



Published online only

The JOURNAL

The newspaper of the Parish of St John the Baptist, Andover.
Including: St John Fisher, Whitchurch and
The Chapel of St Theresa of Lisieux, Farleigh

Issue
No 371
June-July
2025

First Holy Communion

Thirty-six children from our parish received their First Holy Communion in St John the Baptist Church at two special Masses, the first on Saturday 7th June and the second on Saturday 14th June. On both occasions the weather was kind as the families gathered and were shown to their allocated places in the church, while the First Holy Communicants gathered in the church hall. They were then led into the church by M.C. Calum Meredith carrying the processional cross ahead of Father Austin and Deacon Michael and took their places in the first rows on the right of the church. The procession was welcomed into the church by the hymn "One More Step Along the World I Go" before Father Austin welcomed them and reminded them of the significance of this special day.

During the homily Father Austin addressed the parents and families saying how most of us had a special memory of our First Holy Communion. He encouraged the parents and families to bring the children to Mass so this would be the first of many Communion received during Mass attended with other members of Christ's family.

At the end of Mass each child was presented with a certificate to keep as a reminder of their special day.

Throughout the year's programme of instruction, the children and their families have been ably supported and taught by our parish team of catechists: Mrs Pam Brown, Mrs Margaret Cullen, Mrs Helen Harvey, Mrs Andrea Pinnick, Mrs Ann May, Mrs Lizzie Humphrey, Mrs Christine Short, Mrs Rita Harrington, Mrs Denise Lloyd, and Mrs Ann Tydeman. The team deserve our grateful thanks for the time, effort and dedication given so generously. Thanks also to Mrs Catherine Whatley and St John the Baptist School for the important part they play in nurturing the spiritual life of the children and the practice of their faith. We pray that the families will continue to support the children on their spiritual journey.

For both Masses the church was beautifully decorated with flowers arranged by Mrs Pat Franklin, Mrs Fran Rae, Mrs Peggy McAuley and Mrs Pip Cotter. Thank you!

Mrs Elizabeth Benedetto accompanied both Masses on the organ, and also encouraged the congregation to join in the hymns. Thank you – the music was joyful and uplifting.

Throughout the year our Parish Administrator, Mrs Teresa Lynam has given generously of her time, using her experience and expertise to keep the technical and digital side of the programme running smoothly – a vital task as our large parish becomes more and more diverse. Thank you Teresa.



Parish International Day



The Parish International Day, celebrating the rich cultural heritage (and the food) of members of our parish will be on Sunday 20th July.

Following the 10.30am Mass, all are welcome to join in a celebration of culture and dishes from the various parts of the world from which our parish draws its heritage.

You are invited to bring a national/regional dish, non-alcoholic drinks or delicacy to share and enjoy.

It promises to be a wonderful and joyous experience. Fun for all the family.

Don't miss out!



Letter from Syro-Malabar Eparch

Pope Leo has taken considerable pains to emphasise the truly Catholic nature of the Church, embracing the Latin and the Eastern branches of the Faith. Portsmouth Diocese recently entered into an agreement with the Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Great Britain about the conveyance of St. Paul's Church in Paulsgrove to the care of the Eparchy and its dual use by Latin-Rite and Syro-Malabar Catholics. The Eparch, Mar Joseph Srampickal has written to Bishop Philip expressing the thanks of the Syro-Malabar community.

Dear Bishop Philip,

Greetings of Peace and Joy! On behalf of the entire Syro-Malabar Catholic Eparchy, I write to express our heartfelt thanks and deep appreciation to you and the Diocese of Portsmouth for the extraordinary gift of St. Paul's Church, Paulsgrove. This generous and grace-filled act is not only a blessing to our growing community but a testament to the spirit of unity, communion, and generosity that defines the Church. For many years, we have longed for a spiritual home — a place where our faithful could gather in prayer, worship, and fellowship, rooted in our rich Eastern Catholic tradition while fully embracing the universal mission of the Church. Your support and the Diocese's openness have made this dream a reality. We are fully aware that this gift is the fruit of much discernment, prayer, and pastoral foresight, and we remain deeply moved by the trust and love shown toward our community.

St Paul's Church will now stand as a symbol of the vibrant diversity within the Diocese of Portsmouth — a space where cultures meet in communion, and Christ is made present through every liturgy, sacrament, and act of service. We assure our prayers for you, for all the clergy and faithful of the Diocese, and for all who have helped make this gift possible. May the Lord, who cannot be outdone in generosity, bless you abundantly. With profound gratitude and fraternal affection,

Yours in our Lord and our God,

+ Joseph Srampickal

Andover Chamber Choir

Songs and Sonnets

This summer, Andover Chamber Choir will perform a mixed programme of music that captures the spirit of summer and which promises to provide a delightful evening of entertainment.

From jazz settings of Shakespeare to music from his time, and from the heady harmonies of Elgar and Ireland to classic British folksongs, the programme includes something for everyone. Of particular note, the programme will include two Hampshire folksongs collected and arranged by Gustav Holst. The musical pieces will be complemented by readings chosen by Prof. Michael Wheeler, chairman of the choir.

Interim Musical Director Amy Walters said, "After a packed programme of sacred pieces for the last few months, we are now enjoying a return to the secular and musical choices that include both the light-hearted and the dramatic. We are learning some new and some more familiar repertoire, and we can't wait to share it with our audience. Over Wallop - a quintessential English village - is an ideal location for this repertoire."

The concert takes place on Saturday 19 July at St Peter's Church, Over Wallop, SO20 8HT, beginning at 7.30pm. Tickets are £15 on the door or £12 in advance from The Lights (in person, telephone or online), Wallops Community Shop and choir members. Under 16s are admitted free of charge. Light refreshments are included in the ticket price.

Saturday 19 July 2025, 7.30pm

Songs
and
Sonnets

ANDOVER
CHAMBER
CHOIR

St Peter's Church,
Over Wallop, SO20 8HT

Tickets
£15 on the door, £12 in advance, Under 16s free
Available at: The Lights, Wallops Community Shop and Choir Members

Inaugural Mass of Pope Leo

The Vatican News Agency presented an account of the Inaugural Mass during which Pope Leo greeted over 100,000 pilgrims in St Peter's Square, leaders from around the world, and representatives of Christian denominations and countless millions watching on television. As he marked the joyous start to his Petrine Ministry, officially inaugurating it with Mass on Sunday, 18 May. Religious delegations included Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Zoroastrian and Jainists, among the many present for the celebration.



Expressing his heartfelt gratitude for the prayerful and joyful support offered to him as he begins his pastoral ministry as Pope, Leo XIV recalled the intense emotions experienced over these past few weeks. "Following the death of Pope Francis, we felt like sheep without a shepherd," he recalled, "yet having received his final blessing on Easter Sunday, and with eyes of faith, hope, and joy, we remembered how the Lord never abandons His people." The Pope also thanked everyone for accompanying in prayer the College of Cardinals meeting in conclave to elect the Successor of Peter as they looked at how to continue the mission of preaching the Gospel with a shepherd able to address today's challenges. He said they felt "the working of the Holy Spirit, who was able to bring us into harmony, like musical instruments, so that our heartstrings could vibrate in a single melody."

"I was chosen, without any merit of my own, and now, with fear and trembling," said Pope Leo, "I come to you as a brother, who desires to be the servant of your faith and your joy, walking with you on the path of God's love, for he wants us all to be united in one family." Pope Leo XIV recalled how love and unity are the two aspects of the mission entrusted to Peter by Jesus. In the Gospel for that Sunday, Jesus entrusts the disciples to continue the mission, to be "fishers of men" and bring the "hope of the Gospel" to all people "so that all may experience God's embrace."

Peter's experience of God's "infinite and unconditional love of God," despite his own weakness and denial, enabled him to take up this mission, the Pope explained. Pope Leo recalled how Peter is entrusted then with "loving more" and "giving his life for the flock," a "self-sacrificing love." "The ministry of Peter is distinguished precisely by this self-sacrificing love, because the Church of Rome presides in charity and its true authority is the charity of Christ. It is never a question of capturing others by force, by religious propaganda or by means of power. Instead, it is always and only a question of loving as Jesus did." The Holy Father expressed his hope that the entire Church be united by a "great desire be for a united Church, a sign of unity and communion, which becomes a leaven for a reconciled world." In the face of a world marked by so much discord and wounds caused by hatred, violence, prejudice, fear, and economic reality "that exploits the Earth's resources and marginalises the poorest," the Pope said, "we want to be a small leaven of unity, communion, and fraternity within the world. We want to say to the world, with humility and joy: Look to Christ! Come closer to him! Welcome his word that enlightens and consoles! Listen to his offer of love and become his one family: in the one Christ, we are one," he urged. "This is the path to follow together, among ourselves but also with our sister Christian churches, with those who follow other religious paths, with those who are searching for God, with all women and men of good will, in order to build a new world where peace reigns!"

The Pope upheld the missionary spirit, adding that such an approach will keep the Church from closing itself off in small groups or taking on a feeling of superiority to the world. "We are called to offer God's love to everyone, in order to achieve that unity which does not cancel out differences but values the personal history of each person and the social and religious culture of every people," he said. "Brothers and sisters, this is the hour for love! The heart of the Gospel is the love of God that makes us brothers and sisters." In conclusion, Pope Leo XIV invited all Christians to be enlightened by the Holy Spirit, so that we might build a Church "founded on God's love, a sign of unity, a missionary Church that opens its arms to the world, proclaims the word, allows itself to be made 'restless' by history, and becomes a leaven of harmony for humanity." "Together, as one people, as brothers and sisters, let us walk towards God and love one another."

A Splash of Colour Decorating Services

Simon Cowley

3 Abbots Close
Abbots Ann
SP11 7NP



I don't just decorate. Need any other jobs doing around the house? Tiling? Plastering? General Maintenance?

NO JOB TOO SMALL

Call for free quotation

07809 543115

simon.cowley01@hotmail.co.uk

Midsummer Viewing – The Legend of Hell House (1973)

With the Summer evenings at their longest it's time to hide behind the sofa and watch a scary film. This is one that will do it. Set in the then, as made, early 1970s, a Team of four with “specialist” skills, have been (very well) paid by a mega-rich and dying Industrialist to spend a week in a large shut-up mansion to find out whether survival does continue after physical death.



The omens aren't good. Officially known after its owner and creator, Mr Belasco, it is commonly known as “Hell House” owing to the licentiousness and evil that went on in it in the 1920s. All of the nastiness was orchestrated by Belasco himself. When the Authorities finally broke in (yes, that bad) they found 27 bodies but no Mr Belasco. Sealed by the wider Belasco family, it was bought by our dying Industrialist to find out if he indeed, literally, has a future.

The omens get worse. There have two previous attempts to investigate the Belasco place. In each case, not everybody got out alive. Those that did were mental wrecks or had shattered legs or similar. The exception is Roddy McDowell. He plays a Physical Medium and was on the last investigation attempt in 1953. He got out physically intact and sane. He's back - for the six-figure sum he'll (and the others) will each get. The others are Pamela Franklin (Mental Medium) and Clive Revill (Physicist) with wife. They are more in it for the truth than the money. Pamela is a believer in “things beyond” whilst Clive is the material scientist de-bunker of “things beyond”.

With a shortish time of 90 minutes the film itself is well-structured as a narrative. Recruitment of the group and getting to the house takes 5 minutes. The rest of their stay (pick up: Friday 5.00pm) is managed as a series of episodes that progress through the Team's working week. You always know what day it is and when it is by showing on screen “Tuesday 10:31pm” and so on. This holds you from scene to scene and since the narrative is clearly progressing you are kept well and truly in the groove.

Is it scary? Yes, it is. It won't have you going to check that you did lock the front door but it will send shivers up your spine and more than once. It's not so much “noises off”, although our Mental Medium hears plenty of those. It's much more objects that shatter and are attempting to do you physical harm. Lots and lots of that and very well done. And - as a result - when 5.00pm on Friday does roll around it's not everybody in the Team which arrived Monday that's walking out to the car.

So, do our Team find out the truth? Yes, they do and although there are partial hints all the way through, the big reveal is skilfully held back so that when it happens it does come as a complete revelation. And this reviewer *never* got it. Recommended.

Volunteers and Charities Event

Jenny LeLean, the Head of Caritas Portsmouth, organised a Charity and Volunteer Networking Event which was held in our parish hall here in Andover. It was a bit of a leap in the dark as there had never been an event of this kind before and it was anybody's guess how many groups or individuals would turn up.

As it was, several well-known charities were represented, including CAFOD, Stella Maris, SVP, and Christians Against Poverty. There were also representatives from parish projects such as Alton clothes bank, Tilehurst and Andover foodbanks, a dementia support group, Street Pastors, St Peter's Welcome hub, and the Bamenda Committee, as well as information on the work of Caritas.

It proved a lively afternoon with each of us learning useful information about the work of other groups and the ways in which they worked for the community.

Jenny is already making plans for a repeat of the event next year, and after this promising start there is every hope that the event will be even bigger and better in the future.



Pope Leo XIV on Vocations

Writing in the *Diocesan Vocations Newsletter*, Canon John Cooke, directed our thoughts to comments made by Pope Leo shortly after his election. He wrote: Pope Leo XIV visited the tomb of St. Paul in Rome on 20th May, and he emphasised God's love and mercy as the foundation of all vocations, including the pope's. He reflected on St. Paul's conversion and urged the faithful to recognize that one's life originates as part of God's loving plan. Every vocation, even his own, springs from God's love.

"Let us ask the Lord for the grace to cultivate and spread his charity and to become true neighbours to one another," he said. "Let us compete in showing the love that, following (St. Paul's) encounter with Christ, drove the former persecutor to become 'all things to all people,' even to the point of martyrdom." The Pope explained that the visit was part of entrusting "the beginning of this new pontificate to the intercession of the apostle."

Pope Leo's homily reflected on a reading chosen from the letter of Paul to the Romans, where the apostle expresses his complete allegiance to the Lord and his faith in God's justifying action in Jesus. The pope said St. Paul received the grace of his vocation from God, acknowledging "that his encounter with Christ and his own ministry were the fruit of God's prior love, which called him to a new life while he was still far from the Gospel and persecuting the church."

St. Augustine also was a convert who experienced choosing God after having realized God had chosen him first. The Pope said "We cannot love unless someone has loved us first." In fact, "at the root of every vocation, God is present, in his mercy and his goodness, as generous as that of a mother who nourishes her child with her own body for as long as the child is unable to feed itself," he said, quoting from the saint who founded the religious order he joined in his twenties.

When St. Paul speaks of "the obedience of faith," Pope Leo said, he is referring to what happened to him on the road to Damascus, when the Lord appeared and "did not take away his freedom, but gave him the opportunity to make a decision, to choose an obedience that would prove costly and entail interior and exterior struggles, which Paul proved willing to face."

"Salvation does not come about by magic, but by a mysterious interplay of grace and faith, of God's prevenient love and of our trusting and free acceptance," he said.

Pope Leo said, "God loves us. This is the great truth of our life; it is what makes everything else meaningful.' Indeed, 'our life originates as part of a loving plan of God.'" "Faith leads us to 'open our hearts to this mystery of love and to live as men and women conscious of being loved by God.'"

"Here we see, in all its simplicity and uniqueness, the basis of every mission, including my own mission as the successor of Peter and the heir to Paul's apostolic zeal. May the Lord grant me the grace to respond faithfully to his call," he said.

Let us keep Pope Leo XIV in our prayers as he embarks on his being called to be our Pope.

Ordination

God willing, we can look forward to the Priestly Ordination of Deacon Ryan Browne at St John's Cathedral, Portsmouth on Saturday 19th July, at 11am. Bishop Philip invites everyone to come to the Ordination. and we would encourage you to do so.

Deacon Ryan, whose home Parish is Our Lady Queen of Peace and Blessed Margaret Pole, Southbourne, is on his Diaconal Placement based at St John's Cathedral, Portsmouth.

He writes:

"I herald originally from the sunny coastal town of Bournemouth. My mum and dad met originally in West Cork, Ireland. My mum was born in a small village called Leap (situated just between Skibbereen and Clonakilty). My dad was born in Bournemouth, but was taken on holidays every year to his father's home village of Leap. After their marriage in Ireland, they moved to Bournemouth, where I was born in 1995. My brother, who is now married and is a schoolteacher in Bournemouth came later in 1997.

I attended Corpus Christi Primary School in Boscombe and then went on to study at St Peter's Catholic Comprehensive in Southbourne. It was during these early and incredibly formative years that I began to sense a calling to the sacred Priesthood. I first sensed a calling when I was five years old and was inspired by my parish priest, Fr John Dunne. He has sadly passed away, but he is my earliest image of a priest. I was always mesmerised by the priesthood.



(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

In fact, I remember quite clearly when I was five years old a priest of our diocese, Fr Tony Pennicott, giving holy communion to my grandfather who was suffering from Parkinsons. These images of the priesthood, of accompaniment, compassion and care really inspired me as a child & continue to do so as I near the end of my initial formation before ordination as a priest.

After schooling in Bournemouth, I attended the University of Exeter to study Philosophy and Theology, with a study year abroad in the United States. I really enjoyed this time of intellectual curiosity and exploration & I loved getting to know new people from all over the place. It was at the end of my studies that I began to think more deeply about what God was calling me to do: were my dreams of the priesthood as a child just that, or was there something more to it? I moved home and worked for a year as I considered the calling to priesthood more seriously. In 2019 I applied to be a seminarian for our Diocese and was subsequently accepted by Bishop Philip and asked to undertake my studies at the Venerable English College in Rome. I spent just over five years in Rome: two years of Philosophy (at the Angelicum), three years of Theology (at the Gregorian University), and a two-month course in pastoral theology in the autumn of 2024. I loved my time there because I was able to experience very closely the universal Church, the pontifical universities, the saints, the Holy Father and of course good food and wine. During my seminary formation I had some excellent experiences, including working for Vatican News, a pastoral placement at the L'arche Community in Rome, and a summer placement at the UN Embassy of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta in New York. The experiences have given me an expansive experience of the universal Church and all the good the Church does to contribute to the common good in the world.

Upon the completion of my STB, I was ordained to the Diaconate 10th July of last summer by Bishop Philip at the chapel of Our Lady of the Snows. This chapel is based at the beautiful location of Villa Palazzola (the summer residence of the Venerable English College just outside Rome, where everyone is very welcome to go and stay). After ordination, I was appointed to undertake my diaconal placement at St John's Cathedral. I moved here in September and have been serving the parish community here, as well as our other parishes in the Portsmouth Pastoral Area. It has been a rich experience so far. I have been able to celebrate baptisms, funerals, teach our first communion, confirmation and RCIA candidates, to frequently visit our excellent Catholic schools, and to visit the sick and housebound.

Please God, I will be ordained to the priesthood on Saturday 19th July at 11am here at St John's Cathedral in Portsmouth, with my first Mass scheduled for the 10am Mass at St John's Cathedral on Sunday 20th July. I would love to see as many faces from around our diocese as is possible! An ordination is very special and is most meaningful when a great number of our diocesan family attends. So please do come along if you are able to. May God bless you & I look forward to serving you all as a priest in the future.

Please pray that I may be a priest who constantly reminds people of God's love for them, especially as I prepare for ordination in the coming months. Pray also that many more young men may listen to the Lord and consider whether they might have a vocation to the priesthood.

A Prayer for Pope Leo

Heavenly Father, You have raised your servant, Pope Leo XIV, to the chair of Saint Peter. Pour out Your abundant blessings upon him. Through him, guide your pilgrim Church along the path to Heaven. Grant him the wisdom to discern Your will, courage to fulfil it, and charity to shepherd Your people with the heart of Christ. In this time of transition, bring peace to troubled hearts, joy to those who suffer, and hope to the despairing. May he be a faithful successor to Saint Peter, a humble servant of Your Word, and a fearless herald of Your Divine Mercy and Truth, that he may lead the Church in unity, holiness, and fidelity. We entrust him to the maternal care of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to the prayers of all the saints. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Healing Prayers Group

The Healing Prayers Group meets in the parish church each Tuesday evening between 6.30pm and 7.00pm.

If you would like to choose a theme, scripture reading and music, or would like a copy of the El Shaddai Healing Prayer or if you would like any further information, please contact the parish office.



St Gregory Barbarigo (1625—1697)

Gregory Barbarigo was born into an illustrious Venetian family, but his mother, Lucrezia Lion, died when her son was only seven. However, the family had a tradition that the religious, moral and political education of the sons should be the responsibility of the father. In this Gregory was highly fortunate as his father, Giovanni Francesco, was a man of great devotion and learning. Giovanni remained Gregory's mentor and confidant throughout the boy's life.

When he was eighteen Gregory accompanied the Venetian ambassador to negotiate the Treaty of Westphalia which marked the end of the Thirty Years' War in the Holy Roman Empire and the Eighty Years' War between Spain and the Dutch Republic. During the course of that journey Gregory became friendly with Fabio Chigi, the papal nuncio.

Gregory had a keen interest in the sciences, especially mathematics and astronomy, but in 1653 he went to Padua to study law, and it was there that he became interested in other topics including theology. In 1555 Gregory was ordained a priest. He left Padua and went to Rome, where his old friend Fabio Chigi had been elected as Pope Alexander VII.

Gregory had taken his library to Rome with him, and while mixing with some of the learned scholars of the day, he continued his studies of science and ecclesiastical history, until plague broke out in the city. Pope Alexander put Gregory in charge of relief work in the Trastevere district.

The following year, 1657, Alexander appointed him to the bishopric of Bergamo. On his arrival in Bergamo, Gregory lost no time in reforming his diocese in the spirit of the Council of Trent. He began with the clergy, drawing up list of all the clergy showing each one's attributes and abilities, refusing permission to hear confessions to all who did not pass an examination and banning priests from attending the theatre. He distributed devotional books and improved the standards of study in the seminary.

Pope Alexander made him a cardinal in 1660, and three years later summoned him to Rome, where he spent just one year before being appointed bishop of Padua. Gregory set about organising in Padua similar reforms to those he had instituted in Bergamo. He wrote books outlining how seminaries should be run and on what seminarians should study. He placed considerable emphasis on the study of languages and encouraged the study of Christian doctrine among the people of his diocese. On his pastoral visitations he would question parishioners on their knowledge of the catechism. He supported the foundation of schools where children were taught Christian doctrine. By the time of his death in 1697 there were forty-two schools in the city and many more throughout the diocese.

During his life he made frequent visits to Rome, participating in five papal elections. He had less time for studying the subjects so close to his heart, but he took satisfaction in encouraging others, in improving the library at the seminary in Padua. He purchased books from all parts of Europe, and he set up a printing press with fonts for oriental languages.

Gregory died on 18th June 1697. He was beatified by Pope Clement XIII in 1761. Pope John XIII stated that ever since his own days in the seminary he had taken Gregory Barbarigo as his model, and he declared him a saint on 26th May 1960.



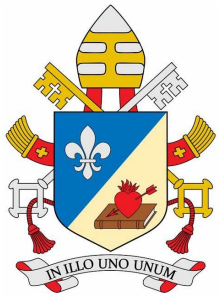
Volunteering

Elsewhere in this Journal you can find an article about a local volunteering networking event. One of the participants who lives in Oxford said that while it was difficult to get student volunteers for organisations such as The Society of St Vincent de Paul, a surprising number of students had happily volunteered to work with the Companions of the Order of Malta. A Catholic information website recently had an article written by Kate MacKenzie the London coordinator of the Companions of The Order of Malta, a volunteers' organisation which seems to be little known but is apparently increasingly popular among Catholic students.

The concept of volunteering is central to the Catholic Church. The recently deceased Pope Francis said that "volunteering is a grace from God" and that "volunteers are the strength of the church". Across the UK, however, the volume of people who volunteer has been in long term decline.

The benefits of volunteering are profound for recipients and volunteers alike. It helps recognise the dignity of every human being and treat them with respect and compassion; it builds a real sense of community; it supports the well-being of recipients and volunteers alike. It can unify people of all ages from the school children who draw pictures for our homeless guests at the Companions Cafés to our ability to come together and celebrate the 90th birthday of one of our volunteers.

When asked why they do not volunteer, over a third of people say they are concerned about making a long term commitment. Many projects do not ask of this. For example, at The Companions of the Order of Malta we are very flexible, and volunteers sign up as little or often as they want. One in five people say they do not volunteer because they have not been asked to. There are abundant opportunities to get involved, whether it is supporting the local community, the homeless, the elderly, the disadvantaged or marginalised in society. The Companions' projects in London range from the Companions cafes for the homeless in the morning and evening, lunch parties for the elderly and weekend activities like gardening. So much joy comes from volunteering. The important thing is to make a start.



The Pope's Intention for June

At the beginning of this year, the late Holy Father set out the intentions for which he asked us to pray. For this month of June he prayed that the world might grow in compassion:

Let us pray that each one of us might find consolation in a personal relationship with Jesus, and from his Heart, learn to have compassion on the world.

Reflection on the Pope's Prayer intention

“My heart, His Heart, all hearts! This is how our hearts are moved when we are truly devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

We begin with an awareness of our own hearts. God the Father created our hearts and shaped our hearts from the first moments we were formed in our mothers' wombs.

My heart! My heart is a living image of God's love for me. My heart beats quietly and faithfully all day, every day. My heart brings life and strength to every part of my body. With every beat, my heart draws blood from my fingers and toes and knees and elbows—refreshing this blood as it passes by my lungs. In the next beat, my heart sends this blood back out to my body, giving me new life and energy. This is the Father's love. Like my heartbeat, often it is quiet yet powerful and life-giving. So, too, I can see in my heart an image of the Heart of Jesus.

His Heart! His Sacred Heart is filled with love for me at this very moment. His Heart is on fire with love for me and the whole human race. I can pray to unite my heart with His Heart. Jesus desires to make my heart more like His Heart. My heart may need His healing and mercy. Jesus may wish to stretch and strengthen my heart so that it is able to receive love and share love more fully.

All hearts! Then, united with the Heart of Jesus, He sends me out to touch many hearts through prayer and service. Truly, with Christ, I ask that He may bring all hearts into closer communion with Him. With Him, I seek to touch 'all hearts' that I meet today with His compassion— in my family, my school, and my work.

This reflection is by Fr Joe Laramie SJ who has served as national director of the Pope's Prayer Network since 2020. In August he will be moving to a new assignment as director the Sacred Heart Jesuit



Salome Gachui

Quality experienced live-in carer

*Eighteen years' experience including
Dementia, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, MS,
Terminally ill, Cancer, Spinal Injury,
Stroke & Muscular Dystrophy*

Excellent organisational skills

*References, DBS, Emergency Cover, Long
or Short Term*

Tel: 07939 623680

Email sallygachui@yahoo.co.uk



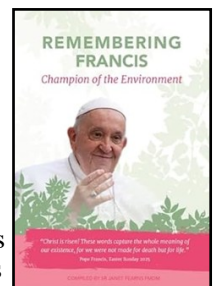
Remembering Francis: Champion of The Environment

Compiled by Sr Janet Fearn FMDM, this book is a memorial to two men who shared the name of Francis and whose greatness lay in their humility, poverty, simplicity, outreach to the poorest and most marginalised people of their time – and joy. In the deathbed words of St Francis, “I have done what is mine to do; may Christ teach you what is yours.” Pope Francis echoed his namesake.

Their lives were separated by eight centuries and yet St Francis of Assisi and Pope Francis also walked together. The “Little poor man of Assisi” spoke of all created things as his brothers and sisters. As a Jesuit, “the People's Pope” spoke of “God in all things.”

In this book, St Francis' *Canticle of the Creatures*, also known as *the Canticle of Brother Sun*, is presented alongside excerpts from Pope Francis' landmark Encyclical, *Laudato Si'*. The two documents start with the same two words: “Laudato si'” “Praised be to you”.

The hardback book ISBN 9780852315767 is published by Redemptorist Publications at £14.95.



A Slowly Rising Tide

It might not seem obvious looking at Mass attendance since the pandemic, but a report by the Bible Society suggests that Catholics are rapidly catching up with Anglicans, and that Catholicism could soon overtake Anglicanism as the largest denomination of worshippers for the first time since the English Reformation.

The growth in numbers is said to be driven by younger churchgoers. The report further suggests that among churchgoers under 35 Pentecostal worshippers could soon push Anglicans back into third place.

However, it is a well-established fact that fewer people in England and Wales now identify themselves as Christian. Census figures reveal that Christians now make up less than 50% of the population, while those owning to having no religion are increasing in number. Yet this study, concentrating on actual church-going people, suggests we could be seeing an exciting period of growth and change.

The number of those in Britain attending church, while still disappointingly low, actually grew between 2018 and 2024. Some 5.8 million people said they attend church at least once a month, up by 2.1 million over that six-year period – with the largest increase being among those under 25 years old.

It has been clear that in the past many who ticked the “Christian” box in surveys or censuses did so because they felt nominally or culturally Christian, but without actually practising his or her faith or attending church.

So while the average Briton is still more likely than ever to be a non-believer, according to the new report, those who do still identify as Christian appear to be “practising their religion more intentionally”, with an increase in the number who say they attend church at least once a month.

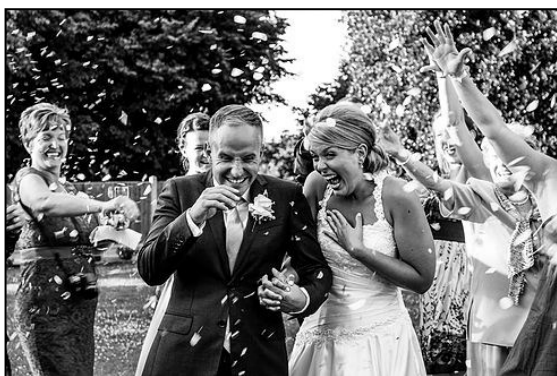
Figures collated by the Catholic Church in England and Wales also show a rise in attendance at Sunday mass since the pandemic, Mass count figures rising from 390,000 in 2021 to 555,000 in 2023, though they also indicate these are down from pre-pandemic figures of 702,000 in 2019. The 2021 census figures show Catholics have already overtaken Protestants in Northern Ireland.

Stephen Bullivant, a professor of theology and the sociology of religion at St Mary’s University, Twickenham, has expressed the view that Catholicism is doing “least worst” out of the major Christian churches as it “benefits from a steady stream of churchgoing immigrants to a much greater degree”.

However, the report also found that the highest rates of Bible reading are within Baptist, independent evangelical, new churches, and Pentecostals, all of which reported weekly Bible reading at around 90%. The lowest weekly Bible reading rates are among Anglicans and Catholics, at 61% and 56% respectively.

The report’s authors, painting a hopeful picture for the future, concluded that Gen Z that is anyone born from 1997 onward is more spiritually engaged than most other living generations, and that this openness presents a significant opportunity for outreach and engagement.

The report also emphasized the positive impacts of churchgoing for individual and community well-being, noting that churchgoers report higher life satisfaction, a greater feeling of community connection, and lower rates of depression and anxiety. They are also more likely to be socially engaged and charitable. Here is hope for us all yet!



Burdock Photography

*Specialising in Weddings,
Family Groups, Newborn
Bespoke commissions accepted
Prices to suit your budget
Call 07724496840*



Doggy Day-care

Collection between 8-10am

Drop home between 3-4.30pm

Contact

Adam Baxter

07766431242

or

Dan Bowman

07738123385

Canine First Aid Trained

Available for Andover and surrounding area

From The School

The school came together with Deacon Michael and Father Austin to celebrate Mass on the feast of Pentecost. A special highlight during the Mass was the contribution from the Year 5 ministers who led the responsorial psalm guiding all in the sung responses.

The Year 3 children who had received their First Holy Communion the previous weekend were invited to attend wearing their special First Holy Communion clothes to join the school community to receive Holy Communion for the first time during a school Mass. It was a special, joyful moment.

In mid-May the school held its traditional May pilgrimage in honour of Our Lady. They were joined by family and parishioners as they processed round the school grounds. They visited the Stations of the Rosary, telling the story of Jesus' life through Mary's eyes. The children led in prayer, readings and reflections, and all joined in the singing. Special thanks to Years 5 and 6 who donated and arranged the flowers for the occasion.

Also in celebration of Our Lady, during the month of May Year 5 Rosary Team led a lunchtime Rosary each day guiding all who joined in in reflection and prayer.

Key Stage 1 were excited to welcome the inter-active group "Perform". The children had a wonderful time exploring the theme of "Jungle Rumble" using drama, dance and singing to help develop confidence, concentration and social skills.

It has been a busy time for the green-fingered pupils in the Gardening Club. They have planted peas, beans, lettuces and much more. They have also planted tomatoes ready for the club to sell to raise funds.

Many congratulations to Mrs Sophie Pearson who ran the London Marathon raising £917 for CAFOD. The whole school proudly celebrated her success and admired her medal. The school thanks all for the support and generous donations from the community.

The school was visited by a team from the Catholic Schools Inspectorate and were awarded "Outstanding" in all aspects of how the school demonstrated provision of Catholic life and mission, how the pupils responded to Catholic social teaching, and how well the school staff and leadership developed the curriculum to establish a Catholic ethos within the school.

(The full Inspectorate Report can be found on the school's website., and a summary of the inspectors' report follows this article.)



Congratulations!

St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School was last month visited by inspectors from the Catholic Schools' Inspectorate on behalf of the Diocese of Portsmouth to examine the truly Catholic aspects of the school. The inspectors' overall judgement was a magnificent top grading of "Outstanding".

The inspectors examined three key areas: Catholic Life and Mission; Religious Education; Collective Worship. In all three areas the inspectors recorded the highest possible grading.

It was noted that the pupils are "exceptionally proud of their school and embrace its inclusive Catholic culture." The school's mission "Together, through our words and actions, our work and play, we point towards Christ each and every day" was clearly understood by even the youngest pupils and there was considerable evidence of Catholic social teaching exemplified in the way pupils behaved. The inspectors spoke of the pupils' "joyful eagerness" to fulfil roles on the school council and the eco-council, to work as Mini-Vinnies, house captains and as part of various ministry teams. This level of pupil involvement, and the pupils' confidence, happiness and exemplary behaviour, comes from the staff who are "so committed to caring for and nurturing every single child in their care".

The inspectors' report highlights the enjoyment and interest shown by the pupils in their religious lessons. The range of activities enhances interest, and the pupils are "religiously literate and are confident to link their learning from religious education to their moral and religious commitment to everyday life." However, while pupils know how well they are doing with their work and what they need to do to improve because of helpful teacher feedback, the inspectors felt there was room for improvement in both presentation of work and in allowing greater opportunities for pupils to demonstrate creativity and individuality in their response to learning.

The strong subject knowledge and high expectations of the staff was commendable, as was the way that drama, discussion, artwork and various written forms ensured a high level of engagement by the pupils. Teachers celebrate work and offer positive reinforcement and integrate aspects of Catholic social teaching into lessons in a variety of ways. Leaders and school governors have developed a well-established system of self-evaluation including lesson observation, scrutiny of pupil work, seeking views of pupils and staff and analysing pupil progress data.

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

Collective worship was another strong point of the school's day, be it class worship, whole school celebrations of the word, the daily Angelus in the playground during lunchtime led by Year 6. The school provides sacred spaces around the school such as the Peace Garden and the prayer tables. Pupils were seen to be skilled at planning, organising, leading and evaluating prayer sessions and liturgy, with activities suited to the different ages. Participation in Mass, the Stations of the Cross both in the school and in the parish, as well as the May pilgrimage provide vital experiences, as do high-quality music and other art forms. Traditional Latin hymns such as *Salve Regina* for rosary celebrations was particularly impressive, and the work of the parish priest and deacon offering Mass, Benediction, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and leading *Lectio Divina* further enhanced the range of liturgical offerings.

Commenting on what might be improved, the inspectors suggested more freedom for pupils to use their creativity and individuality to show their understanding in religious education, and for specific aspects of excellent practice in religious education in the school to be shared so that all pupils are given the opportunities to achieve their best outcomes. The Inspectors summed up the school's strengths:

- Prayer is at the heart and soul of this school: because pupils can easily make links between their prayer life and their actions.
- Carefully planned and reflective prayer experiences are in abundance and ensure spiritual nourishment for all members of the school community.
- Due to the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, the entire staff body are wholeheartedly committed to the mission of the school.
- The principles of Catholic social teaching are woven into every aspect of school life.
- Teachers provide high-quality feedback and regular opportunities for pupils to improve their learning in religious education.

You Have to be Crazy?

There are several references in this edition to the work of volunteers. So many organisations find difficulty not just attracting new members but getting members to take up roles on committees or organisation of groups. The problem is clearly not just one encountered by community or church groups; according to Cardinal Mario Grech it is something that the Catholic Church also faces.

Touted as one of the "*papabile*" (*someone suited to be Pope*) prior to the conclave which elected Pope Leo, Cardinal Grech admitted that he was relieved to come out of the conclave still a cardinal and a free man, and that he had actively dissuaded his supporters not to vote for him. He insisted he had no desire for the job. Speaking to the *Times of Malta*, Cardinal Grech said, "Someone told me before the conclave: in order to want the papacy you must be either a martyr – and I don't feel I am one – or crazy."

He went on to say that after the conclave he realised why the new Pope takes a new name because his old life is not his any more, and he is not his own man. He said it was wrong to think that every cardinal had a desire to become Pope, and he pointed out that the same reluctance to assume high office was to be found throughout the Catholic hierarchy.

Appointed a cardinal by Pope Francis in 2020, Cardinal Grech worked as secretary general to the Synod of Bishops and so saw the problem at first hand. Around a quarter of the priests chosen by the Pope to become bishops turn down the promotion because they don't want the additional burdens which a bishopric brings with it.

"When a bishopric becomes vacant anywhere around the world," said the cardinal, "we receive dossiers from the local nuncio detailing three nominees. We receive these files, rank the candidates by preference, and submit them to the Pope for his final selection. It's increasingly common for the chosen candidate to decline – one in every four priests chosen by the Pope to be bishops are refusing."

Cathedral Restoration

Last year *The Journal* published an appeal by Canon James McAuley for donations towards the restoration of the West Window in St John's Cathedral in Portsmouth. The appeal was successful, and Canon McAuley has expressed his delight at the magnificent achievement of raising over £100,000 so that the work can be completed. He has offered sincere thanks to all who contributed to the appeal.

The cathedral was built in 1882 so will mark its 150th anniversary in seven years' time. Like most buildings the cathedral is showing signs of age, and the cathedral campus needs to be upgraded to provide for the needs of the diocese in better and more appropriate ways.

Canon McAuley, writing in the diocesan Newsletter, has outlined the need to take further, urgent, measures to safeguard and help 'future-proof' the cathedral. He writes:

In 2032, the cathedral and the diocese will mark their 150th anniversary. As the seat of the bishop, the cathedral is the liturgical and theological "heart" of the diocese. Recent inspections by a conservation architect and other specialists have identified work which needs to be done to the cathedral's roofs, upper nave windows, organ, heating and electrical systems. This will cost more than £2 million. Funds permitting, we hope also to develop the site to make it more fit for mission and outreach in the most socially deprived part of our diocese.

The Cathedral150 appeal will be launched in Advent 2025. In the meantime, any donation, no matter how little, to the Cathedral150 appeal, may be sent to: CDP Cathedral 150th Fund; Sort Code 309304; Account Number 00900347. It is also possible to set up a regular standing order. For more information, including how to gift aid your donation, please contact Cathedral150@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk.

Please pray for those who have died in May

Linda Creaven, Shirley Knight

and June

Jane O'Kelly, Anna Ricci, Patricia Wheatley, Stephen Foster and Pete Marshall

and for those whose anniversaries occur in June & July

Thomas Reed, Mary Mallon, Mary Alice Magee, Mary Gallagher, Timothy Chute, Joseph Smith, Ellen Mackrell, John McGarvey, John Toland, Chester Wisniewski, Matthew McGarvie, James Crouch, Elizabeth Holdway, Leon Antoni Danisz, Hazel Rodwell, Brenda Taggart, Mark Anthony, Douglas Tolhurst, Gerald Green, Sylvie White, John Sheehan, Margaret Connolly, James Hunter, Michael Daley, Margaret Davies, Massimo Paccini, George Sweet, Freda Marchant, Dorothy Watford, Cpt George Kitchin, James Daly, George McDermott, Mabel Tree, Catherine Henry, Maria Hubbard, Herman Eggeman, Eileen Galeno, Albert Line, Daisy Lewis, John Barlow, Alfons Majowski, Dorothy Ward, William Kavanagh, Elizabeth Parman, Alice Gilbert, Douglas Spindler, William Bennett, Kathleen Hamblett, Desmond Ryan, Nancy Clune, James Hugh Thornton, Fr Joseph Val D'Eremao, Patrick "Paddy" O'Reilly, John McCumisky, Jessica Rogers, James Meehan, Barbara McEvoy, Harry Ridley, Christina Hare, John Sayers, Henry Cummins, Reg Dredge, David Daws, Tom Connolly, William Fitzgerald, Fr. Charles Ayward, Ann Quinton, George Henderson, Olive Connolly, Valerie Greenslade, Ann Hedley, Gustavo Costi, Valerie Masser, Tom McGinty, Margaret Barrins, Fr Ronnie Mitchell SMM, Canon Brian Murphy O'Connor, Anne Chute, Brendan Hayes, Eddie Smith, Fred Crompton, Rita Hunt, Anthony Goddard, James Wheen, Margaret Jackson, Marie Allen, John Doonan, Andrew Allen, Jo Parker, Kevin O'Leary, Anita Wilders-Pratt, Fred Tarrant, Samuel James Webber, Bernadette Coveney, Garry Stockley, Dean Derrick, Mary Britten, Mary Evans, Denzil Stratton, Winnifred Gwillim, Caroline Wingate-Morris, Harold Hanlon, Charles Church, Anne Scicluna, Mary McIvor, Micheal Gavin, William Clary, Baby Robert McPleesaw, George Henderson, Joan Dorothy Boyton, William Melling, Dennis McConville, Kathleen Williams, Thomas Roach, Thomas Reagan, John Carver, Fr Littlefair SMM, Jane Mason, Geoffrey Acres, Anne Cunningham, Nancy Phelan, Brian Dixon, Percy Saddler, Eileen Welsman, Tony Mullins, Donald Pringle, Ernie Baddeley, Andrew Clark, Cecile Dunn, Shiela Gadsden, Alice Malyon, Bertram Hollard, Robert McPhearson, John McLaughlin, Francois Bedier, Noreen Carter, Clement McGuinness, Charlie Rogers, Monica Mullen, Mary Baker, Ellen Smith, Gerard Monks, William Green, Kathleen O'Loughlin, Rev Mother Eugenie Kendall, Winifred Howell, James Kelly, Robert McCumiskey, Patrick Drugan, May Jones, Bishop Michael Evans, Otto Fiedler, Lottie Rowley, Michael Malone, Jean Kladko, Sally Luxton, Violet Larkin, Peggy New, Janice Clarke, Lily Kelly, Bertie Ayres, Julian Maslinski, Edwin Wasniewski, Esther Murphy, Jo Brazier, Brian McAuley, Nikita Montague-Evans, Joseph Giraud, Tony Downing, John Glasspool, Peter Calderley, Rosemarie Harris Samuel James Webber, Margaret Henley, Kakai Haig, Mary Bullough, Mary Daws, Emily Byrne, Alan Cotter, Eileen Church & Muriel Arkwright

During the month to come please remember in your prayers the following who are sick:

Esme Coveney, Rita Lane, Margaret Williams, Patrick Arnold, Sheila Muir, Mary Oak, Fiona Hilleard, Bernard Ivinson, Tony Fabian, Helen O'Connell, Douglas Manning, Diane Mahoney, Catherine Ash, Sile Monnelly, Rose Bull, Carol Keenan, Kathie Carrick, Tom O'Regan, Rita Casey, Joseph Hayward and all those in need of prayers.

If you know that anyone on this list is now happily recovered, or if you would like a name added to this list, please contact the editors.

PLEASE NOTE

Articles printed in *The JOURNAL* are printed in good faith and are not necessarily the views of the editors. Contributions must be accompanied by full name and address, which may be withheld on request. The editors reserve the right to amend all contributions. Please support our advertisers, they support us.

ENDPIECE

Many thanks to the various contributors to this month's *The JOURNAL*. The next edition will be issued on 6th & 7th September. Contributions should be with the editors by Monday 1st September. Please leave contributions at the Presbytery or email them to: stjohnsjournal@googlemail.com