, so this means many parish facilities and groups can start up again. In August we held our first “Meeting Point” at St Charles church, Hadfield. It has been a very difficult time for all of us recently. Some may have been sick, others bereaved or maybe suffered financial hardship because of the pandemic. We want to help each other rebuild our lives and community in a supporting, caring way. The event was well attended and everyone was happy to see old friends again over a cup of coffee and cake. In fact, it was so lovely that we will be holding them on the second Saturday of each month for the foreseeable future.

We have carried out risk assessments to make sure it is safe for people to gather again, but for those that are still a bit nervous about coming back we will have a table in the church where those who wish to can wear masks and keep distanced. We are “open with care” and are open to everyone – Immaculate Conception, St Charles, St Margaret’s, All Saints, St Marys, families from our schools, or anyone else that would like to join us. Coffee, cake and TLC are the order of the day and everyone is assured of a warm, caring welcome. Lifts can be arranged for those that need them

*By Sue Hoolahan*

## Gaelic Games fun and physical activities at St Benedict Derby

St. Joseph’s Gaelic Football with facilities at St. Benedict School in Derby hosted a showcase of Gaelic Games on Saturday September 18th 2021. Many of the young athletes come from around the twenty primary and five secondary schools of the Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust. Seán Hughes, PE Teacher at St. Benedict, Darley Road, Derby leads a team of volunteer coaches.



For more information on how to join in the fun and activity contact Seán: [shopkins@ben.srscmat.co.uk](mailto:shopkins@ben.srscmat.co.uk)

*By Gerry Molumby*



Let's bring the Gospel to life!

# Here: Now: Us

## A workshop near you in the Diocese of Nottingham

Here in our parish, our neighbourhood and the wider world  
 Now as we emerge from lockdown into a 'new normal'  
 Us God's people called to build the Common Good.

To find out how you can get involved visit  
[dioceseofnottingham.uk/herenowus](https://dioceseofnottingham.uk/herenowus)



### Here: Now: Us

Join your local city workshop for building missionary parishes

- **Derby: 16 October** at Our Lady of Lourdes, Mickleover
- **Lincoln City and County: 23 October** at SS Peter and Paul
- **Greater Nottingham: 30 October** at Our Lady & St Patrick's, The Meadows
- **Leicester: 13 November** at St Joseph's.

Here: Now: Us will help lay people put Catholic Social Teaching into action, grow in confidence and leadership, and reach out to the community.

- Each Here: Now: Us workshop starts at 10.00 a.m. and finishes at 4.00 p.m. Over the course of the day, you'll:
1. discover how Catholic Social Teaching helps us build the Common Good
  2. imagine how it can enable us to transform our parish, neighbourhood and world
  3. help each other to discover and claim our unique vocational responsibility
  4. begin to develop an action plan for mission alongside others in the city.

A strong interest has emerged in the four cities of Derby, Lincoln, Nottingham and Leicester for workshops in Autumn 2021 which gather parishioners from across each city. You'll be very welcome to join us!

You'll also be laying foundations at county level for the four emerging Caritas Hubs – ongoing networks of Catholics which hold a vision for the Kingdom of God in their area, interact with local ecumenical and public sector partners, and support each other in developing and sustaining practical projects which bring the Gospel to life.

To find out more and book your place, visit [dioceseofnottingham.uk/herenowus](https://dioceseofnottingham.uk/herenowus) or call Paul on 0115 648 1509

“The thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle.”

*Pope Francis*

“The essential vocation and mission of the lay faithful is to strive that earthly realities and all human activity may be transformed by the Gospel.”

*The Joy of the Gospel*

“This initiative comes at an exciting time for our diocese, as we listen afresh to the Gospel's invitation to encounter Christ, grow as disciples, and step out in mission... Every parish that takes up the invitation of 'Here: Now: Us' won't just make an impact at home; it will be joining the universal Church in making Christ's love known on earth.”

*Bishop Patrick McKinney*



# News From....



As pupils go #BacktoSchool, we are inviting our Nottingham Diocese schools to Go Green and fundraise for Amazon communities protecting the rainforest. Check out our resources for primary and

secondary schools and get involved in the #GoGreenChallenge today!

<https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Education-resources>



The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is deteriorating, as tens of thousands more Afghans flee their homes, compounding an existing crisis following decades of conflict and drought. Afghan families displaced inside the country and those who have reached neighbouring countries need humanitarian assistance – the basics of life: food, water and shelter.

Your generosity and compassion have allowed us to stand together with communities in Afghanistan for decades, and we will continue to do so.

CAFOD started working in Afghanistan in the late 1980s and a core part of our work has been to support Afghan organisations committed to improving the lives of vulnerable and marginalised people, supporting them to earn a living.

### What is the current situation in Afghanistan?

We have all been shocked by the news of the Taliban takeover of the capital Kabul and control over the vast majority of Afghanistan.

### What has the Catholic Church said about the situation in Afghanistan?

Pope Francis has expressed his “unanimous concern for the situation in Afghanistan”. He called for prayers “so that the clamour of weapons may cease, and solutions may be found at the negotiating table”.

The situation in Afghanistan is highly complex with decades of conflict that have taken a terrible toll on Afghan people, resulting in deaths, injuries and pushing families further into poverty. Drought and coronavirus have added even greater problems for vulnerable families struggling with hunger and healthcare. The UN estimates that 80 per cent of Afghans forced to flee since the end of May 2021 are women and children now in desperate need of humanitarian aid.

The leader of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, has called on the UK government to allow more refugees to come to the UK in light of the situation in Afghanistan. In a joint letter to the Guardian newspaper on 26 August, Bishop Paul McAleenan, lead bishop for migrants and refugees of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, urged the British government "to go further in helping at-risk Afghans, human rights defenders and women activists, and create safe passages so that people can find sanctuary without resorting to dangerous journeys.”

### How are CAFOD and local experts responding to the situation?

It is a rapidly changing and uncertain situation, and we are doing everything possible to ensure the immediate wellbeing of local partners and the communities they serve. Their vital work has started to resume in some areas and we will be looking to support the most vulnerable Afghans with humanitarian aid and longer-term support.

Please continue to keep the people of Afghanistan in your thoughts and prayers and if you are able, please donate to our emergency appeal [cafod.org.uk](https://cafod.org.uk)

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# Leprosy – how to see an end to this ancient and devastating disease

Many people believe that leprosy is just a disease of ancient times, occasionally mentioned in the Bible. But the reality for many millions, is that it is still a devastating disease of today.

Over 200,000 people are newly detected with leprosy every year, but this number only includes those who are actually found and diagnosed. Millions more go undiagnosed, spreading infection within their communities or living with the devastating effects of the disease and its consequences. To put leprosy into context, the disease exists in 120 out of the 195 countries in the world today.

## What is leprosy?

Leprosy is a disease of the nerves. If left undiagnosed, it attacks the nerve endings and causes a lack of sensation in the peripheral parts of the body such as the hands and feet. This lack of sensation easily leads to unintentional injury, then chronic ulcers and if left untreated, clawing of hands and feet, amputation, and blindness. Leprosy causes more disability than any other infectious disease.



**A man's hand with clawed fingers caused by leprosy.**  
Copyright: St Francis Leprosy Guild

In times gone by, people with leprosy were considered a threat to society. They were often forcibly and legally removed to leprosy colonies or asylums where they lived in poverty for the rest of their lives. There was a degree of justification for doing this. Leprosy couldn't be cured in those days. People with leprosy became deformed, blind, and outcast. Leprosy shocked and horrified people. It is no surprise, then, that leprosy was a highly stigmatised disease. The L-word "leper" still carries a sting of fear and horror to it and never should be used to describe people affected by the disease.

Tragically, leprosy is still one of the most stigmatised diseases on earth. A leprosy diagnosis is a life sentence for some, often considered a curse from God and the result of sin. Many people with leprosy are thrown out of their homes, communities, or forced to leave their employment leading to a life of begging. Unbelievably, there are more than 120 laws in the statute books, worldwide, today, that actively discriminate against people with leprosy.

## How is the disease caused?

Since 1873, we've known that leprosy is caused by a bacterium. But it took until 1980s for an effective antibiotic cure to be found. Known as multidrug therapy, or

MDT, this discovery was a massive breakthrough. Since then, around sixteen million people have been cured of leprosy. As recently as 2000s the disease was considered eliminated, and as a result, health services were scaled back, and leprosy expertise and knowledge declined.

Tragically, an unknown number of people still had leprosy or were catching leprosy and then transmitting it into their communities. These people were undiagnosed, untreated and many, including children, developed the life-changing disabilities caused by leprosy.

## How leprosy diagnosed?

Today, if someone suspects they have leprosy, they must find a clinic or hospital for a diagnosis or treatment. People with leprosy often live in remote or isolated locations with no healthcare provision and no transport. And, sadly, some doctors and nurses today don't recognise leprosy when they see it.

A further complication is that leprosy is hard to detect in its early stages. Before the disabilities caused by the disease become visible, leprosy presents as numb patches on the skin which can be easily confused with other skin complaints such as scabies. There is no point-of-care or field diagnostic test available for leprosy yet. Diagnosing leprosy involves experience, and confirmation of the disease using a skin biopsy.

In addition, leprosy may incubate for twenty years before any symptoms show at all. In this way, those who are infected may continue to transmit leprosy to their communities and that, tragically, includes children. A proxy for undetected leprosy in a community, is the presence of children with (life-long) leprosy disabilities.



## What's the solution?

Until recently, caring for people with leprosy meant providing treatment with MDT, the provision of healthcare in hospitals and clinics, surgery to improve disabilities caused by leprosy, and trying to reintegrate people affected by leprosy back into society after they have been neglected and ostracised.

To see the end of leprosy in today's world, new strategies are required to find and treat everyone with the disease. This so-called active case-finding requires a complex combination of skills and expertise: logistics, mapping, data collection and recording to find people who have leprosy, plus medical

skills to diagnose, and treat patients and maybe their families, friends, and neighbours too, and to monitor their progress and health over time. In this way, a lifetime of disability and stigma can be avoided, and the spread of leprosy can be stopped. St Francis Leprosy Guild has cared for people with leprosy for over 125 years and its current operating strategy emphasises active case-finding and early detection followed by treatment with MDT. If we can find and treat people affected by leprosy, village

by village, town by town, city by city, and country by country, we will see an end to leprosy at last. But it is not easy, and we need all the support that we can get to make it a reality.

## Will you help

For more information, please visit our website [www.stfrancisleprosy.org](http://www.stfrancisleprosy.org) or scan



# Hospitality Hub

Serving the local community.

## Mondays: 10am-12noon during term time: Little Lambs

Little Lambs Baby & Toddler Group is a friendly and welcoming baby and toddler group for mums, dads and grandparents to enjoy time with their little ones. We provide a safe and secure environment for babies and children to interact and play. We also invite local guests each week, who offer free trials, services or information which is relevant and will appeal to young families.



Please visit our 'events' section on Facebook for an up-to-date list of guests:

[www.facebook.com/littlelambswoodthorpe/events](https://www.facebook.com/littlelambswoodthorpe/events) Twitter: @littlelambsng5

Instagram: littlelambswoodthorpe

## Tuesdays Coffee/Tea Mornings

A friendly gathering for hot drinks & biscuits from 10am-11am. A warm welcome extended to all.



## First Wednesday of the month, starting 6 October 2021: Tea Dance

Providing a social afternoon with a programme of ballroom older sequence and new sequence dances. A small entrance fee is charged which covers the cost of the activities, a raffle and the provision of light refreshments.

## Alternate Thursdays: Friendship Club (9 Sept 2021)

All are invited to an afternoon of friendship with a variety of activities, outings, films, interesting speakers accompanied by light refreshments: hot drinks and cakes. Come and join the fun and humour, with old and new friends.



## First Friday of the Month: Soup Lunches

We supply homemade soup lunches and refreshments on Fridays from 12.30pm until 2pm. The lunch is open to everyone, young and old, and is a good opportunity to socialise with friends and build a strong community spirit.

## Forthcoming Events:

- McMillan Coffee Morning** Saturday 25 Sept 2021 11am-1pm
- A Mad Hatter's Quiz Night & Supper** Saturday 9 October 2021 7pm-10pm (tickets now on sale)
- Good Shepherd Christmas Fair** Saturday 27 November 2021 10.30am-2.30pm
- Children Secret Santa Party** Saturday 4 December 2021 12pm-4pm (tickets now on sale)
- Christmas Carol Service** Friday 17 December 2021 7pm-8pm FREE Mince pies & mulled wine.

Where: The Good Shepherd Parish Centre 3 Thackerays Lane, Woodthorpe, Nottingham, NG5 4HT  
Contact details: office tel no: 0115 926 8288 Email: [goodshepherd.arnold@nrcdt.org.uk](mailto:goodshepherd.arnold@nrcdt.org.uk)



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Ministers of Religion



# Return of the sacrament of Confirmation at Christ The King, Alfreton

Friday September 10th saw the return of the sacrament of Confirmation at Christ The King Alfreton. It was an evening of many celebrations as 17 young people individually received the gifts of the Holy Spirit through the imposition of hands and anointing with oils by Bishop Patrick, it was also an opportunity to welcome newly appointed Parish Priest Fr. Paul. All of this was enhanced by showcasing the newly decorated church and hall carried out during the closure within the Covid pandemic months.



Max Russell being confirmed at Christ the King Alfreton.



Mirlead Beet, joined by family having received her Confirmation Certificate at Christ the King Alfreton



+Bishop Patrick and newly appointed Parish Priest Fr Paul Nellikulam .

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## Diocesan Education Service is Training New Chaplains for Primary and Secondary Schools

The growth of lay chaplaincy provision in Catholic schools in our diocese has been boosted this academic year, with four new chaplaincy apprentices taking up posts across the diocese.

Joel Bryan, who is working for the Saint Ralph Sherwin CMAT, and is based at St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy in Derby, spoke about what drew him to Chaplaincy as a career: "University has never been for me, and when I left School I was unsure of what I wanted to do. However I felt a strong pull towards youth ministry, so joined the Briars team, and fell in love with this kind of work.

Since leaving the Briars I have tried a variety of different Jobs from care of the elderly to shop assistant. But everywhere I went I kept seeing signs pointing me towards Chaplaincy. I felt that this was where the Lord was calling me and I couldn't ignore his call any longer, so I answered Him and began looking for chaplaincy roles. It was at that time that the perfect opportunity arose, a Chaplaincy Apprenticeship working in a school under the mentorship of a fantastic Chaplain whilst also studying and working towards a Youthwork qualification. As someone with no A-levels this truly felt like a gift from God. It felt as though he was answering so many of my prayers all at once by providing me with a job, a course and a calling. It has been wonderful to work with Fran Hazel the Chaplain at St Mary's. It's been amazing to see



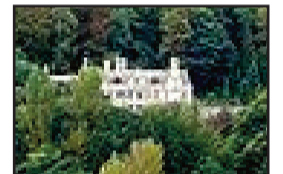
how much the children love coming along to prayer groups and seeing different ways of engaging children in our faith. I have been inspired by how many children willingly give up their break time to come and pray the rosary. The role provides the opportunity to see different approaches to chaplaincy with all the different types of sessions they offer from retreat days, chaplaincy teams, prayer groups and so much more. I'm looking forward to the future and doing my bit to help inspire the youth of today on their faith journeys.

I'd say to anyone who is struggling with knowing what to do with their life and is a practising Catholic who enjoys working with young people - why not look into the Chaplaincy Apprenticeship scheme?"

If you know a young adult who you think would suit this role encourage them to get in touch with the Nottingham Diocesan youth service (NDCYS) to ask about opportunities in Chaplaincy.

## Prinknash Abbey to welcome community of nuns

The Benedictine monks of Prinknash Abbey are delighted to announce a new and important venture on the historic Prinknash Abbey estate in Gloucestershire.



The monks have offered one of the properties on the Prinknash estate to the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, OSB, an autonomous community of nuns established within the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham following the Benedictine Rule and currently living at Kingstanding in Birmingham.

The Prinknash community converted to the Catholic faith in 1913 on Caldey Island. The monastic community belongs to the Subiaco-Cassinense Congregation of the order of St Benedict, the largest of the Benedictine Congregations which comprise the Benedictine Confederation, and whose monasteries include St Benedict's own monasteries of Subiaco and Monte Cassino.

The Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, OSB, were received into the Catholic Church at the Oxford Oratory in 2013. They are part of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, established by Pope Benedict XVI and are aggregated to the Subiaco-Cassinense Congregation.

The refurbishment of buildings at the new monastery for nuns will include new guest and retreat facilities for individuals and groups, especially of young people. The work is expected to take two years.

Mgr Newton, the Ordinary of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, said he was extremely grateful for the generosity of the Prinknash community in offering the sisters a permanent home to live out their monastic vocation.

The Abbot Administrator of Prinknash said: "Prinknash is a much-loved and historic centre of prayer and monastic hospitality. We ask Almighty God's blessing on this new venture. Our hope is that the presence of these two distinct monastic communities on this outstandingly beautiful and historic estate will enrich this oasis of peace for the many who visit, and be a powerful witness of monastic generosity and prayer."

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# CAFOD's hopes for COP26

by Sinead Callaghan, CAFOD Education Team



This year, the UK will host the largest gathering of world leaders ever to take place on British soil: the 'COP26' climate talks.

It's a crucial moment for getting on track to keeping global temperature rises below 1.5 degrees – the point at which the impacts of the climate crisis could cause even greater devastation to communities in low-income countries who have done least to cause the problem.

That's why CAFOD supporters including children and young people are demanding that the Prime Minister and the Chancellor show leadership in the run-up to the summit to make sure countries commit to rapidly cut their emissions, provide financial support to the countries hardest hit by the crisis and stop supporting the fossil fuels driving the climate crisis.

What is a COP and why is it important? COP means 'conference of parties' and is an annual climate conference organised by the UN. Governments and negotiators from across the world will travel to the meeting to discuss how to keep temperature rises below dangerous levels and prevent the climate crisis from causing even worse catastrophes for the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.

COP26 is critical because it is the first COP since the coronavirus pandemic began. Governments are in the midst of planning how to rebuild from the pandemic and it is vital that these plans are based around the need for a global green and just transition. Pope Francis warned that it would be "a scandal" if the money governments are spending to rebuild economies and save businesses "were to focus on rescuing those industries that do not contribute to the inclusion of the excluded, the promotion of the least, the common good or the care of creation".

Liam Finn, Campaigns Manager at CAFOD, said: "All our lives have been turned upside down in the past year and we all want to go back to normal as soon as possible.

But the last thing we want to do is to go back to the injustices and inequalities of the 'old' normal which have made the crisis even worse. We in the UK have a massive part to play in building a better normal, calling on Boris Johnson to show the leadership we desperately need in the months remaining before the COP."

## Why do we need urgent action on climate change?

The climate emergency is affecting us all – and is having the greatest impacts on the world's poorest countries and communities, who are the least responsible for the greenhouse gas emissions and can least afford its impacts. Increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events like droughts (East and Southern Africa), hurricanes (Central America) and floods (Bangladesh), have sadly become common events the world over, as well as increased extremes in temperatures, such as the recent heatwave experienced in North America. The resulting failed harvests as seen in Zambia, Zimbabwe and parts of East Africa, destruction of land, displacement of people and animals has already destroyed the livelihoods of millions of people and caused devastation to our common home. We need to act now to support those whose lives are already impacted by climate change and help them to adapt to the new realities and new challenges.

We need to make urgent and ambitious emissions cuts right now to prevent potential devastating future impacts. The sooner we act, the more chance we have of limiting temperature rises and limiting the worst impacts of climate change.

Acting now gives the best chance of preventing future hunger crises and food shortages. Acting now can prevent places becoming uninhabitable for people and wildlife. Acting now is in the interests of all of us and our common home.

As part of the Paris Agreement, the world has set the target of limiting temperature rises to 1.5 degrees, which is seen as a relatively 'safe' level of warming. Beyond this level, natural systems that sustain life on Earth – ice, forests, ocean, the atmosphere – become dangerously unstable and 'tipping points' such as the melting of ice caps can cause irreversible damage and threaten to speed further temperature rises.

The COP26 Climate Change Summit in Glasgow in November 2021 will be the largest gathering of world leaders the UK has ever seen and needs to focus on how to meet this target. Current plans do not go nearly far enough and do not adequately consider the reality of the millions of people already affected and vulnerable to even the slightest increase in temperature rises.

In Glasgow, leaders must agree a deal to move faster on their commitments to tackle climate change. They need to show collective leadership to 'keep 1.5 alive'.

## What do we want to see from COP26?

The UK has a role as a participating government and as COP President to galvanise ambition and commitments from other governments. UK government action matters in itself for the impacts it will have in tackling climate change, so we need specific commitments, finance and changes in policy. It also matters as a signal to build trust and ambition among other governments and to support the UK's role as COP President to achieve the collective ambition necessary.

## Our hopes for COP26 are three-fold

First, we'd like to see ambitious short term action on climate change before 2030 to cut emissions in line with a 1.5-degree world. This can be achieved through more policies and investment in greener transport, infrastructure, agriculture and jobs. Second, we want the government to plug the climate finance gap to support the countries and communities most vulnerable to the climate crisis so they can respond and adapt to climate impacts like floods, droughts and other extreme weather events. Finally, we urge the government to drop all support for fossil fuels, both at home and overseas.

Catholic parishes, individuals and schools across the UK are joining CAFOD on this journey towards COP26. They have been speaking up and meeting with MPs urging them to demand Boris Johnson show leadership in the run-up to the meeting in Glasgow.

CAFOD supporters have also been urging Chancellor Rishi Sunak to act and show the UK can be a credible host for the summit, by setting out a strategy for the UK to cut its emissions and by working with fellow finance ministers to provide financial support to countries being hardest hit by the crisis.

Call for the Prime Minister and Chancellor to show leadership at COP26 at [cafod.org.uk/reclaim](http://cafod.org.uk/reclaim)

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—GENESIS 41:35

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## .... in the classroom with Fr John

# A Fresh Look at the Story of Creation

I invited the students to read and ponder the opening chapter of the Book of Genesis, the page that opens the Bible, where a poet imagines God creating the wonder of life over a six-day working week – and then resting on the seventh day. The had to pretend they had never before known the story.

They read with fresh eyes and minds. The page held them. The atmosphere of the classroom changed. I watched their interest grow, quiet smiles reflect, checking back to make certain, awareness of development, upward glances to see what I was doing (no one was talking) and they saw I was watching them. I heard gasps of surprise and chuckles. I was asking them to become students and they were responding. What did they notice, what had surprised them, what had they learned? They said:

The story is of a man and woman, not Adam and Eve . . . A shapeless mass of water is the raw material of creation . . . How do you contain a shapeless mass of water? . . . God is waiting for the right moment . . . they liked the word “hovering” as God waited . . . God began and exhausted himself creating light and dark: that is all God did on the first day!

Second day, God separated the water to waters above the sky and below the earth – and that’s all. Too tired to do any more . . . God is not in a hurry . . .

Third day and now God gets busy . . . Tired by mid-day, takes a rest, looks at what has been done and thinks it good . . . A busy third day afternoon follows and as the day fades God saw all that was made and found it good . . . Why didn’t God admire creation on the first and second days? . . . Twice in the same day God admires the work . . . Is it “handiwork” – does God have hands? . . .

The fourth day is a surprise: God creates sun, moon, stars. So the sun is not the light of the world which was made on the first day . . . Why would God create light on the first day and the sun on the fourth? . . . Because ancient peoples worshipped the sun as the giver of life and light (“and still do in some primitive parts of the world” called out some of the students) . . . God is the giver of light and life (first day) and the sun is now created in the light of God . . . At the end of day four God sees all that was made. It is good . . .

Fifth day and the pace certainly hotting up: life in water, in the sky, on the dry land . . . Huge varieties begin to exist . . . What do they eat and drink? . . . God saw all was good. Nothing wrong anywhere? All was good . . . Twice on the third, once on the fourth and once on the fifth God sees all is good . . . Is God sometimes too busy to look?

Sixth day and a surprise. The foliage of all plant life is food for creatures - they do not need to eat each other: leaves are good enough . . . There is no one to eat the fruit! Why fruit if there’s no one there to eat it? . . . God pauses and then speaks to someone ‘Let us make mankind (“No women?” shout protesters, and everyone laughing) in our own image and likeness’ and God creates mankind male and female . . .

God is male and female (“or female and male” insist the girls who win, of course) . . . . God is us. God is like us. We are like God – but only if we are female and male. We can’t do it on our own – male or female: we do it together, male and female, if we want to be like God . . . They are caught in the cleverness of language and its weakness: we can’t say everything, we can only say or speak partially . . . . God is male and female, male and female are one . . . . Are male and female one or do they become one? . . . It can mean both, can’t it?

If it means both, then what does ‘become one mean?’ . . . . Silence . . . They knew . . . . A girl said, “It’s a baby, isn’t it. They become one in their baby.” The students were overwhelmed. They had arrived where they’d never been before. Baby comes third . . . . Baby is the third person . . . . Baby must carry on the human race, with other third persons.

There was no sniggering. All were old enough to feel attraction and they knew the underlying reality: like their own mothers and fathers they would want to find partners, to marry, to have children . . . . want their children to have children . . . . Young as they were, they knew the pattern of life – and here it was at the end of the sixth day . . . . God’s plan ‘Increase and multiply and fill the earth’. It had been happening for a long time and soon it would be their turn . . .

I thought I sensed tears in some of them, even a wanting to cry . . . . “Isn’t it beautiful,” said one of the girls. No one answered. I was right – they were ready to cry, girls and boys could not trust their voices not to crack and then they would cry . . . . God’s word had overwhelmed them and they surrendered to its power . . . . Become one, increase and



multiply, fill the earth with love . . . .

“Who is God talking to – ‘Let us make?’ Do you know, Father?” “I do.”

“Tell us.”

“No, you have been thinking so well – you tell me.”

But we don’t know! . . . . You have not thought enough, yet. You will understand, give yourselves a minute or two . . . . “It’s a woman, isn’t it?” said one of the girls, quietly . . . . Yes – but how did you know? . . . . “Because of us: we are female and male but the Bible says we are one. God is one, but God says ‘let us’ so it must be a woman, otherwise we can’t see the female in God.” . . . .

“Yes, you are right. God is speaking to a woman. We even know her name.” . . . . “We can’t know her name! There is no woman mentioned, so how can we know?” . . . . “Tell us her name, Father, perhaps we’ll understand then” . . . . “I’ll do better than that: I’ll let her tell you herself. Turn to the Book of Wisdom, chapter five.” . . . . They read for themselves ‘I was with God in the beginning.’ . . . . Who is she? . . . . “The lady Wisdom, planning the wonder of Creation with God – “And delighting to be with us!” called out one of the boys. “That’s what she says! God’s Wisdom is with us because she wants to be!” . . . . “She was with God in the

beginning, and with us in all history. God shares her with us” . . . . “No, she shares God with us” . . . . “Same thing!” . . . . “No, it isn’t! God and Wisdom planned creation together and then God says ‘You go now and be with the human race and help them as you have helped me. I’m tired. It’s the end of the sixth day. I need to rest’.”

They are laughing. God tired, resting, and letting poor lady Wisdom do all the rest of the work? . . . . “Typical man! I’m tired. A woman’s work is never done” . . . . “It’s only for billions of years,” says one of the boys, “and then you can rest for all eternity.” . . . . “Thank you very much,” replied the girls, “you just lost yourself eighteen wives.” . . . . He’s quick. “I only want one and she’s in 5R. She won’t mind and I’ll make her a cup-of-tea whenever she wants one . . . .”

“Is there a nicer name than Wisdom for the lady? It sounds so stuffy” . . . . The Greek word is Sophia, and the Greek bible calls her Sophia . . . . “That’s a lovely name. Sophia with God at the beginning and God said to Sophia ‘Let us make’ and she agreed we should be like her and God, and she has stayed with us to keep reminding us” . . . . “Look – God saw all he had made and it was very good. That is the only very good – at the end . . . . I bet he rested peacefully on the seventh day – all was very good” . . . . and Sophia looking after creation . . . . Where is she today?

## Biblical Number Fun in the Classroom

I told the students they would enjoy this in an unusual way. They had to read the chapter in the Bible giving the ages of the first men, the patriarchs (no women’s ages available, sadly), and see what they could see. They were not impressed. “See what we can see?”

“If you see, you will understand: if you don’t or can’t, then you won’t. I promise I shall tell you but I’d prefer you discover for yourselves: you would remember the search, the humour, the game-playing – it’s all there. If I tell you I am between you and the Bible text: if you discover for yourself it is direct – you and the Bible. I can give you the answer or the question. If I give you the answer you will forget it, if I give you the question and you find the answer – you will remember.”

They agreed. They also agreed making it a homework project would be better than a classroom one when some would see more quickly and others might feel left behind and then not even bother – because the answers were already available. So homework it was, and they agreed when we later discussed the chapter it had been better that way.

They analysed the great ages of the patriarchs in different ways but saw the patterns emerge. The majority had made a list: names in the first column, year of birth of first child in the second, year of death in the third.

They noticed the number of “o”s. A Hebrew number ending with “o” is a perfect one – “tenfold” is its meaning, an abundance. They saw “5” begin to be noticeable and how often the numbers in both columns could be divided by “3”.

They began to see patterns of numbers rather than “ages of men” and realised the author did not know any ages or birth dates – simply there had been births and deaths, life passed on down the generations.

Noah began the tenth generation and was the only good man left on earth. God had given the human race (still no women had names, the students beginning to distrust the Bible mentality) a perfect time (ten generations) and it had failed. The story of the Flood, they saw, was a return to the opening verses of the Bible and God’s Spirit hovering over a shapeless mass of water. God would need to begin again after the

Flood in the same way – by separating waters. That was the moment for some of them. This whole chapter must be carefully constructed if it folds back so neatly. They had caught a glimpse of ancient biblical mentality.

Adam (and Eve) lost their sons, Abel (murdered by his brother) and Cain (who fled in fear east of Eden to the land of Nod and there married a local woman). Adam and Eve were not the first man and woman. Man and Woman are the first man and woman all through chapters one, two, three – yet all the youngsters had been taught Adam and Eve were the first human beings. The Bible doesn’t say that. Who made it up? Perhaps people pretend to know the Bible without ever reading it? Including teachers and priests? Already the youngsters were opening their minds. There were 800 years between the birth of Seth, Adam’s third son, and the death of Adam – the same 800 as for Jared after the birth of Enoch, and 300 for Enoch and his baby, Methuselah. Perfect, perfect (two zeros) numbers – completion.

Continued on page 11



# You'll never walk alone

Two years ago Fr Jarosz and four parishioners completed part of St Cuthbert's Way (a pilgrimage walk from Melrose, Scotland, to Holy Island in Northumberland). We returned this September to walk the remainder of the path. On both occasions we walked to raise money for the Nomad Trust night shelter, provider of emergency accommodation for homeless people in Lincoln.

The first challenge came before we set off! One of the drivers developed a bad back and nearly did not make the trip. Thankfully, with the help of modern medicine, we all



made it up to Scotland safely and just in time for a welcome evening meal.

The next day we started where we would finish! We drove to our finish point prior to our starting point (for the benefit of our driver) and saw yellow sheep in a nearby field. We then set out walking from Morebattle, having had a chat with the Danish pastor we first met two years ago, and who is still renovating his church/cafe. The path involved many ascents and descents through the Cheviot hills and we reached both the highest point of the entire Way as well as the Scottish-English border. With tired feet we neared Hethpool and seeing the yellow sheep knew we were nearly there.

The third day took in the route from Hethpool to Weedon bridge, near Wooler. More climbs, forests of ferns, grumpy cows and desolate heather moorlands were notable features. This day was the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and the morning prayer combined with the scenery to move one parishioner to comment about the sadness of knowing you will never walk that journey again, leading another to reflect on lows being the inevitable consequence of highs. The Cross, however, teaches us to see things differently - it is by going down that we go up, to detach from earthly cares and like we did yesterday, to always have the end in sight.

The fourth day we set off from Weedon bridge, heading for Fenwick and visited St Cuthbert's cave en route. We finished the walk early enough to drive across to Holy Island and spend time there. That night we were tempted to watch Liverpool FC play



what would prove to be an eventful football match in the Champions League, but tiredness took us to our beds instead.

On the final day we left Fenwick and after hazards of crossing the A1 road and a high speed railway line, we took off our shoes and socks and headed out on the sea bed towards Holy Island. A memorable crossing, we reached dry land and our pilgrimage walk was over.

Whilst the landscape, weather and wildlife were uplifting, it was my fellow travellers who made the trip. It was a highlight to spend time in their presence and to enjoy not only their company but the beautiful landscape of their faces without being obscured by a mask all the time. We may never follow the St Cuthbert's Way together

again, but the Lord assures us, thanks to His death on the Cross, that through the presence of the Holy Spirit, wherever we do go, we will never walk alone. This particular pilgrimage is over but we can walk on with hope in our hearts, to where the Lord calls us.

Thanks be to God for the walk and pilgrimage, with a safe arrival home. Thank you to all who kept us in prayer and to those who donated much needed funds to help the homeless. To make a donation visit the 'Just giving' website: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/pilgrimage-walk>.

St Cuthbert pray for us.

*Jo, SSPP, Lincoln*

## ... in the classroom with Fr John

*Continued from page 10*

Divide Adam's age by **3** and we see **310** – the same figures as his age when Seth was born, but in a different order: **130**. Reverse **130** and the number is **013 = 13**. Mean anything? Yes! Kenan has his son, Mahalel, at the age of **70** (two perfect numbers, **7** multiplied by **10**) and dies at the age of **910**, which divided by mystical **7** gives us **130** . . . **013**. We are back with Adam and Seth.

“No one can claim this is coincidence” the students agreed. The author was writing as he chose, not by revelation. It is neat, smart, challenging and mathematical.

Seth has Enosh at age **105** – divisible by **3** or **5**, just as his death age is by **3** – **912**. Son Enosh has child Kenan at **90** (perfect **0** and **3** by **3** as well as by **5**) and dies at **905** (**5**). Kenan we have discussed so we go on to Mahalel, only **65** when Jared is born and **895** when he dies. We can see **5** clearly – but **65** divided by **5** = **13** again. **895**, his death age, divides by **5** to **179** which totals **18** which is **9** (**3 x 3**) by **2** – and now the students are all laughing.

Mahalel becomes the youngest father so far at the age of **65** – and his grandson will be the same age for his first born, **65**. But whereas Mahalel had a further **838** years to live - his grandson has only **300** to live – a perfect, perfect number, but a short life at the age of **365**.

No! come the protests from the students – **365** is a perfect number of years in itself, mirroring the days of the year. After **365** we start the next year, the next stage of life. Enoch did not start again because he died.

No, he didn't – “he walked with God” says the story: he lived a perfect year of years – and was perfect, didn't die, walked with God. They were satisfied. Meaning in every detail. Methuselah, Enoch's son, made up for his father's short life by becoming the oldest man on record – **969**. That's a number obviously to have the “divided by **3**” treatment – anything else? A couple of students had seen it. The number **187** (Methuselah's age when son, Lamech is born) looks unwieldy – what can you do with two heavy-weight numbers like **187** (son born) **969** (own death)?

Two students had seen the author was playing with primary numbers – the numbers that can only be divided by **1**, the absolute number. He has used **3, 5, 7, 11, 13** - let's try **17**: and he had. We can divide **187** and **969** by **17**! The game is still on. Primary numbers are part of it.

Methuselah's son is Lamech and there is a serious change of direction. Lamech dies at **777** (triple perfection, the absolute perfect number, symbolising perfection (just as the number **666** symbolises absolute imperfection and is the symbol of the beast.) At **777** Lamech is perfect. He had been **182** when son Noah was born. **182** divided by perfect **7** becomes **26 = 13** by **2**. It is still there, that **13**.

Almost finished. But what fun they had had. Lamech is the ninth generation, son of Methuselah who was **187** (**11 x 17**) when his child was born and **969** (**3 x 17 x 19**) at his death. The set of **3, 5, 7, 11, 17, 19** primary numbers is complete in the patriarchs' ages. How could they have known where their careful looking would bring them – to an

author enjoying himself playing with numbers, perfect, mystical, prime – on a wet afternoon in Jerusalem, thousands of years ago.

Who had asked him to do it? I reminded them the people of Israel decided to compose their Scriptures after returning to the Holy Land from the Babylonian captivity. They had oral and written traditions, many texts to edit, choices to be made. We read the Bible as one text but it is composed from collections. It seems clear that whoever wrote this chapter on the patriarchs' ages had been left to do it his own way and amused himself with number-play in the process.

Noah is the end of the story, the tenth and final generation. Would there be another generation? For **500** years, in our imagination, God ponders whether to give Noah children – and decisively makes choice of a new creation, a new beginning. Noah is **500** years old (“**00**” is double perfect) before God blesses his home with children: the first and only biblical triplets are born – Sem, Japheth and Ham. All that time you wait for a child and three come along together. **100** years later the four men and their wives go onto the Ark – the human race survives and we are all descended from Noah and his wife. End of story.

Some of the students had continued and worked out overlaps, and presented them: Adam was still alive when Noah's father, Lamech, was born . . . Adam's son, Seth, died just before Noah was born . . . Abraham was already **60** when Noah died . . . Methuselah was on the Ark because he died **14** years after the Flood.

And last – something they would never have known to include. Those primary numbers, **1-19**, contain the most perfect Hebrew number. Could they suggest which one it was? Number **17** – the precious mystical primary number **7** and the **10** of perfection. I told them of the miraculous catch of fish in the Gospel according to John – **153** fish. Who counts fish? We weigh fish. Why remember a number **153**? John plays with the answer.

Seven apostles go fishing. They catch **153** big fish (equal!). They share – **21** each and **6** left over: **3 x 7** each (a perfect catch) and **6** left over. Who has those six fish? The eighth person present, Jesus. He has a fish cooking on the fire – so he has **7**, the perfect number! They have **3 x 7** – a perfect number. “You will do greater things than I,” Jesus had told the apostles. They did, inspired by the Holy Spirit, but the pattern is the same: **1 x 7, 3 x 7** . . .

I told the students that St Augustine invites us to imagine a triangle with a base of **17**, then **16**, then **15**, etc., and as we place the last one on the top – we have **153**! An equilateral triangle – all three sides are equal (symbolising the Trinity – Father, Son, Holy Spirit) - holding **153** fish, us. It is the salvation of the world, said St John: **153** symbolises the human race held in the love of God. The number **17** symbolises universal salvation.

They were satisfied. They had shared their homework with a biblical writer having fun over two and a half thousand years ago.

*John Daley IC*



# A very joyful return of Little Lambs...

This week saw the much-anticipated return of Little Lambs Baby & Toddler Group at the Church of The Good Shepherd in Woodthorpe, Nottingham.

The popular baby and toddler group, which has been running for more than ten years, was closed for 18 months during the recent pandemic but reopened its doors at its new time of 10 am on Monday 6 September.

The group offers parents, carers and grandparents the opportunity to stay and play with their children and socialise over a cup of tea or coffee for two hours each week.

Little Lambs regularly host local businesses, such as Buzz Ceramics who offer hand-painted personalised ceramics as well as local photographers, beauty, book and craft stalls. Each session ends with a singing session featuring popular nursery rhymes.

Little Lambs runs on Mondays during term time, from 10 am - 12 pm and is suitable for

babies from birth up to pre-school age. Entry is £4 per family. For more information, contact Rebecca Burke at [little.lambs@virgin-media.com](mailto:little.lambs@virgin-media.com) or visit the group's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/little-lambswoodthorpe>



*Willow's first visit to Little Lambs and she loved it so much she's bringing her Grandma next week.*



**You can use both sets of clues to solve the puzzle: the solutions are the same. So, if you want to try the CRYPTIC puzzle, for instance, but are unsure, use the QUICK clues to help you work out the solution.**

**Similarly, if you try the QUICK clues, use the CRYPTIC clues to help you prove the solution**

**CRYPTIC Across**

- 1 European language that's not totally suitable (6)
- 4 Israelite divisions baptiser created without Father's backing (6) 9 Kind of 11 gets to look arch here in New York (7)
- 10 Laugh head off reading alternative Welsh writer (5)
- 11 Long term work on the Metropolitan, maybe (5)
- 12 Levi's boy is among Rangers honourees (7)
- 13 One in the habit of going to a particular London station (11)
- 18 Native American, a Margaret Mitchell character, Pennsylvania allowed in (7) 20 Bye, say, after painting flipping divorcee (5)
- 22 Attempt to resign from work to expose Pakistani water feature (5)
- 23 Spats as Tiger scratched (7)
- 24 Variant doctrine being something inadmissible in court, advocate's opening is dismissed (6) 25 Swift is one in pursuit of a name for the mountain man (6)

**CRYPTIC Down**

- 1 Judge's key changes make a Benjaminite town (6)
- 2 Ransack Winchester, for one (5)
- 3 Bend a month in the Sorbonne to absorb old speech (7)
- 5 One of eight, the one that boasts, his head's gone (5)
- 6 Prussian's oddly uncharitable seeing poor Anita depart (7)
- 7 Inscrutable Egyptian's wrecked ship and an indefinite number get cross (6) 8 Solomon's greatest hit, this book? (4,2,5)
- 14 Hero's love is torn between Adele and Erica (7)
- 15 Russian secret policeman's at home about one - that's

out of Lisbon (7)

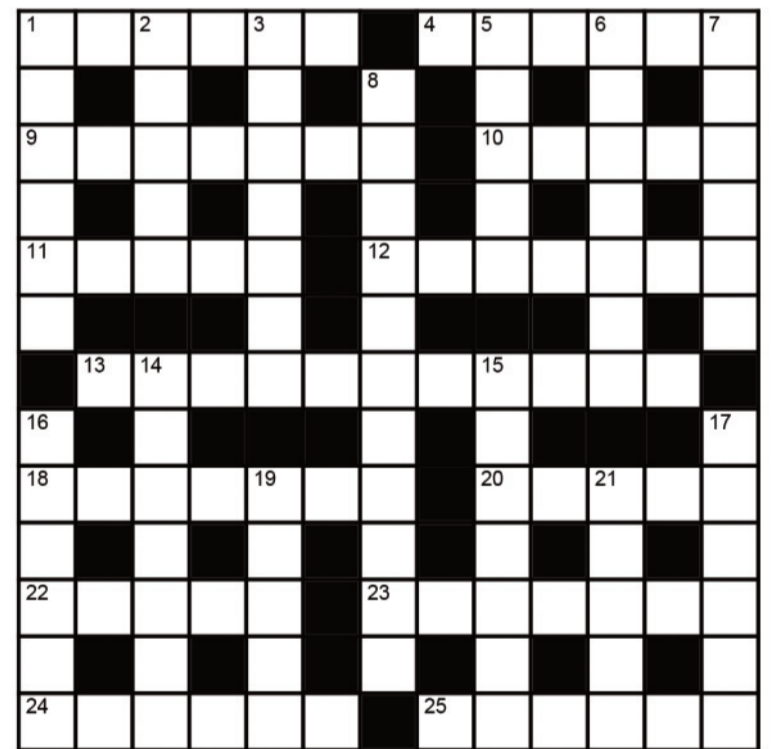
- 16 European city, home to 17 and his flock (6)
- 17 Needs no round to be showing below average scores to get a clerical job (6) 19 Fool, over a very large port, Paul steered away from (5)
- 21 Motif of the egoist? (5)

**QUICK Across**

- 1 Teutonic (broadly) (6)
- 4 Twelve divisions of Israelites, from the sons of Jacob (6) 9 City of New York state, on the shores of Lake Erie (7)
- 10 Novelists Evelyn or Auberon? (5)
- 11 Musical piece accompanying a stage drama or comedy (5)
- 12 Eldest son of Levi (7)
- 13 RC clergy in the mantle of the Dominican order (11).
- 18 Uto-Aztec American of the Great Plains (7)
- 20. Additional; surplus (5)
- 22 Major river of Pakistan (5)
- 23 Cloth or leather overshoes or leggings (7)
- 24 Formal denial or doubt of any defined doctrine of the RC Church (6) 25 Ecuadorean (broadly), for example (6)

**QUICK Down**

- 1 Town where the Tabernacle was kept and where Solomon worshipped (6)
- 2 Weapon with a long barrel which features spiralling grooves for accuracy (5) 3 Language presumed spoken by Christ (7)
- 5 Oarsman or woman (5)
- 6 Prussian general, Britain's ally at Waterloo (7)



- 7 Statue with the body of a lion and the head of a man (6)
- 8 OT book, alternative title in some Bibles being 'Canticles' (4,2,5)
- 14 Lover of the priestess Hero in Greek myth (7) 15 Peninsula of south-west Europe (7)
- 16 Local church community (6)
- 17 Beneficed member of the clergy (6)
- 19 Port of Mysia visited by Paul (5) 21 Topic: melody (5)

**SOLUTION**

**Across:** 1 German, 4 Tribes, 9 Buffalo, 10 Waugh, 11 Opera, 12 Gershon, 13 Blackfriars, 18 Arapaho, 20 Extra, 22 Indus, 23 Gaiters, 24 Heresy, 25 Andean.  
**Down:** 1 Gilbeon, 2 Riffle, 3 Aramaic, 5 Fowler, 6 Blucher, 7 Sphinx, 8 Song of Songs, 14 Leander, 15 Iberian, 16 Parish, 17 Parson, 19 Assos, 21 Theme.