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Including: St John Fisher, Whitchurch and
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Pope's Health Gradually Improving

Following some five weeks in Rome's Gemelli hospital, 88-year-old Pope Francis was discharged and was able to return to his residence in the Casa Santa Marta.

The Pope had been seriously ill with what was described as a polymicrobial infection that resulted in bilateral pneumonia. which is caused by multiple pathogens and can lead to chronic and short-term diseases .Double pneumonia, also known as bilateral pneumonia, is an infection that affects both lungs and can make breathing difficult. In addition, he had also suffered a minor kidney infection.
The pope has a history of respiratory problems, having had part of his lung removed in 1957 due to infection. Pope Francis has also experienced other health issues in recent years, including sciatica and colon surgery in 2021

His return to the Vatican was greeted by thousands of well-wishers, and the Director of the Holy See Press Office, Matteo Bruni, provided journalists with daily briefings covering small improvements in the pope's breathing, his mobility and his speech.

It was noted that Pope Francis continues to receive high-flow oxygen through nasal cannulas during the day, though this is slightly reduced at night. Throughout his stay in hospital, Pope Francis maintained a round of prayer, some work on Curia documents, and rest between his treatment.

When he was discharged from hospital, Pope Francis was given clear instructions by the medical staff to rest as much as possible for two months during which time his health will continue to be closely monitored.

Dr Sergio Alfieri who led the pope's medical team in the Gemelli hospital, said that during his time in hospital "the clinical conditions of the Holy Father presented two very critical episodes in which the Holy Father's life was in danger. Pharmacological therapy, the administration of high-flow oxygen and the assisted mechanical ventilation recorded a slow but progressive improvement, bringing the Holy Father out of the most critical episodes."

The Pope's personal physician, Dr. Luigi Carbone, has said that Pope Francis is comfortable in the Casa Santa Marta and has all he needs to aid his recovery.

As his recuperation progresses, it seems that the Pope is in good spirits and he continues to do as much work as he can, and one of the papers he was working on was a homily to be delivered at a special Mass for the Jubilee of the Sick and Health Care Workers.

Restricted though he might be, Pope Francis has taken a keen interest in Lenten activities, and he followed the meditation by the Preacher of the Papal Household, Father Roberto Pasolini, OFM, by video link. He similarly followed the Mass in St Peter's Basilica which was presided over by Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin to mark the 20th anniversary of the death of Saint John Paul II.

It is still too early for there to be any indication of whether the Pope will be able to take any active part in the Holy Week liturgies, but on Sunday 6th April he made his first public appearance outside St Peter's Basilica at a jubilee Mass for the sick. Though in a wheelchair and still with an oxygen tube under his nose, he spoke to the crowd wishing everyone a happy Sunday and thanking them for the welcome they had given him.

A few days later he was well enough to welcome King Charles and Queen Camilla for private audience.

Seminarian Video Maker

Seminarian Nathan King has produced videos looking at aspects of Catholic worship and tradition. In his latest video he focusses on his Seminary House job for this year. You can watch his short videos on YouTube; search for Seminary Allen Hall House Nathan King.

"At Allen Hall Seminary in London Chelsea, my house job for this year is sacristan. I have the great privilege of setting up for all the liturgies that take place throughout the year at our seminary. I especially enjoy setting up for daily Mass. I decided to make a short video on the daily process, to give you a small glimpse into what setting up for Mass looks like. I really enjoyed making this video and I hope you enjoy watching it or maybe even learn something from it.

I look forward to making new videos in the future as I progress through my formation at Allen Hall. I would love to show what it is like living at seminary and help people understand the four pillars of formation that we go through each year:

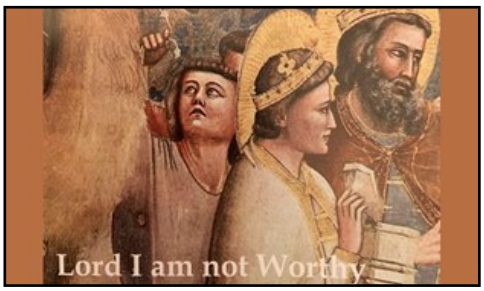
1. Human Formation
2. Intellectual Formation
3. Pastoral Formation
4. Spiritual Formation.

Thank you for all your prayers and support. God bless.

Nathan King

You can watch his short videos on YouTube; search for Seminary Allen Hall House Nathan King

Prayer Book For Mobile



About two years ago Bishop Philip published a prayer book *Lord I am not Worthy* and sent out copies to everyone in the parishes. The book is designed to fit into your pocket and into the back of benches in church. The title of the book, *Lord I am not Worthy*, comes from those powerful words of the Mass that we say just before receiving Holy Communion.

The book contains many Catholic prayers, some well known and others less well known. The prayer-book is now available for download. If you would like to have the prayer book *Lord I am Not Worthy* on your mobile, laptop or iPad you can download a copy from the diocesan website. Search for Prayer Books for Mobile.

Volunteer

Jo Lewry asks what is your New Year resolution? Why not volunteer for CAFOD?

We have many volunteering opportunities in the Portsmouth Diocese to enable you to put your faith into action so why not come and join our team of amazing volunteers. *"For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink"* Matthew 25:35. You can make a difference and help your brothers and sisters living in poverty overseas, so please volunteer!

We are looking for new school volunteers to share assemblies and workshops about CAFOD's work and inspire our young people to put their faith into action. So, if you have time during the week to visit our Catholic primary and secondary schools, please get it in touch to find out more. Full training and resources are provided.

Our fantastic parish volunteers help promote our Lent and Harvest family fast days in their parishes, so why not come and join our volunteering team?

For more information, please contact me by email jlewry@cafod.org.uk or telephone 07710 094447.

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Rite of Election

On Saturday 8th March, the Rite of Election and Call to Continue Conversion took place at the Cathedral. The Cathedral was full with a large number of those being baptised this Easter or being received into full communion, many of them young men and women. It was a very joyful occasion.

In his homily Bishop Philip spoke about how each of us has their own story to tell about our salvation, about what God has done for us. Some have experienced a major conversion, like St Paul on the road to Damascus, though most will have had a gentler introduction to faith through our Catholic family upbringing, education or personal relationships. Some will have come from a different faith background.

Bishop Philip spoke of his own Catholic family, one that was typically faithful to Sunday Mass but not perhaps one that was especially devout. He thanked God for the grace to be able to maintain his faith through university, and for his discernment of a priestly vocation.

The bishop suggested that after the Mass those present might find an opportunity to share their stories in the centre next to the Cathedral. In the meantime, he drew attention to the Mass readings, to the story of Abraham, of the great faith that Abraham showed in the promise God made: *I will make of you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great.* Abraham followed the call, left for a distant land, believing and trusting that all would be well, and God changed his life, which is why we call him our "father in faith".

Similarly, in that day's Gospel Andrew was so deeply moved that he rushed to find his brother and tell him that he had found the Messiah. Simon came to see, and he too was instantly converted. His life was never the same again.

Bishop Philip spoke about how God has given all present the gift of faith, a call to be a disciple of Jesus Christ as a member of His Holy Catholic Church. Like Andrew and Simon Peter "we too have found the Messiah … This is why every day we should be profoundly thankful. Our Catholic faith is the most precious and most important thing in life. It gives our lives meaning and purpose; it gives us joy and happiness; it gives us a taste now of what we one day hope for, eternal life in the happiness of heaven".

Bishop's Other Recent Engagements

Bishop Philip went to St. Peter and the Winchester Martyrs in Winchester for a meeting of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. Fr. Gaston and the Core Team had organised the event and there were about 50 people present.

Pope Francis wants the Church at every level to be more 'synodal' and in this regard the DPC is an important instrument of synodality - a real opportunity for the Bishop and the diocesan leadership to consult the Diocese, especially the laity, and to hear constructive ideas and proposals to further the Church's mission.

The topic for the meeting this time was *The Formation of the Laity*: What methods, resources and topics would foster the evangelisation, formation and catechesis of the laity at personal, family, parish and diocesan levels? What do people feel they need? The bishop acknowledged that this is a huge and wide-ranging topic.

There were a number of short presentations to get the discussion going: from Fr. Gaston on what was happening in parishes; from David Walford from St. George's School Southampton on the school context; from Ursula Clark about parish evangelisation cells; from Liz Dean about the RCIA programme in Guernsey and from Liza Nahajski on the Great Story of Jesus Retreat and personal accompaniment. Chris Bevan and Chris Patterson spoke about how the Oxfordshire Pastoral Area is addressing the mission plan and the need for lay formation. All of this led to some lively round-table discussions. The materials were then handed in to the Core Team who will synthesise these into a set of recommendations to the bishop.

Bishop Philip recently spent three days in Rome visiting Portsmouth seminarians at the Venerable English and Welsh College and the Pontifical Beda College. He stayed at the VEC where he was made very welcome.

He said: "It was great to see Jack Ryan, Sean Barnes and Fr. Edward Hauschild and to find out how they are getting on. Fr. Edward is studying at the Angelicum for a licence in moral theology and it was good to hear from him how the various courses were going.

Sean is in his first year (of four years) at the Beda and seems to be settling in. He loves being in Rome with all the opportunities it gives to explore the history of the Church.

Jack is now coming towards the end of his studies for the degree of Bachelor of Sacred Theology and will be returning to the diocese in the summer.

I also had time to speak with Fr. Stephen Wang, the rector of the VEC and Fr. Philip Gillespie, the rector of the Beda. Fr. Philip is finishing this summer and will return to the Archdiocese of Liverpool. His successor is Fr. Marcus Holden from the Archdiocese of Southwark. I am grateful to both of them and to their staff for all their help and support of our students.

Please pray for vocations to the priesthood – and for the seminarians we have in the various seminaries at home and abroad.

Synodal “Take Outs”

A simple and accessible ‘take-outs’ resource has been published to help Catholics engage with the Synod on Synodality’s Final Document. Produced by the Diocese of Westminster, the resource is particularly useful ahead of the ‘Implementation Phase’ that Pope Francis has recently commissioned the Church to move into as we journey to the celebration of an ecclesial assembly in the Vatican in October 2028. The resource is titled: *How to be a Synodal Church in Mission. Take-outs from the Final Document: ‘An Informal Reaping of the Fruits’*.

The Synodal Journey Final Document Take-outs and the Synod on Synodality Final Document can both be accessed from the website of the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales.

Each section of the Final Document (FD) is numbered, and this ‘take-outs’ resource takes a particular topic or key point and explores it with reference to the FD’s more in-depth text. For example…

Synodality calls for formation in the faith and in what it means to be missionary disciples

“The formation required… needs to explore theological, biblical and spiritual foundations. All the baptised need this formation in witness, holiness and service, which emphasises co-responsibility.” (80)

You can then visit section 80 of the Final Document for more information.

Several aspects of synodality are explored in the resource including exactly what synodality is, what it calls for, how we can walk alongside people in all their joys and challenges, and how to have a ‘Conversation in the Spirit’. It also looks at how a synodal Church places the poor at its centre, and how Mary, Mother of Christ, is at the heart of a synodal, missionary and merciful Church.

Among many other points, the take-outs look at participatory decision-making, and how the FD advocates for bishops and priests to listen to laypeople and vice-versa. To better understand the Final Document of the Synod it is advisable to download this accessible 8-page PDF resource which can be found on the website of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales.

The ‘implementation phase’ we are now entering was outlined in the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalos Communio*. The principal aim is to ensure that “synodality is increasingly understood and lived as an essential dimension of the ordinary life of local Churches and the entire Church.”

We currently stand at the start of a process of accompaniment and evaluation of the implementation phase by the General Secretariat of the Synod.

Timeline

March 2025 Announcement of the accompaniment and evaluation process

May 2025 Publication of the Support Document for the implementation phase, with guidelines for its conduct

June 2025 – December 2026 Implementation paths in local Churches and their groupings

24-26 October 2025 Jubilee of synodal teams and participatory bodies

First half of 2027 Evaluation Assemblies in Dioceses and Eparchies

Second half of 2027 Evaluation Assemblies in national and international Episcopal Conferences, Eastern hierarchical structures, and other groupings of Churches

First half of 2028 Continental Evaluation Assemblies

June 2028 Publication of the *Instrumentum laboris* for the works of the ecclesial Assembly in October 2028

October 2028 Celebration of the ecclesial Assembly in the Vatican.

St Francis of Paola

St Francis was born about the year 1416 in the small Calabrian town of Paola. His parents were hard-working, humble people who demonstrated a love of God. They had been childless for many years and had sought the intercession of St Francis of Assisi. When at last a child was born to them, they named him Francis, and when he was thirteen years old placed him in the Franciscan friary at San Marco where he learnt to read and where he laid the foundation of the austere life which he subsequently led.

He joined his parents on a pilgrimage to Assisi and Rome, and upon returning to Paola, despite being only fifteen years old, he obtained his parents' consent to move out of the family home and to occupy a secluded cave on the seashore some mile or so out of the town. He lived the solitary life for the next five years, after which he was joined by two other men. The local people built them a chapel and three small rooms. The three men sang the divine praises each day and a local priest came regularly to celebrate Mass in their chapel.

Approximately seventeen years later, having been joined by several other young men, the archbishop of Cosenza allowed them to build a monastery and a church. Francis established the rules and discipline for the monastery, emphasising the austerity of the life the monks were to adhere to. Francis himself slept on a bare plank with a log for a pillow; he only agreed to sleep on a mat when old age compelled him to do so. Charity, humility and penance formed the basis of his rule but he imposed a fourth obligation binding them to observe a perpetual Lent abstaining not only from meat but also from eggs and anything made with milk.

In 1474 the new order was sanctioned by the Holy See. The order was originally known as the Hermits of St Francis of Assisi, but in 1492 their founder changed the name to "Minims", indicating that they were to regard themselves as the least, the *minimi* in the household of God.

In 1481 King Louis XI of France was seriously ill and it was clear that he was dying. He sent for Francis to come and heal him, promising to give Francis and his order great assistance. Receiving no positive response from Francis, the king appealed to Pope Sixtus IV, who ordered Francis to go. Accompanied by the dauphin, the heir to the Franch throne, Francis travelled to see the king. Louis fell on his knees, imploring Francis to heal him. Francis replied that the lives of all men, including kings, were in the hands of God and prayers should be addressed to Him.

Francis had many long conversations with King Louis, and by his prayers and example Francis was able to get Louis to reconcile himself to God's mercy. It is said that the king died in resignation in the saint's arms.

King Charles VIII honoured Francis as his father had done, and would do nothing in the matters of his conscience or affairs of state without seeking his advice. Charles built two monasteries for the order in France, and the monastery of Santa Trinita del Monte in Rome which was to admit only Frenchmen.

Francis stayed in France for some twenty-five years. He fell ill on Palm Sunday 1507, and four days later, on Maundy Thursday, he assembled the members of his order and exhorted them to the love of God, to acts of charity and to a strict observance of the duties of their rule. He received viaticum, the "last rites" barefoot with a rope round his neck, as was the custom of his order. He died the following day, Good Friday, aged ninety-one. He was canonized by Pope Leo in 1519.

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.

On the Third Day – Hollywood's Easter Sunday

Hollywood is quite good at depicting events that happened to which multiple humans were witnesses to. Events that weren't seen by a group and yet did happen require a touch more depth in their approach. Easter Sunday Morning and what happened is front and centre in this regard. However, this has been done on the big screen and oft-times not at all badly.

With, of course, only Jesus as the only human witness as to what happened, as it did happen, there are two approaches that Hollywood can use. These two approaches are the forensic and the dramatic reconstruction and both can and do work, each in their own way.

The forensic is just that. Largely based on the Gospel accounts, it is what people saw later or what happened at Jesus's Trial, on the Cross and burial. Yes, there is dramatic licence but it's in keeping with the context of the account. The two films that take this route are, *King of Kings* (1961) and *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965). Both are full-on epics and deal with the Easter Weekend fully. Both films show the reality of the body of Jesus being placed in the Tomb. In *Greatest Story* you see the Roman officer in charge of the detail of Roman guards personally entering the Tomb to confirm that Jesus's body is physically there, before his men seal the Tomb with a stone.

When Easter Sunday dawns both films show that in each case the Tomb is empty. Bit of a difference in approach in the depictions. In *Greatest Story* the soldiers are waking up after having fallen asleep and it's egg on face time. So, they claim they were all awake all night. In *Kings* there is no Roman guard, but Mary Magdalene has slept by the Tomb. She wakes up, finds it empty and sees whom she believes is the gardener.

The alternative is the dramatic reconstruction. This focuses on the person of Jesus himself and is best illustrated in Mel Gibson's, *The Passion of the Christ* (2004). In *Passion,* the penultimate scene ends at Calvary with Mary cradling the dead Jesus in the classic Pietà framing. Jesus is clearly dead but there is no depiction of Jesus's body being laid to rest in the Tomb. Instead, with Mel Gibson, we go straight into Easter Sunday morning for the final scene of his film.

This final scene opens now in darkness, and we hear, not see, the sound of rumbling of heavy stones grinding against each other. We the see the stone sealing the Tomb physically moving as the Tomb opens and the dawn light streams in. And we're watching from the interior of the Tomb. Sunlight falls on the shroud wherein Jesus's body is still wrapped - or not. As we watch the light advance across the length of the shroud, we see it deflate and go flat because it is empty. Then we see the Risen Jesus - from the side - skin glowing in the light. The camera lowers and we see his right hand and the hole in it where the nail went through. Screen goes to black. End credits.

As Hitchcock once said to actress Ingrid Bergman, “Ingrid, it's only a movie”. Yes, Alfred but in this case, these are based on true events.

John Newland

Wisdom Centre

The Wisdom Centre in Romsey has the following events planned:
Thursday 22nd May 10am to 12pm: A Spirituality of Aging, Led by Mary Dunn
Saturday 14th June 10am to 4pm: Silent Retreat, Led by the Breathing Space Team
On **Friday 25th April and Friday 23rd May,** they also offer the popular **Community Café from 12 to 1,30pm** serving a choice of either soup and a roll, or jacket potato with a choice of filling; a dessert or fruit; tea or coffee. Please contact the Centre to book a place – suggested donation £6.50 per person.

Also, their **Creative Café, on the same days as the Community Café, 1.30 t0 3.30pm**, friendly mindfulness sessions with a different craft each week: February – Easter Cards; March Stamped Pebbles; April – Paper Gift Tags; May – Floral Bags.

The Centre continues to hold weekly in-person meditation every Wednesday evening 7.30 – 8.30pm. Sessions are free of charge and there is no need to book.

If you would like further information please contact Wisdom House, The Abbey, Romsey SO51 8EL, Telephone 01794 830206 or email reception@wisdomhouseromsey.co.uk

The Pope's Intentions

The Pope's Intention for February

Every year, the Holy Father asks for our prayers for a specific intention each month. You are invited to answer the Holy Father's request and to join with many people worldwide in praying for this intention each month. This month of April is for technology to help rather than hinder: Let us pray that the use of the new technologies will not replace human relationships, will respect the dignity of the person, and will help us face the crises of our times.

Reflection on the Pope's Prayer intention

Pope Francis's prayer intention for the month of April is dedicated to the new technologies. The Pope requests prayers so "that the use of the new technologies will not replace human relationships, will respect the dignity of the person, and will help us face the crises of our times." This is an extremely pertinent topic that affects us all, especially due to the enormous extension of social media networks and the dizzying development of Artificial Intelligence.

Pope Francis has emphasized that "technology is the fruit of the intelligence God gave us." However, if it is not used well, it can produce negative effects. Among them, the Pope alludes to isolation and the lack of authentic relationships: "Something's wrong if we spend more time on our cell phones than with people." Cyberbullying and hatred manifested on social media networks are other major risks since "the screen makes us forget that there are real people behind it who breathe, laugh, and cry." The Pope likewise warns that technology should not "benefit only a few while excluding others" since this would be one more cause for increasing economic, social, labour, educational, and other inequalities.

To avoid these dangers, Pope Francis invites us to place technology at the service of the human person, using it to unite people, to help those in need, to improve the lives of the sick and persons with different abilities, to foster a culture of encounter and to protect our planet.

The Pope has also emphasized that the new technologies should not alienate us from others and from reality. The Pope asks that we "look less at screens" to "look each other in the eyes more." In this way, we would be able to "discover what really matters: that we are brothers, sisters, children of the same Father," and act accordingly.

Calling for an ethical approach to technology, Cardinal Michael Czerny, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, echoed Pope Francis's words. "The new technologies," he affirms, "are an important resource and tool at the service of the human family. Their use must be directed toward the respect and dignity of basic human rights if they are to be at the service of development. Let us unite ourselves to the Holy Father's appeal so that digital progress might constitute a gift for humanity, respecting the dignity of each person, for justice and the common good."

The International Director of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, Father Cristóbal Fones, explains that "Pope Francis wants to remind us that the responsible use of technology means putting it at the service of the human person and of creation. Used in this way, it can also be a means for giving glory to God since our capabilities and creativity come from Him. Similarly, the ethical use of the new technologies helps in the care of creation, in the protection of the dignity of the human person and in improving lives."

Father Fones mentions other advances such as easier access to an infinity of educational resources online; telemedicine/telehealth, software used in healthcare and new diagnostic tools; software that improves communication and allows us to maintain contact around the world, even allowing teams to work together across distances; recycling technologies and renewable energy…. "Technology can be a powerful tool for addressing global crises such as poverty and climate change".

Pope Francis has urged us to develop a critical awareness about how we use the new technologies and the effects they have on our own lives and on society. He also encourages us to use new technologies responsibly, and to promote their responsible use, so they foster integral human development for everyone, especially the most disadvantaged.

Chrism Mass
Celebrating the Fullness of Priestly Vocation

This Tuesday of Holy Week, t 11.00am there was a special Mass at St John's Cathedral required the participation of the entire Diocese. Here, all our ordained clergy were called to attend and renewed their ordination vows. It was a very special service for the men who have decided to heed the call of the priestly vocation and for those who are ordained as deacons.

Another important aspect of the Chrism Mass is the blessing of the holy oils (the Oil of the Sick, the Oil of Catechumens and Sacred Chrism). The Sacred Chrism, in particular, is breathed upon by the bishop in an act emulating Christ's actions as He breathed upon His apostles to "receive the Holy Spirit." These are the same oils used in all the other sacraments such as Baptism, Confirmation and the Anointing of the Sick. The oils are intended for an entire year and are taken back by priests to their respective parishes.

The Permanent Diaconate

Canon John Cooke, the Vocations promoter for the Diocese, asks: "Have you ever wondered what the permanent diaconate is all about, but something has held you back from finding out more about it? Is there a little voice in your head, that can't be silenced? If that's YOU, why not 'Come & See' for yourself without committing to anything further?

The diocesan vocations team will be holding an information event on Saturday, 3rd May 2025 at The English Martyrs Church, Didcot, OX11 7AJ from 9am – 3pm where you'll get to hear first-hand, from those who are involved and what it's been like for them. You've got nothing to lose!

If you'd like to attend, please call Pam on 07883 059529 to book a space and to help with catering requirements. If you can't make it on the day, but would like to know more, please email diaconate@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

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From The School

The school came together to begin the season of Lent with a Mass celebrated by Father Austin. Each class participated in a special Lenten project by creating unique Lenten crosses on each of which was a resolution to keep during Lent. The crosses were offered up at the start of the Mass. Fr. Austin reminded us all of the importance of Lent as a time for reflection, for seeking forgiveness and for striving to become better versions of ourselves. The use of sign language during Mass ensured everyone's participation.

The school's Lenten journey began with a joyful Shrove Tuesday, thanks to the ever-helpful kitchen team who made delicious pancakes served with ice cream for all. First courses were eaten in double-quick time!

This day was followed by the more sombre Ash Wednesday. Deacon Michael led the school in prayer, songs and scripture before all, including families and friends, were invited to receive the ashes as a sign of our mortality.

During one Friday in Lent the children from Key Stage 2 were invited to lead the Stations of the Cross in the parish church. Those taking part read clearly and respectfully, inviting the large congregation to reflect on Christ's journey to Calvary. Key Stage 1 children were also present in with their families.

St John's marked CAFOD Family Fast Day, answering Pope Francis's call to be Pilgrims of Hope during the Jubilee Year. The school community answered the call by supporting Andover Foodbank wholeheartedly and generously.

To help celebrate World Down Syndrome Day, the school was joined by two volunteers from North Hampshire charity *Andover Twenty1* who came to tell us about the vital support which they provide to children with Down's Syndrome and to tell the story behind "Lots of Socks Day". While most people have two copies of each chromosome, those with Down's Syndrome have three; the extra chromosome is often likened to a sock, hence all the brightly coloured socks worn in school on that day.

The school's theme for this year's World Book Week was "Poetry and Rhyme". It was a fun, action-packed week. Thanks to the Friends of St John the Baptist School, author James Carter visited the school, delivering inter-active workshops and assemblies throughout the day's visit. The children were invited to dress up for the final day, keeping in mind this year's theme. This they did with great imagination and skill.

Father Austin came to school for a Reconciliation celebration, which was prepared and ministered by the children of Key Stage 2. He stayed to hear confessions, giving the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. During the liturgy the children offered their Lenten promises which were displayed in the school hall as a reminder of their commitment to the season.

Mrs Whatley, the staff and pupils of St John the Baptist School wish Father Austin, Deacon Michael and all their friends in the parish a Happy and Holy Easter, and offer thanks for their consistent support.

Fr Peter at 90

Our former parish priest, Father Peter Codd, celebrated his 90th birthday last month. Father Peter now lives in Newbury. Although he is nominally retired, he has remained active, always willing to help by covering for priests who are ill or who need a break, and he shows little sign of making any concession to his age! He has become an integral part of St Joseph's parish, and as a mark of their affection and gratitude, Fr Michael Fava and the ladies of that parish organised a celebration high tea in his honour.

Present at the event were representatives of the many parishes in which Fr Peter has served, including a small detachment from our parish of St John the Baptist. All were welcomed by Fr. Michael Fava, parish priest at St Joseph's, who paid a fulsome – and richly deserved – tribute to Fr Peter's long service to the Diocese of Portsmouth, including his six years voluntary ministry in the twinned Diocese of Bamenda in Cameroon.

It was a highly enjoyable event, organised with great care and generosity, and provided a wonderful opportunity for people from numerous congregations to meet and reminisce about the times they shared with Fr Peter.

Photograph shows a youthful Father Peter Codd flanked by Fr. Ron Hishon and the late Fr. Frank Isherwood in Cameroon in the 1970s.

Seminarian Adam Trzebiński

Adam is one of the Portsmouth Diocese seminarians at Allen Hall Seminary, in London. He writes:

"Looking back, this past year has presented its share of challenges, but it was also fruitful in many aspects. I've begun my third year of formation at Allen Hall, a year dedicated to pastoral theology. This year serves to introduce us to theological concepts in the initial months, followed by weekend visits to selected parishes. After approximately two months, we transition to full-time parish placements on the first day of Advent. My placement this year is the pastoral area in Maidenhead encompassing different parishes which will soon amalgamate into one Parish of the Holy Family.

This third year is considered pivotal in our seminary journey. It provides an extended period of immersion within our Diocese, allowing us to experience first-hand the responsibilities we might undertake, God willing, as ordained priests. It's a time for us to deepen our understanding of the Diocese and to observe the daily realities of ministry. It is also important part of our discernment process where the Diocese as well as the seminarian discern their compatibly to one another and whether we are called to be priests of the Diocese.

Throughout this past year, I've had the opportunity to participate in and observe various aspects of parish life. This included assisting with the First Holy Communion program, which encompasses preparation for both First Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as well as being involved in the RCIA program and Baptismal preparation. I've also been privileged to visit many parishioners in their homes, as well as those in hospice care, care homes, and schools.

From a pastoral perspective, this placement has been profoundly rewarding. I've gained invaluable insights into the diverse lives of our parishioners, witnessing their struggles, illnesses, and life challenges, some of which are truly unimaginable. It has been incredibly moving to witness the strength and unwavering faith of some parishioners who, even in moments of profound darkness, maintain their hope and trust in God's presence within their trials. Their resilience and faith have been a source of deep inspiration.

Please continue to pray for my continued discernment and for all the seminarians in formation. I would also like to ask for your prayers for an increase in vocations to consecrated life and for all those people who are lonely and have no one praying for them.

May Almighty God give us strength, courage, and zeal in our seeking Him and imitation of His Son."

St Bede's College Bamenda

St Bede's College is located in Ashing-Kom, in the Cameroonian Archdiocese of Bamenda. The area had been severely affected by the problems facing the Anglophone region, and as a result had to cose in order to ensure the safety of the students and the staff.

The college remained empty for some time and became a target for vandalism. One of the worst aspects of the damage suffered by the buildings was the complete destruction of the electrical fittings and wiring.

The lack of electrical power greatly reduced the college's ability to offer an education to its students. Thanks to funds from the Portsmouth and Bamenda partnership, the college has been able to install solar power. The environmentally sustainable source of power has given the college a new lease of life, and provided the students with what was described as "a brighter and more hopeful future".

Please pray for those who have died recently

Mary Horobin, June Saunders, David Stewart, Robert Maxwell and Bruno Pinto

and for those whose anniversaries occur in April

Pope John-Paul II, Dennis Brown, Ada Churchill, Martin O'Brien, Irene Maginness, Frederick Butcher, John Joseph Jones, Mary Thornton, George Cross, Eileen Jankowski, Vincent Nolan, Arthur Antrobus, James Duncan, Theresa Melling, Nora Rutter, Frederick Fanshaw, Bill Dainty, George Connor, Joanna Stockley, John Scott, James P. Martin, Mother of Sr Nicolette, Patrick Butler, Michael Gouge, Martin Mannion. Thomas McCormack, Bertha Burrowes, Eileen Patricia Crocker, Annie Tricker, Charlie Spencer, Sister Alice S.M.M., Mary Sainsbury. Lisa O'Riordan, Rob Melville, Greville Edgecombe, Martin Murphy, Ronald James, Mrs Wheen, Madeleine Minall, Janet Cleary, Doris Kenchington, Michael McGregor, Tony Weldon, Susan Dodds, Meta Giebermann, Mary Kinsella, Claire Brooke-Heart, Annie McKeever, Pat Wilson, Freddie Williams, lan Nash, Pauline Slevin, Vincent Rendell, Barbara Bryce-Curtis, Robert Moran, Michael Cowdrey, Hannah Lee, Freddie Appleton, Rosin Murfin, Simon Murfin, Tony Scott, Ronnie Bentick, Fr Philip Wilson SMM, Jean Grady, Bartholomew Thomas, John Stokes, Mary McErlain, Prudence Fanshaw, James Gillian, Sheila Fay, Cyril Faye, Patrick Reardon, Annie Cummins, Margaret Burbidge, Rev Mother Philomena Renouf , Alan Nash, Fr Brian Measures, Joseph (Jos) Hilleard, Don Wicks, Dom Denis Maurice Martin, OSB, Lawrence Baxter, Hanna Sheehan, Paddy Connolly, Reverend Richard Davey, Frank Drugan, Clinton Dickie, Dcn Vincent Jones, Danny Davis, Jonathan Cremins, Ana Shelley, Debbie Church, Helen Connolly, Eleanor Hurley, Edward Collett, Tom Warren, Betty Lisney, Harold Rushton, Alexander Neill, Antonino Mirra, Mary Cowles, Jill Thomas, Christine Hotherstall, Isabella Fifield, John Scott, John Scowen, George King, Margaret Baverstock, Rosemary Davis, Ronald O'Neill, Henry Short, Patricia Thicknesse, Anne Ivinson, Terence Melling, Fred Flood, David Bull, Joseph Burdett, James Daly, John Robinson, Jonathan Griffin and Pamela Lytle

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, Tony Fabian, Helen O'Connell, Douglas Manning, Diane Mahoney, Catherine Ash, Sile Monnely, Bill Jago, Linda Creaven, Rose Bull, Jane O'Kelly, Wendy Rawlings, Mark Radcliffe, Paul Owens, Tom O'Regan, Elizabeth Spyropolous 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

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ENDPIECE

Many thanks to the various contributors to this month's *The* JOURNAL. The next edition will be issued on 10th & 11th May. Contributions should be with the editors by Monday 5th May. Please leave contributions at the Presbytery or email them to: stjohnsjournal@googlemail.com