



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 368
March
2025

Concern Over Pope's Health

Pope Francis was admitted to Rome's Agostino Gemelli hospital on Friday 14th February where he underwent several diagnostic tests followed by treatment for bronchitis. He had been suffering from bronchitis for several days, something which he himself mentioned during a couple of public audiences, having his speeches read for him by his assistants.

According to the Vatican Press Office, the pope slept well that first night, despite having a slight fever. Tests confirmed he had a "respiratory tract infection" but his condition was stable.

His stay in hospital meant that several events scheduled to take place were either cancelled or were presided over by Vatican staff.

Three days later, the Vatican Press Office released a statement saying that "The Holy Father remains without a fever and is proceeding with the prescribed treatment". The statement added that "Pope Francis is touched by the numerous messages of affection and closeness that he has been receiving in recent hours; he especially wants to extend his thanks to those who are hospitalized at this time, for the affection and love they have expressed through drawings and messages of good wishes; he prays for them and asks that they pray for him."

A later statement explained "The results of the medical tests carried out over the past few days and today have shown a polymicrobial infection of the respiratory tract, which has led to a further change in therapy. All tests carried out to date are indicative of a complex clinical picture that will require appropriate hospitalization.

The pope continued to work as much as possible. Among his regular contacts over are video-calls to the parishioners of the Holy Family Parish in Gaza, led by Argentine-born Father Gabriel Romanelli and his assistant, Egyptian-born Father Yusuf Asad.

Later in the week it was revealed that tests had shown the onset of bilateral pneumonia, requiring additional pharmacological therapy, though a press release indicated that Pope Francis remained in good spirits. It added that the Pope had "received the Eucharist and, throughout the day, alternated between rest, prayer, and reading. He expresses his gratitude for the support he feels at this time and kindly asks that prayers for him continue."

According to his doctors, Pope Francis is not "in danger of death", but he's also not fully "out of danger". The Pope was not attached to a ventilator, although he was still struggling with his breathing and consequently keeping his physical movements limited.

Nevertheless, the physician said, the Pope is sitting upright in a chair, working, and joking as usual. Alfieri said that when one of the doctors greeted the Pope by saying "Hello, Holy Father", he replied with "Hello, Holy Son".

The pope remained in hospital, and three weeks after he was admitted to hospital, he remained under treatment with the most recent bulletin saying "The Holy Father's clinical condition has remained stable in recent days, showing a good response to treatment." Throughout the world the faithful continue to pray for his recovery.



Lenten Healing Mass

On Saturday 22nd March, Father Austin invites us all to join him as he celebrates a Mass for Healing.

One element of such a Mass is the Anointing of the Sick, which bestows on the recipients the healing grace of the Holy Spirit. This anointing does not just apply to those who are desperately sick or in physical pain; it is also beneficial for those suffering mentally or spiritually and for those who want to bring new energy to their spiritual life.

A Mass is essentially about recalling to mind Christ's redeeming work, bringing that redemption into our present lives with the whole congregation celebrating. Each Mass bestows upon us the benefits of redemption, the forgiveness of sin, the deliverance from the power of evil, the opening of the doorway to immortal life. It provides spiritual healing of all that we have done or endured.

A Healing Mass is all of those things with the addition of the opportunity to enjoy the Anointing of the Sick, a sacrament which is available for all of us for we are all in need of strength and healing. The sacrament is administered during the Mass, after the Gospel and the homily. The sacrament has two main parts: the laying on of hands on the head of the person, and the anointing with Holy Oil on the person's forehead and hands. Everyone present at the Mass is entitled to be anointed. After all we are all in need of healing in one way or another.

The Lenten Healing Mass will be a way of strengthening our Lenten resolves, a time when we can pray for ourselves and for others whom we know to be in need of healing.

There may be people you know who would like to attend this Mass but have no means of transport, so if you, as a friend, can help them then please do so. The Mass is a good opportunity for those who cannot usually get to Mass to join the parish in a special celebration – it might also be a good opportunity to invite someone who has not been to Mass for some time to come and join us.

After the Mass there will be tea provided in the parish hall, offering a chance to mingle, chat, renew old acquaintances and make new friends.



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Seminarian – Francis Ezeani

Francis is one of our seminarians at Allen Hall Seminary, in London. He writes: “I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who offered prayers, thoughtful messages and phone calls to me and my family during the period of my dad’s illness and eventual passing last summer. May God reward your kindness immensely.

Last year I was in Maidenhead parish for the Year of Pastoral Theology. It was a year filled with grace and the awareness of a growing capacity for compassion, pastoral care and trust in God within me. Through the varied pastoral ministry of the clergy of the parish and members of the Mill Hill Missionaries, I was integrated into various aspects of priestly ministry. Some of these included; home visits, hospitals and care home visits, sacramental preparation courses, prison ministry, schools ministry, Mission and Evangelization outreach and involvement in the Parish Pastoral Council and some parish groups such as the UCM, St. Vincent the Paul and even the weekly Badminton group. In addition, I assisted at daily Masses and also funerals, baptisms and an amazing wedding! I am grateful to the very warm and encouraging parishioners who made me feel welcome from the very start and supported me throughout the year with their prayers, edifying conversations, dinner invitations and lots of gifts. I am still humbled by their love even though I had to take a substantial break during the year to care for my terminally ill dad in Nigeria and stayed on a bit longer for the funeral.

After a slightly turbulent but grace-filled year of Pastoral Theology, I resumed formation in the new Academic year at Allen Hall Seminary last September kicking off my Theological studies. It was interesting and perhaps a bit of a relief to not only have completed Philosophical studies but also to see its relevance in my current study of Theology. The lectures so far have been really intellectually stimulating. One highlight of starting Theology studies is that I go to St. Mary’s University Twickenham on Thursdays for lectures. These classes with other students (religious and non-religious) give me a deeper appreciation of our Faith and the beauty of diversity in cultural and religious exchanges.

The main highlight of the year for me has been my admission as a candidate for Holy Orders at Allen Hall Seminary by our amiable Bishop Philip last October on the solemnity of the Douai martyrs. It was a day of much grace and joy and celebration as together with Nathan King, we renewed our commitment towards the path of priesthood and as well received the official acknowledgement by the Church of a genuine priestly vocation.

Reflecting on my vocation journey, I am filled with gratitude to the Father who loves me to bits and to His Son Jesus who calls me to this path and the Holy Spirit who continues to strengthen me through life’s challenges. I am equally thankful to Our Lady whose maternal love has been a great source of consolation for me and I would like to encourage everyone to a strong devotion to our Heavenly Mother who never abandons her children.

Finally, may I thank you for your prayers for clergy and seminarians and humbly ask that we pray for atheists, lapsed Catholics and anyone we may know who is yet to accept the Gospel of Jesus; that the Holy Spirit may enlighten their minds to accept the love of the Father through his Son Jesus Christ.”



Word on Fire Conference

Towards the end of February, Canon James McAuley and Bishop Philip, together with a number of lay people and priests from across the Diocese, joined over 1500 other participants from across the country at the ExCel stadium in London Docklands for the Word on Fire Conference.

The conference was about the Bible and its use in the evangelisation of culture, and it featured some internationally known Catholic speakers. Bishop Robert Barron gave the keynote address on the vision, main themes and structure of the Bible as a whole and how both Testaments centre on the Person of Jesus Christ.

Professor Tracey Rowlands discussed how the Bible has to be read in the light of faith and within the life of the Church. She argued that the historical-critical method of reading the Bible, though useful, falls short when it is not integrated with the theological and spiritual dimensions of the faith.

There were then four wide-ranging panel discussions. The first, led by Fr. Paschal Usche, involved Angel Anyamele, Greg Finn, Martin Kochanski and Haley Stewart. In it the contributors discussed their work of publishing and digital outreach, showing how the Word of God can be a dynamic force in the hearts of the faithful. Then, Bishop Robert Barron and Professor N.T. Wright, the biblical scholar and former Anglican Bishop of Durham, explored how the Bible serves as a living Word that can engage, challenge, and inspire contemporary culture.

Next up were Professor Francis Davis and Jenny Sinclair who said that there is an urgent need for Christians to live out a truly biblical vision, which prioritises care of the weakest members of society. Finally, Jo Boyce and Fr Patrick van der Vorst (from Westminster Diocese) reflected on how their own creative work had been shaped by the Bible’s narratives and imagery. They offered insights into how art, literature, and music can be vehicles of spiritual insight, even for those who may never pick up the Bible themselves.

The message of the whole conference was summed up admirably in the words of St. Jerome: “Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.”

St Theresa of Calcutta

The Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has released a decree inscribing St. Teresa of Calcutta in the General Roman Calendar, along with the liturgical texts to accompany her feast day on September 5.

Mother Teresa was born in Skopje on August 26, 1910 as Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu. She professed solemn vows as a Sister of Loreto in Calcutta, India, in 1937. In 1950, she left the Sisters of Loreto to found the Missionaries of Charity, which now numbers over 6,000 sisters active in 130 countries who serve those most in need. Mother Teresa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, and Pope St. John Paul II beatified her on October 19, 2003. Pope Francis canonized her on September 4, 2016 during the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. Her feast day will be celebrated as an optional liturgical memorial annually on September 5, the date of her death in 1997.

Cardinal Arthur Roche, Prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, offered praise of St. Teresa as: “a beacon of hope, small in stature but great in love, a witness to the dignity and privilege of humble service in the defence of all human life and of all those who have been abandoned, discarded and despised even in the hiddenness of the womb.”

He noted that her holiness and spirituality reveals to the faithful an “outstanding witness to hope for those who had been discarded in life.”

Pope Francis called her a conduit of divine mercy that illumines the darkness that surrounds us. “Her mission to the urban and existential peripheries,” noted the Holy Father, “remains for us today an eloquent witness to God’s closeness to the poorest of the poor.”



Formation Days

Douai Abbey

*Fr. Peter Bowe Director of the Douai Pastoral programme has announced the next event in the Spring/Summer programme: A Lent Day of Prayer. It will take place on **Saturday 22nd March**, from 10.30am to 4.00pm, with arrivals and coffee from 10.00am.*

The day will be led by Fr Alex Austin OSB. St Benedict mentions joy in his Rule only to describe Lent! ‘Preparing for the favourable time’ calls for eager engagement, so that we do not stumble through Lent, but embrace its invitation to journey towards Easter.

A contribution of £30 (to include lunch, coffee and tea) or £15 (bring your own lunch) payable on the day. All booking and enquiries to the Programme Director via the Douai Abbey website, where you can find further details of the programme.

Living Theology Weekend

The Living Theology weekend at the Ammerdown Retreat and Conference Centre near Bath has been held annually since 2013. Somewhere between a retreat and a conference, it features high profile speakers exploring current theological topics in an accessible but rigorous way. This year's Living Theology weekend will take place from Friday 13th June to Sunday 15th June 2025.

The theme of the weekend is ‘The Theology of Pope Francis and the Church today’ and features talks from:

- Dr. Gemma Simmonds CJ, Director of the Religious Life Institute and Senior Lecturer in Pastoral Theology, Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, Cambridge
- Dr. Dominic White OP Director of Research Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology and Prior of St Dominic’s Priory, London

The weekend runs from 5.00pm on **Friday 13th June and finishes after lunch on Sunday 15th June**, The residential cost covers bed and full board (two nights, Friday and Saturday) plus all lectures and plenaries, with access to Ammerdown’s extensive facilities. The cost is £335 single occupancy, or £295 pp for two people sharing. Non-residential cost is £195 and covers lectures, plenaries, liturgies, communal living during the day, lunch and evening meal, but does not include bed or breakfast.

Please email: ltammerdown@gmail.com with enquiries and for a booking form or book online at the Living Theology website.

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RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
Four Sea Interludes from Peter Grimes
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Programme:

Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Sea Symphony and Toward the Unknown Region

Benjamin Britten: Four Sea Interludes from Peter Grimes

Our programme this spring is inspired by the beauty and grandeur of the sea and showcases two major British composers.

We are delighted to be joined once again by our friends from Croydon Philharmonic Choir, as well as a professional orchestra and soloists, making this a concert not to be missed, so join us on our seaward travels.

St Katherine Drexel (1858 – 1955)

Katherine Drexel was the foundress of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. Her father Francis Anthony Drexel, a Catholic of Austrian descent, was a banker and one of the wealthiest men in America. The girl's mother died when she was only a few weeks old, and Katherine was brought up by Anthony and his second wife, Emma Bouvier. It was a religious household with strong charitable ethics, and Emma devoted much time to giving food and clothing to the poor in Philadelphia.

When her father died, Katherine and her two sisters were left as beneficiaries of a trust fund of \$14,000,000. Inspired by their Catholic faith and Emma's example the three young women regarded this fortune as an opportunity to serve God through service for others. This latter part of the 19th Century was a great era of Catholic immigration. Many cities began to expand as the immigrants flooded in. The church responded with an unprecedented system of schools, hospitals, orphanages and other charitable institutions, showing the world that Catholics knew how to "look after their own".

Not unnaturally there were considerable claims on the three wealthy Catholic women, but Katherine did not limit herself to helping immigrant Catholics. She took a deep interest in those who were not only outside the Church but were pretty much excluded from American society in general – namely the indigenous people and the descendants of the enslaved.

She began by endowing scores of schools on Indian reservations, and in 1878, during a private audience with Pope Leo XIII she begged the pope to send priests to serve the Indians. The pope asked why she did not become a missionary herself. It might seem that Leo was dodging the question, but Katherine realized that it was not enough to share her wealth. God was calling her to give everything.

She set out to find a religious order corresponding to her own sense of mission. She found none, but encouraged by her bishop she set out to establish her own religious congregation. In 1891 she was professed as the first member of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored (sic) people. Within a year she had been joined by ten other women.

Katherine embraced a vow of poverty, but she continued to administer the \$400,000 annual income from her trust. She insisted that her own Sisters must rely solely on alms, and used her income to support projects serving Indians and Afro-Americans. Among her charitable gifts were huge donations to the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, continued support for mission schools on reservations, and \$750,000 towards founding the Xavier University in New Orleans, the first Catholic college established for coloured students. She was personally responsible for establishing 145 missions and 12 schools for Indians, and 50 schools for black students.

Katherine died on 3rd March 1955, her life having spanned the era of slavery and the Indian wars to the dawn of the civil rights movement, Her work did little to directly challenge the structures of racism and discrimination, but at a time when racial segregation was rigidly enforced in much of the USA, her work had a deep effect as witness to Christ's teaching that all are brothers and sisters.

Father Augustus Tolton, the first black priest in America, and one of her contemporaries, said "In the whole history of the Church in America we cannot find one person that has sworn to give her treasure for the sole benefit of the Colored and Indians. As I stand alone as the first Negro priest of America, so you, Mother Katherine, stand alone as the first one to make such a sacrifice for the cause of a downtrodden race".

Katherine Drexel was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 2000.



Healing Prayers Group



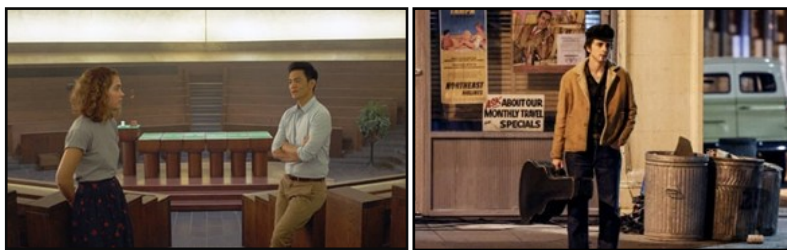
The Healing Prayers Group meets in the parish church each Tuesday evening between 6.30pm and 7.00pm.

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.



Sounding America: *The Brutalist* (2024); *A Complete Unknown* (2024)

Both these films look at the supposed dream of America; getting on and becoming a material success. Both get into America's heart that seems to pulsate only with Mammon's beating impulse. And both films, each in their own way, declare through their own particular central character that this ain't the whole case, nor is it the most important.



Set between 1947 and 1960, *The Brutalist* has Adrian Brody as a Hungarian architect who arrives as a refugee in the US after surviving years in a Concentration Camp. He trained at the German avant-garde Bauhaus Institute and produced buildings in the interwar years. That and being Jewish account for what happened to him. After a bumpy start, he's taken up by a very rich American industrialist and given a massive trophy commission. The patron doesn't appreciate our architect's ability or vision. Brody is the intellectual fashion of the moment, and this will reflect well on the patron. As for Mr Brody himself, since he's needed, he's tolerated.

There's a fair level of unhappiness all round. Nobody is likeable (including Mr Brody) and so it chunders on for nigh on 4 hours. Thankfully, what keeps this dour tale afloat and motoring is the high level of acting from all concerned and something else. This "else" is the fact that the film is split into two equal halves with a 15-minute intermission separating each half. This film requires its long run time to unpack its story, and this quarter-hour break is truly the cinematic leaven that tips it into working.

Of shorter duration, at just over 2 hours, is *A Complete Unknown*. This is the origin story of Bob Dylan (played by Timothée Chalamet) between his arrival in New York in 1961 as the title indicates and his going his own way in 1965 at the Newport Folk Festival. Taken up by established folk singer Pete Seeger, Dylan's ability as a performer and a songwriter is blatant from the start. Indeed, as performed on screen, Mr Chalamet does a pretty good job of singing Dylan's songs.

What comes over clearly in the film is the attempt to package Dylan and this new talent commercially and also culturally. The first comes from the record companies and Dylan is happy to deal with this by producing records people want to buy. For him, having money is ok. The second is the road that leads to what happens at Newport in 1965 and the break with his mentor Pete Seeger and the Folk Music community. In 1961 Dylan was a folk singer and only that (i.e. acoustic [nonelectric] guitar). By 1965 he's moved on and is wanting to go electric. For the Folk Music community that's heresy. When he plays electric at Newport there's no way back. He doesn't want one anyhow.

Strangely enough, these two films together form a window into America from the end of World War 2 to the Sixties. Neither film is a docu-documentary yet each gives a flavour and together a composite of the US then. And each repays the time spent watching it.

John Newland

Wisdom Centre

The Wisdom Centre in Romsey has the following events planned:
Thursday 22nd May 10.00am to 12noon: A Spirituality of Aging
Led by Mary Dunn
Saturday 14th June 10.00am to 4.00pm: Silent Retreat
Led by the Breathing Space Team

On **Friday 28th February, Friday 28th March, 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, 1.30pm to 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 7.30pm – 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

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. The Holy Father asks for our prayers for a specific intention each month. This month of March he asks us to pray for families in crisis:

Let us pray that broken families might discover the cure for their wounds through forgiveness, rediscovering each other's gifts, even in their differences.

Reflection

People usually come to therapy, "broken", in some way or another. Whether it's a break up, a loss, life transition, or overwhelming symptoms of depression or anxiety, something feels broken, or they themselves feel broken.

As a mental health therapist, this is the work I am blessed to do, to be with and love people who courageously show up to share their broken hearts. It seems ironic, that relationship is both the cause of and the cure to our deepest wounds. It is in the rupture, loss, or absence of relationship where we experience the most profound pain. And when someone loves us, shows us kindness, or witnesses to our suffering, we can experience a restoration that can soothe the pain, though its mark can never be completely erased from our story.

I have found that as I start to see my own brokenness as the reality of my humanity and a way to receive love, rather than a shameful barrier to love, my heart has expanded and my relationship with Jesus has deepened. It is in the painful, and beautiful vulnerability of being received with love in our brokenness that we can encounter the deepest truth, goodness, and beauty of our Lord, who allowed himself to be broken like us, and for us.

So, as we pray for broken families, for our broken human family, and as we ourselves feel the ache of our brokenness and long for the fullness of being with a perfect and heavenly family, let us not fear the brokenness. Let us face the reality of it with faith, hope, and with bold confidence in our Savior who was broken for us, who redeemed suffering so that the evil of sin and death could be transformed into beauty and life. Let us start with ourselves and ask Him for the grace we need. Let us forgive and ask for forgiveness. Let us see the gifts in ourselves and in each other. Let us see, even in our differences and across divides, that we belong to each other. That our deepest identity is not our brokenness, but our belovedness.

(Bria Halama is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist LCP working in Milwaukee. and is involved with the John Paul II Healing Centre's Inner Healing Prayer Ministry in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee).

Reimagining Baptism Conference

For a number of months in the Archdiocese of Southwark, a group comprising parish catechists, diocesan employees (for catechesis, evangelisation, and marriage and family life), religious sisters, and clergy have continued a conversation about baptism catechesis and how baptism is understood in the life of the Church today. This group, called the Baptism Collaborative, believes that the time is right for a wider exploration of these themes and invites clergy and catechists to a national conference in May.

Clergy and catechists (involved in all areas of Sacramental preparation) are invited to participate in a day to re-imagine Baptism. This event will be hosted by the Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis from the Archdiocese of Southwark, and the Baptism Collaborative.

Keynote speaker will be Abbot Hugh Allan O.Praem, a member of the order commonly known as the White Friars, with workshops run by seasoned catechists and clergy from around the country. Two offerings of the conference will be held on consecutive days at Amigo Hall, St George's Cathedral, Lambeth Road, SE1 6HR. The first day, primarily, but not exclusively, intended for clergy is Friday 9th May. The second day is Saturday 10th May, and this is primarily intended for catechists.

There will be ample chances not only to share the difficulties that we encounter but to explore practical suggestions that will enable parents to be 'the best teachers in the faith', preparing their children for a lifetime in Christ.

To book please go to: <https://aec.rcaos.org.uk/baptism-reimagined>

News from Bamenda

In February the Portsmouth Bamenda Committee was delighted to announce that the Diocesan Board of Trustees had recently approved a grant of £32,183 to rebuild the nursery school in St Felix Parish, Ntenefor, Bamenda. Ntenefor is a suburb of Bamenda City and has been severely impacted by the Anglophone crisis with large numbers of internally displaced persons arriving in the suburb.

The impact of a large increase in the local population has been significant for St Felix School which has seen a sharp increase in pupil numbers. The current classrooms used for the nursery school are completely inadequate and very cramped. The new classrooms and facilities for teachers will provide a much improved and safer educational setting for the school's youngest children.

Approximately 50 per cent of the project's costs (around £17,500 of the £32,183) will come from funds raised within or donated by the Parish of Our Lady and the Saints in Guernsey.

Father Bernadine, parish priest in St Felix who will oversee the project, said, 'Everyone in St Felix parish will be delighted to hear this news but especially the children attending the nursery school, their families and teachers. Work will begin as soon as the funds are received, and we hope that the new nursery school will open its doors by September 2025'.

Synod Update

Representatives of the groups set up by the Pope to address issues that emerged during the First Session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops met last month. Each coordinator presented an update on their group's work, focusing on the methodology used, those involved, the expected timeline for submitting reports, challenges encountered, and any outstanding questions.

After prayers for the Pope's recovery, the coordinators took turns presenting their group's progress, outlining the methodology used, the people and organisations involved, the expected timeframe for submitting their final report, the difficulties they had encountered, and any open questions still to be addressed.

The statement made following the meeting noted that this was a "rich sharing time, particularly useful for those study groups dealing with 'transversal' issues".

After each coordinator had spoken, Fr Giacomo Costa, SJ, a consultant to the General Secretariat, provided "guidance to ensure consistency in the drafting and submission of reports."

The coordinators were informed that the Canonical Commission is available to assist them, particularly on issues with a legal or canonical dimension. Cardinal Mario Grech reminded participants of the importance of considering external contributions, which can still be submitted via email (synodus@synod.va) to the General Secretariat until 31 March 2025. As previously announced at the opening of the Second Session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, any new contributions received will be promptly forwarded to the relevant Study Groups.

These ten Study Groups were established in March 2024 following the First Session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. During their discussions, significant issues concerning the life and mission of the Church from a synodal perspective were identified. The Assembly reached broad consensus on these matters, which, given their importance, require reflection at the level of the universal Church and a more in-depth study.



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From The School

To commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day the school joined together to pray for peace in the world. Through their prayers they hoped for a deeper sense of compassion, understanding and a commitment to being peacemakers within their own lives.

The children have been singing the Jubilee Year Song of Hope, joining Catholics throughout the world to celebrate Pope Francis' Year of Hope.

We were joined by parents and parishioners when Father Austiin celebrated a special Mass in school on the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, also known as Candlemas. New candles for the altar were blessed during the Mass, symbolising the Light of Christ in our lives. Each class received a new blessed candle to use during class prayers, fostering a sense of unity and faith within the school community.

There have been some exciting developments in the school's Outdoor Play and Learning initiative (OPAL). Parents and children have responded wholeheartedly to the recent survey. There is general support for outdoor play and exploration, also a balanced interest among the children not only for physical play but also enthusiasm for social spaces, for art, crafts, games, puzzles or simply chatting with friends. This indicated a need for these appropriate spaces within play areas. OPAL aims to develop these needs and to create a vibrant and dynamic environment to support all aspects of the children's development. The Friends of St John the Baptist School are funding much-needed storage for the growing collection of play resources.

St John the Baptist School welcomed two very special visitors from "Great Athletes" recently. The children had the opportunity to meet athlete Kelly Simm who began gymnastics aged 6 at her local school. She worked very hard with her coaches and has achieved great success since, representing Great Britain at important world events as part of gold medal winning teams. Each Year Group joined Kelly to do "a circuit" to music. They had to do squat jumps, 'sporty dogs' and planks. There was a lot of cheering on of other year groups, and the whole hall was full of energy and cheer.

Kelly showed the children her gold medal and encouraged them to have resilience and perseverance in all they do.

The governing body of St John the Baptist School has vacancies for Foundation and Parent Governors. One important role of the governing body is to write, review and monitor the school's policies. The governors follow an annual review cycle to ensure the policies remain relevant and effective. Anyone interested in joining the school's governing body is invited to contact the Chair of Governors, by email on:

governor.zarbpiscopo@st-john-andover.hants.sch.uk

Further information about governance can be found at: <http://www.casportsmouth.org.uk/governors/>
<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/governors/volunteer>



Andover Chamber Choir

This year's spring concert from Andover Chamber Choir charts the dramatic events leading up to Easter in words and music. Entitled 'The Journey to Easter', the story begins in Lent with its emphasis on preparation and penitence, moving on to Palm Sunday and Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

The next stage on the journey is Maundy Thursday with the Last Supper and soul-searching in the Garden of Gethsemane. The central events of Good Friday give way to the initially restrained celebration of the Resurrection on the Vigil of Easter and then to joyful Easter Day itself, all with music tailored to the days in question.

Conductor Bruce Randall says, "There is so much great music written for Lent and Holy Week which is rarely heard these days. The music we're performing ranges from Tallis, Palestrina and Victoria in the 16th century to Purcell in the 17th, Gounod, Schubert, Tchaikovsky and Wesley in the 19th and Duruflé, Chilcott and Gjeilo in more recent times. Many of the pieces are quite short, but all this glorious music will serve to dramatize the narrative, supported by appropriate readings selected by English literature expert Prof. Michael Wheeler, who is chairman of the choir".

The concert takes place on **Saturday April 12th** at St Michael & All Angels Church, West Andover, beginning at 7.30 pm. Tickets are £15 on the door or £12 in advance from The Lights, Newbury Building Society or choir members. Under-16s are admitted free. Proceeds will go to the Andover Young Carers, a small charity providing vital support and respite to young carers in Andover and the surrounding area who have caring responsibilities that are inappropriate for their years. Further information is available from Veronica Bacon 01264 771285.

Please pray for those who have died recently

June Saunders and Mary Horobin

and for those whose anniversaries occur in February

Kathleen Mary Bennett, Emily Ambrose, Juliana Weller, Mary Davis, Kenneth McPherson, Molly Thompson, John Noades, Marguerita Russell, Waddy Kopka, Francis Brittorous, John Cady, Christine Bell, Joseph Rowley, Jim McDermott, Mrs Tickner, Dorothy Fox, Henry Rachwalski, Charles McKeever, Agnes Gardner, Mrs Critchlow, Robar Langford, Anne Bellingham, Renee Harivel, Raymond Harivel, Danny McKeever, Fr C. Marshall SMM, Bridget Monaghan, Patrick Connolly, Dorothy Moorat, Clarice Connor, Cecily Plowden, Albert Hawthorne, Marian Picken, Annie Miley, John Scott, Kathlene O'Connell, Bridget Hynes, Gordon Barnett, Patrick Daly, Bartholomew Thomas, Catherine Pithar, Lily Taylor, David Coleblack, Michael Matheson, Catherine Haslam, Gabriel Josephson, Fr Sean O' Haire SMM, Michael Scicluna, James Turner, John D'Arcy, Michelle Mattia, Meg Blair, Catherine Patterson, Frank Beaumont, Jane Jackson, James Eldridge, Jean Millington, Anita Birtwell, Maria Boudreau, Dominic Clarke, Robert Bray, Joyce Hales, Tom Flynn, Paddy Connolly, Teresa McQuillan, Daniel Taggart, Marian Matejski, Bill Allen, James Grady, Lily Tunnicliff, Mary Roche, Maureen Armstrong, John Granville, Elizabeth Monaghan, Edward Kenny, Christina Mellows, Amelia Green, William Hardiman, Emilio Perrone, Patricia Mahon, Susan Dodds, David Cave, Margaret Brookes, Elizabeth O'Reilly, Beryl Hanson, William Pava, Richard Stanley, Mary Jolliffe, Anastasia Cullen, Eileen Jackman, Colum Harrington, Julie Curley, James Sexton, Margaret Cogan, Robert Maxwell, Sally Curtin, Brian Parker, Karl Hellbusch, Winnie Eglin, Peter Hurley, Maria Germon, Fr.Paul O'Connor C.J., Michael Hickey, Frauke Henrietta Duffy, Hilda Nicholson. Joseph Moss, Michael Holloway, Robert Duffy, Una Kemple, Lillian Herbert, Con Murphy, Bridie Weeks, Jenny O'Leary, Canon Terence Walsh, Alma Dunne, Anthony Turner, Kay Krauze, Cathy O'Shea and Sister Ann Teresa

**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, Bernard Ivinson, Fiona Hilleard, Tony Fabian, Helen O'Connell, Douglas Manning, Diane Mahoney, Catherine Ash, Sile Monnelly, Bill Jago, Linda Creaven, Rose Bull, Jane O'Kelly, Wendy Rawlings, Mark Radcliffe, Paul Owens, Tom O'Regan

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ENDPIECE

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