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## A Jubilee of Hope

**A**t the start of the Mass in Saint Peter's Basilica on the evening of 24<sup>th</sup> December, a frail-looking Pope Francis opened the Holy Door of the Basilica to inaugurate the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope. The opening of the Holy Door is a call to all those who enter through it to walk in holiness, and following the pope's entrance a large number of pilgrims from all parts of the world made their way through it into the basilica. They will be followed throughout the year by countless others who will answer the call to the Year of Hope.



The tradition of opening a Holy Door goes back to 1423 when Pope Martin V opened a Holy Door in the Lateran Basilica. A Holy Door in Saint Peter's was first opened by Pope Nicholas V for the start of the Jubilee Year of 1450.

Pope Francis opened additional Holy Doors in St John Lateran (the Pope's cathedral as Bishop of Rome) on 29<sup>th</sup> December, in the Papal Basilica of Saint Mary Major on 1<sup>st</sup> January, and also in the Papal Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls on 5<sup>th</sup> January. In a break from tradition, Pope Francis opened a fifth Holy Door in Rome's Rebibbia Prison "inviting all prisoners to look to the future with hope and a renewed sense of confidence."

Holy Doors will be opened in specified locations around the world so as to give more people an opportunity to celebrate the Jubilee Year.

In his Christmas homily, the Pope reflected on how God became "one of us to make us like Himself; He has come down to us to lift us up and restore us to the embrace of the Father." He quoted the words of Saint Luke when the angel of the Lord brought light and glad tidings to the shepherds: 'I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord'

"During the Holy Year," the Pope has prayed, "may the light of Christian hope illumine every man and woman, as a message of God's love addressed to all! And may the Church bear faithful witness to this message in every part of the world!"

The Holy Father invited the faithful to pray, to prepare throughout this year, so that this Jubilee may "strengthen us in our faith, helping us to recognize the Risen Christ in the midst of our lives, transforming us into pilgrims of Christian hope."

He repeated that in Emmanuel, "God with us", we find our hope. "If God can visit us, even when our hearts seem like a lowly manger," the Pope continued, "we can truly say: Hope is not dead; hope is alive and it embraces our lives forever!"

The Pope encouraged all to "set out to behold the Lord who is born for us, our hearts joyful and attentive, ready to meet him and then to bring hope to the way we live our daily lives. For Christian hope is not a 'happy ending' which we passively await, but rather a promise, the Lord's promise, to be welcomed here and now in our world of suffering and sighs."

# Exhibition at Quarr Abbey

**F**r. Brian Kelly OSB, Procurator at Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight, invites readers to the Abbey's "Architecture of Beauty" Art Exhibition from **16th January to 25th February 2025...**

The year 2032 will be the 900th anniversary of the foundation of Medieval Quarr Abbey. We will present an exhibition, the fourth in a series for our 10-year 'Two Abbeys Journey, 2022-2032, on the architecture of both our medieval and modern abbeys, under the theme of 'Beauty'. The architect for our modern abbey was a monk, Dom Paul Bellot. We look at his understanding of 'Beauty' in architecture and see how this compares with the architectural style of our medieval abbey.

Schooled in the theology and philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas, it was natural for Dom Bellot to draw on this great medieval thinker for his ideas on aesthetics. For the medieval period, life was something wholly integrated. The value systems of a culture are related to one another. The strategy philosophers developed for this integration involved the doctrine of the Transcendentals: The 'One', the 'True' and the 'Good'. 'Beauty', though not in itself a Transcendental, came under an aspect of the 'Good'.

But changes took place from the Renaissance onwards. A divorce began to grow between art and the spirit in the tradition of classical and medieval architecture. It was Dom Bellot's great concern to set about the healing of this divorce. His underlying theme for all his work was 'innover selon la tradition': to innovate within tradition. He wrote that 'truth is, by nature, progressive, in the sense that it tends not to transform itself ... but it grows in the manner of something living.' Dom Bellot was the architect of many other religious buildings in various countries, and he became an architect of international repute.

Medieval Quarr was founded in 1132. It maintained the classical style of architecture of that time, in a transition period from Romanesque to Gothic. Despite the differences between the Cistercian and earlier Benedictine monasteries, the Cistercians still preserved the same understanding of Beauty in its structure as that of the classical view. We look at the similarities and differences of both. We pay a particular attention to the Liturgy which is at the heart of every Catholic monastery and therefore forms a fundamental backbone to the architectural design.

The exhibition will be held at Quarr Abbey Art Gallery from **Thursday 16th January to Tuesday 25th February, 2025**, 10am (11am on Sundays) – 4pm daily. Admission is free, but donations are welcome.



## World Youth Day

**T**he diocese has announced advance details for the Diocesan World Youth Day pilgrimage to Rome next summer. The group will be going there for the Youth Jubilee, from 28th July to 4th August.

The invitation has gone out to those aged 17+ to join Bishop Philip on this pilgrimage to Rome for the chance to unite with thousands of young people from across the world.

The group will be there for the Mass and ceremony at which Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati, Patron of our Youth, will be canonised.

The cost of the pilgrimage is £1,350 which includes flights, hotel accommodation, half board, travel in Rome, entrance and participation fees and more.

For more information and pre-booking, phone 07780 221 686 or contact:

[youth@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:youth@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

## A Splash of Colour Decorating Services

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# SVP and South Sudan

On behalf of the St Vincent de Paul Society I would like to say a heartfelt "Thank you" for the generous response to our appeal for our members working in South Sudan. Over £2,000 was donated through the parish, including the proceeds of their Christmas raffle donated by the Whitchurch parishioners. In addition, there will be over £300 claimed back in Gift Aid, and we know that some parishioners donated directly through the SVP website. Thank you all for your generosity.

Dee Davey, the SVP England and Wales Ambassador to SVP South Sudan, has sent an update on the situation out there. A new Interim National President, Emmanuel Ladu Lude, who is still in his twenties, has been appointed and has begun to meet all the Conferences in South Sudan.

He reports that the Vocational Training Centre, which is many times over-subscribed with applications, has just taken part in a government programme through which 72 former young offenders who had reached the required academic standard for admission, were provided with courses. All but two successfully graduated and having broken their former links with criminal gangs have a better future ahead of them.

The demand for services provided by St Vincent Primary Healthcare Centre remains high, and the Centre is planning a national vaccination programme for children. Meanwhile the Baby Feeding programme now supports three centres at Nyarjwa, Rafa and Lologu. With the funds from SVP England and Wales, Emmanuel Ladu Lude was able to organize a significant delivery of supplies of essential maize and beans for the refugees in Kworijik camp for internally displaced persons in time for Christmas.

Three of the students living in the *Be In Hope* street children project are reaching the age of 18 and when they leave younger boys will be selected to join the programme.

In addition, Betram Kuol has sent the following message to you all:

*As we approach the end of another year, we want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude for your unwavering support of our life-improving projects for less advantaged communities in one of the world's most climate vulnerable, poverty prone and conflict ravaged countries. Your commitment and generosity have made a profound impact on the lives of those we serve.*

*Together, we have faced challenges and celebrated successes, all while striving to create a brighter future for individuals and families who rely on our efforts. Your partnership has not only provided essential resources but has also inspired hope and resilience in communities striving for a better tomorrow.*

*Thank you for being an invaluable part of this journey. We look forward to continuing our collaboration and making an even greater difference in the coming year. Wishing you a very merry Christmas, a joyful holiday season and a prosperous new year ahead!*

*With warm regards,*

*Betram Kuol Programme Director.*



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## Knitters Wanted

Head of Caritas Portsmouth, Jenny LeLean is seeking the help of knitters in the diocese to support Stella Maris in Southampton to offer woolly hats to Seafarers and Fishers.

As a worldwide Roman Catholic charity and part of the Caritas Social Action Network, Stella Maris cares for the spiritual, practical, and welfare needs of Seafarers and Fishers of all faiths and none. The Southampton office serves hundreds of thousands of seafarers arriving at ports along the south coast of England, throughout the year. Every ship visited receives a bag of gifts, including faith materials, rosaries, chocolate, and knitted hats.

Dedicated knitters across the Portsmouth Diocese offer these much-appreciated hats, bringing pleasure to crews who endure tough, isolated lives, separated from family and friends for up to nine months at a time. If you'd like to help, you might like to use the tried and tested Stella Maris knitting pattern which can be easily found by searching online for "Stella Maris Knitting" Or you can use your own favourite patterns. Dark or bright colours are best.

While Christmas is a special time for these gifts, hats are greatly needed all year round and could be a great project for a knitting group. The collection point for donations is: Stella Maris Southampton, c/o St Joseph's and St Edmund's Parish Office, St Edmund's Lodge, The Avenue, Southampton SO17 1XJ. Parish office hours are Monday, Tuesday and Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm closed 12.30 to 1.30pm.

For further details, email Stella Maris Port Chaplain Gregory Hogan

[gregoryhogan@stellamarismail.prg](mailto:gregoryhogan@stellamarismail.prg)



# Knights of the Holy Sepulchre

Last month, Bishop Philip attended online a meeting with the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, who was visiting the UK to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem's Lieutenancy in England and Wales.

The Patriarch attended a parliamentary reception at the Palace of Westminster to meet with MPs and civil servants on Thursday 28th November.

In his meeting with the bishops, he spoke at length about the situation in the Holy Land. "The small Christian community in the Middle East continues to be tested... the power of the cross remains bright and gives us comfort. While it may be hard for us to change the world of politics, we will not make possible for the world of politics to change us. We will not allow the logic of violence to have the last word or be the only voice in the Middle East. This is the power of Christian witness, and the significance of its presence in these lands, marked by the life of Jesus and, throughout history, bathed in the blood of Christian testimony. We are called to be, through word and action, the luminous presence of Christ – the strength of life, the embodiment of brotherhood and welcome, the desire for the good of all, and the courage to forgive."

Expressing how the war has destroyed everything, not just communities and infrastructure, but relations between peoples, Patriarch Pizzaballa saw a pathway to a better future opening up at grassroots level: "At grassroots level, not just the youth, a lot of people feel it is time to do something different because the status quo that we held on to in our lands is now over. We cannot go back to the previous situation."

In our Diocese, the annual Christmas Crib offerings are given alternately one year to the Friends of the Holy Land and one year to the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre. This year, 2024, our Christmas Crib offerings will go to the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre (KHS).

The KHS is widely believed to date back to 1099 A.D., to the first crusade. For centuries their mission has been to support the Christian community in the Holy Land. Today, made up of 30,000 members from 40 countries, lay people, priests and religious, they financially support Christians in the Middle East, and, above all, pray for them. They fund many works that support the Christians living in the Holy Land, thus ensuring that they survive and that the holy sites are still populated by Christians and do not become museums.

The Knights do everything they can to help with practical projects to stabilise Christian communities. The key partner for the KHS in the Holy Land is the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and through the Patriarchate, they fund-raise to maintain schools, formation, charitable and social activities.

The need to help this year is hugely urgent, thanks to the war in the Holy Land. If you missed out on making a donation at the crib in the church you can send donations marked "Knights of the Holy Sepulchre" direct to the Diocesan Finance Office, St Edmund House, Bishop Crispian Way, Portsmouth PO1 3QA



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## 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.



# Tuesday Coffee and Cakes

**A** **BIG THANK YOU**..... to all those who have contributed in any way to the monthly Tuesday coffee mornings which have raised the magnificent sum of £655. This has been passed to The Food Bank who are experiencing record demands for the emergency help they offer.

Started originally as a social event offering a chance to chat over a cuppa and some homemade bakes, parishioners were generous in their voluntary donations and the bakers' repertoire expanded over the months with lots of successes - and some failures!

An impromptu paperback book stall has grown and gives opportunities for donating, swapping or buying a book to while away the now dark evenings.

In December the more creative members of the group produced some beautiful Christmas wreaths and table arrangements as well as handmade gifts and tree decorations.

Having discovered that we had a talented poet among us she was prevailed upon to give a rendition of her verses at the monthly gathering and what now follows is one of her offerings which captures the essence of what Tuesdays are all about. We hope to see you there on Tuesday 4th February after the 10.00am Mass.

*Fran Rae*



It's the end of the month  
We await the call  
"Can you do some baking, perhaps a cake or two?"  
Is the impassioned plea.  
Of course, it will soon be a 'first Tuesday'  
Meaning coffee, cake, and tea!  
Everyone is welcome, many come each time  
Not just for cake or those famous scones  
(You look away and they're all gone.)  
But for lively conversation,  
Laughter often fills the air.  
As someone once said  
"Time spent over coffee and cake is never wasted"  
Was it Dickens or Shakespeare?  
Chocolate, coffee, apple cake, fruit loaf, all homemade  
By the Band of Bakers ( BOB for short)  
Who do a roaring trade.  
The money raised is vital and thanks  
to people's generosity  
This year we've made the tidy sum of £655 and 50 p  
So, thanks to our loyal supporters  
We love to bake for you.  
If you haven't yet joined us,  
Then remember we are here  
First Tuesday of the month throughout the coming year.  
*Pip Cotter*

## Pilgrimage to Lisieux

**A** pilgrimage to Lisieux will be led by Fr Raffaele Cossa and Fr Mario Toma from St Swithun Wells Parish and will visit the place where St Therese lived and the surrounding area. The Pilgrimage, from Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> to Monday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2025, is organised with Tangney Tours and cost will be approximately £500 per person, depending on numbers, and includes: Coach travel from St Swithun Wells parish, ferry crossing from Portsmouth to Caen, 3 nights half board at Ermitage Lisieux, and a visit to Alencon the birthplace of St. Therese. For further information and a booking form, please contact St Swithun Wells Parish Office or 023 80273882 or Clare Barkaway at Tangney Tours 01732 886666 or visit St Swithun Wells Parish.

# Studying St John's Gospel

**T**owards the end of last year, parishioners took part in a study of the Gospel of St John. Two of those who took part have sent us some thoughts on what they experienced.

The course comprised of reading through John's Gospel and achieving a higher understanding of what it was about as well as picking out certain verses and questioning what the meaning was. Here are some thoughts:

The verse about *'the wind breathes where it will'*. The word 'wind' has 3 meanings; breath, breeze and spirit i.e. Holy Spirit which adds a lot of depth to the understanding. This is something which unless Greek is fluent, is unlikely to be known. For me, it was interesting seeing how the verse can be read in several ways, once the knowledge about the Greek meaning is known.

The woman and the well. This is a much more complicated and deeper chapter than at first glance. The woman has had 5 husbands and is clearly searching for love but not finding it in the correct places but this mirrors the 5 tribes of Israel which chose pagan worship over genuine worship of God. Eventually, she recognizes this and (using the book we were given) perceives Jesus as a prophet and when He reveals He is the Messiah she becomes the first evangelist. The fact she was listened to, despite being an outcast, is very interesting, Jesus does refer to her being with a man who is not her husband. This is ripe for further discussion....*does Jesus put the Holy Spirit into her?*

This linking of the Old Testament with the New Testament is very interesting and David Roper in his article shows this with...*Jesus was crucified at the 6<sup>th</sup> hour, which is the time lambs were sacrificed for the Passover. A hyssop branch was used to offer up a drink to Jesus: The same type of branch was used by the Egyptians to "paint" the doorposts with the blood of lambs during the first Passover. Jesus died once and for all as the Passover Lamb/the Lamb of God.*

The linking of Moses' flight from Egypt, Passover, the lamb's blood and the hyssop branch was very interesting and something I didn't know.

In Chapter 8 What is Jesus writing in the dust on the ground? Why did nobody record what he wrote? A note in my American Bible suggests it shows Jesus was not interested in the men who accused the woman .

Later in the Chapter, Jesus tell the Jews that their father is the devil and describes the devil as a "murderer from the beginning" and also "the father of lies" I found this very surprising and it may partly explain the Early Christian antipathy to Jews.

In the parable of the Lost Sheep where Jesus describes how the shepherd will leave the flock to find one lost sheep. This may indicate to us how important is each individual to God.

The Raising of Lazarus. It is interesting that, after being told Lazarus was ill, Jesus waited for two days before he went to see him. Jesus seems to explain this by saying, "the end of this sickness is not death; it is meant for God's honour to bring honour to the Son of God" i.e. to demonstrate that Lazarus was truly dead and that Jesus could raise him.

When Lazarus is raised he comes out of the tomb wearing his bindings. The 2nd century Bishop Irenaeus linked these bindings to sin binding people.

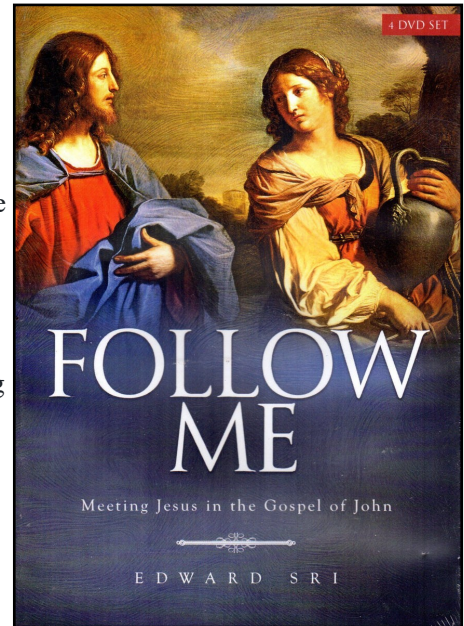
In the Parable of the grain of wheat falling on the ground and needing to grow in order to yield fruit, there is the suggesting that He, Jesus, must die before his teaching will yield the fruit of Christianity.

In the hot country of Israel travellers, having walked along dusty roads to their destination, would have their feet washed by a servant. When Jesus washes his apostles' feet he is demonstrating his humility to them and also showing how He can cleanse them not only physically but also spiritually. He also says "You are not all clean" referencing Judas.

In Chapter 14, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit or Paraclete\* (*This is Greek and is an advocate called in to defend a legal action*) will come to befriend the Disciples. He promises the Father will send the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus says "One is coming who has power over the World but no hold over me" He is referring to the Devil/Satan.

Giulia Khawaja



## Studying St John's Gospel Part Two

**D**r Sri's Bible study was very enlightening, and I thoroughly enjoyed every session. Not only have I come away with a much greater understanding of John's Gospel, but this was made all the more special by the fellowship I found within the group. Praying together was really good for the soul. The message that God and Jesus love us so much was so impactful, and we are encouraged to make both not just part of our lives, but to place them at the very centre of our life, *i.e.* to follow as a disciple. The term *abide* was a continuing theme.

I did enjoy studying the seven "signs" (miracles) documented in the gospel:

Turning water into wine at Cana (Ch.2)

Healing a sick boy (Ch.4)

Healing a paralyzed man (Ch.5)

Feeding the 5,000 (Ch.6)

Healing a blind man (Ch.9)

Raising Lazarus (Ch.11)

His resurrection (Ch.20)

and also the seven "I am" metaphors underscoring God's Covenant name:

The bread of life (6:35)

The light of the world (8:12)

The gate for the sheep (10:7)

The good shepherd (10:11)

The resurrection (11:25)

The way, truth and life (14:6)

The true vine (15:1)

These "I am"s appear to have layers of meaning, most of the time connecting back to Old Testament themes.

I also liked the many parallels that Dr Sri outlined, such as dark & light, in the accounts of Nicodemus (Jn 3:1-21) and the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:7-4:30): Nicodemus the "man of the Pharisees" visits Jesus at night – probably out of fear of the Jews (but possibly to avoid the crowds that would have interrupted his interview with Jesus). Whereas the woman goes to draw water at the sixth hour *i.e.* noon, to avoid the other village women who would have visited early morning. And in the same part, the 5 husbands of the woman symbolizing the Samaritans intermarrying with 5 pagan nations (2Kings 17:24) and turning to cultic deities.

Similarly, the royal official (Jn 4:50) had faith and believed Jesus when he said "go your way, your son lives", whereas the paralysed man at the Sheep gate pool (Jn 5:5) showed no faith and lacked gratitude. Also, the pool called Bethza'tha with five colonnades (porticoes) symbolizes the five books of the Torah we are told.

At the feeding of the 5,000 Jesus took bread and gave thanks and distributed it (Jn 6:11), foreshadowing the Last Supper.

For Irenaeus, (2<sup>nd</sup> Century bishop of Lyon) and St. Augustine, the wrappings that bound Lazarus's hands and feet represent the sins that bound Lazarus in life. Thus when Jesus says "unbind him and let him go," (Jn 11:44) he is both renewing Lazarus' physical life and forgiving his sins.

When we hear the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, we should hear Jesus speaking to us, calling us to "come out" of our sin and to be set free by his saving grace.

I had long thought that the question Jesus put to Peter (Jn 21:15-19) "Do you love me" was merely to remind Peter of his three denials, but when we see the Hebrew text, Jesus is in fact asking "Do you love me Peter, with this total, unconditional love (as in agapas me)?" but Peter says with humility: "Lord you know that I love you (as in philō se); that is "I love you with my poor human love". When Jesus asks for a third time, he speaks only of the poor human love that Peter can give, so Jesus has put himself on the level of Peter, rather than Peter on Jesus' level.

Jesus freely and lovingly offered himself on the Cross for us, for the forgiveness of our sins. The movie film *The Passion of the Christ*, (directed by Mel Gibson and released in 2004), is known for its intense and graphic portrayal of the final hours of Jesus Christ's life, particularly his crucifixion, and I had thought the scourging scene was a little OTT, but maybe not, because we heard this must have been so severe as for Jesus to die after three hours on the Cross.

Jesus was crucified at the 6<sup>th</sup> hour, which is the time lambs were sacrificed for the Passover. A hyssop branch was used to offer up a drink to Jesus: The same type of branch was used by the Egyptians to "paint" the doorposts with the blood of lambs during the first Passover. Jesus died once and for all as the Passover Lamb/the Lamb of God.

Jesus knows we cannot follow him without a power beyond ourselves and that is why God sent his Holy Spirit to empower us. Day by day, as we walk in faith and obedience, we trust that the Holy Spirit will produce in us the character of Jesus: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law (Gal. 5:22-23).

David Roper

# Popemobile Goes Electric

Over the years various popes have found different ways of moving among the crowds who flock to St Peter's Square or the Basilica itself

to hear a papal message or receive a blessing. I remember seeing Pope Paul VI carried somewhat precariously on the shoulders of some hefty men on the *sedia gestatoria*, an ornate throne, which swayed alarmingly. As it was a Holy Year, I had entered St Peter's

through the Holy Door and as the wobbling chair drew nearer I somewhat irreverently wondered whether I would get a 'free pass' into heaven should I be crushed to death beneath a tumbling pontiff! The whole set-up looked dodgy enough in St Peter's but I shudder to think what it must have been like for the pope in a crowded open air venue.

The *sedia* was retired in 1978, and as it has become commonplace now for popes to travel far and wide, motor vehicles have replaced the shoulder-high swaying seat as the pope circulates through St Peter's Square or travels to far flung corners of the world. Popes have used a variety of vehicles, and while Pope Francis has been wont to drive himself around Rome in a little Fiat, for more formal occasions he, like his recent predecessors is usually seen in what is generally known as the "Popemobile".

It was in 1930 that Pope Pius XI was given the first "Popemobile" by German car manufacturers Mercedes Benz. Since then there has been an assortment of vehicles at the disposal of the popes, but several replacement vehicles have been donated by the same company and a Mercedes "Popemobile" has been an accustomed sight helping a succession of popes to meet and greet crowds in St Peter's Square and all round the world.

The latest vehicle is a new convertible, electric G-Class machine which was presented to Pope Francis by the CEO of Mercedes-Benz, Ola Källenius. It replaces the petrol engine G-Class vehicle which has been in use for several years.

A team of specialists from different Mercedes locations worked for almost a year with representatives from the Vatican to build a car tailored to the Pope's needs, and at Pope Francis' request, the entire team who worked on the vehicle was present for the delivery. Presenting the vehicle to the pope early in December, Mr. Källenius described the experience as "a great honour for us, paying attention to all the Holy Father's needs."

One of the main priorities was zero emissions, as the Vatican plans to convert all its vehicles to emission-free by 2030—a goal they share with Mercedes.

The new electric car includes a rotating seat and handcrafted interior furnishings. Additionally, it offers all-wheel drive, specifically designed for the low speed at which the popemobile is often driven through St. Peter's Square during public audiences.

Mr. Zotter, from the Mercedes development division in Gratz, described the vehicle as "a unique piece with all the features," and he expressed his hope that "it will provide the Holy Father with the comfort he needs for his travels."

The Pope's new and improved car is also equipped with a retractable roof to protect him from the elements. The right side back door is built on rotating hinges, while the left is completely welded.

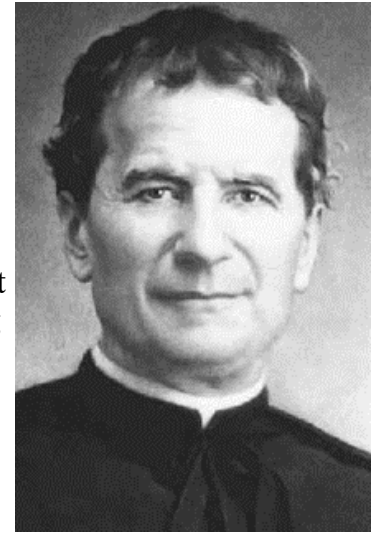
Yet with all the modern touches of the 2025 popemobile, tradition is still factored in. Similar to its predecessors, the car is white and has the license plate SCV 1 (State of Vatican City 1).



# St. Giovanni Melchior Bosco

**S**t. Giovanni Melchior Bosco, or as he is more commonly known St. John Bosco, was the founder of the Salesian Society. He was born into a poor family in Becchi, a hill-side village near Castelnuovo, Piedmont, Italy, on the 16th August, 1815.

When he was little more than two years old his father died, leaving the support of three boys to the mother, Margaret Bosco. He spent his youth as a shepherd but was fortunate to have a parish priest who recognised his intellect and ability and who instructed the young lad in reading, writing and the classical languages. Although the boy possessed a ready wit, a retentive memory, and an appetite for study, he was often obliged to turn from his books to the field to earn the money to keep the family. Despite the setbacks, the desire to learn was strong, and in 1835 he entered the seminary at Chieri and after six years of study was ordained priest.



After his ordination, Don Bosco went to Turin where he began his priestly mission. It was one of his duties to visit the prisons, and he was appalled on seeing children confined in these terrible places, abandoned to the most evil influences and with little hope of a life that did not lead them to the gallows. He resolved to devote his life to rescuing these unfortunates. On the 8<sup>th</sup> December 1841, an incident in his church led Don Bosco to befriend a ragged urchin called Bartolomeo Garelli. Don Bosco began teaching Bartolomeo, and soon other street urchins, drawn by the sort of kindness which they had never known, joined the group which Don Bosco called his "Oratory" since prayer was the central feature of the instruction he was giving. By 1846 the number of boys coming for instruction had grown to some four hundred. In the warm weather, Don Bosco took the boys for walks in the countryside where they would have a picnic meal. He realised that music had a great attraction for these wild children, and he organised a band for which he obtained old brass instruments.

Working with Don Borel, he acquired two rooms which he converted into a chapel dedicated to St. Francis de Sales. This gave his Oratory a home.

Economic decline hit the region, and factory closures saw large numbers of boys out of work. Don Bosco began night classes for these lads to give them a basic education. Sadly, he soon had to give up the rooms. There were complaints about the character of the boys using the facilities, and he was obliged to move the Oratory from place to place. His determination to continue his work led to accusations that he was insane, and there were attempts to have him confined in an asylum. Eventually he found a rough shed on the site of which he built an Oratory which had some seven hundred youngsters attending regularly. Don Bosco took lodgings nearby, helped by his mother who sold all she had to support his work. Dormitories were built and the first Salesian home was created.

In time, the municipal authorities began to realise the importance of the work he was doing, and a fund was started to build technical schools and workshops. Later, and with much difficulty, funds were raised to build a church in the Valdocco quarter of Turin, which was consecrated to Our Lady Help of Christians. That same year, fifty priests and teachers who had been assisting Don Bosco formed a society under a common rule which Pope Pius IX approved in 1874.

Don John Bosco died in January 1888. He was declared Venerable in 1907, was beatified in 1929 and canonised in 1934. The Salesian Order now numbers over 16,000 Priests and Brothers working in 128 different countries. In the U.K. there are eight Salesian communities in Glasgow, Bootle, Bolton, Bollington, Cowley, Farnborough, Chertsey and Battersea. He is the patron saint of Christian apprentices, editors, publishers, students, and young children.

## Lee (2024)

This is the textbook example of how a bio-pic should be done. As World War II photo-journalist Lee Miller, lead actress Kate Winslett not only takes on the mantle of the person but becomes actual Lee Miller in body, heart and soul. She will be nominated for Best Actress Oscar and even if she doesn't get it, she deserves to.

The film is set between 1938 and 1945 and focuses on Miller's work as a photojournalist. That is; a photojournalist takes the pictures and also writes the words that accompany those pictures and combines both into a photo-essay which is then published in a magazine. Working for high-end magazine, *Vogue*, Lee Miller had been a fashion model for them in the 1930s but by 1938 had turned to journalism with an emphasis on taking photographs.

The importance of these photo-magazines cannot be overestimated at this time. With no television or social media, the only way images, as opposed to text, could be seen by the folks by home in the UK or US, was by cinema newsreel or in picture magazines. Staying in the UK, during the Blitz and then on through the War, she provided photo-essays of ordinary people, especially women, doing essential war work. As an example, the film has a sequence of Miller photographing a section of women ATS auxiliaries operating a searchlight during the Blitz.

Never backward in coming forward, Miller was driven to get into Europe after D-Day. Accredited to the British Authorities, the answer was no. Realising she was an American citizen, and they said yes, she joined up and ended up in France. Supposed (ho, ho, ho) not to go to the Frontline, off she went. Putting herself in harm's way, she provided cutting-edge copy and pictures for *Vogue*. This was especially true, as she and her male colleague, a *Life* magazine journalist, barrelled into Germany in early 1945, close behind the ongoing advancing allied troops.

This is where she took the photographs for which she is most remembered. One of those is of her having a bath in Hitler's Munich apartment in Adolf's own bath. The other one of more import, is the photograph she took of the dead bodies of camp inmates all piled into wagons on a railway siding. From where we are, 3 to 4 generations distant, in a sense, how awful it is, it can't be other than history. And yet; this film reaches beyond history. It hits raw emotion. How? Simply. As Kate Winslett arrives at the siding and then climbs, as Lee Miller did, onto and into the wagon, the gut understanding comes off the screen and into each of us that this is something that is taking place now and not in retrospect from 2025.

There's clearly a sense, well portrayed by Kate W, that the real Lee Miller was addicted to danger, a junkie. There's also a sense; that of some of what she saw, she wanted to look away but couldn't. Different? Same thing? Whatever; Kate Winslett nails both. Good film.

*John Newland*



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## Seminarian Farvin Gonsalves

**F**arvin is in his third year at Allen Hall Seminary, London. His home parish is Christ the King in Reading.

*He writes:* "This year I'm in the 'Year of Pastoral Theology (YPT)' at Allen Hall. This year used to be called 'EPP' (Extended Pastoral Placement) where a seminarian would spend almost a year in the parish with little contact with the seminary. Since last year this has been changed, now seminarians spend the first three months (Sept-Nov) preparing for a six-month placement beginning on the First Sunday of Advent and ending in June. Also, there is more contact and support from the seminary during the second part. I will be doing this in St Colman's Church in Cosham which is in the Havant Pastoral Area.

In the first part of YPT we prepare for this placement by centring on the four areas of Priestly Formation (Spiritual, Human, Intellectual, Pastoral) with a specific focus on life in a parish.

*Spiritual Formation:* I attended Prayer and Life Workshops which is a lay-led movement that help build the habits of private prayer and meditating on the Bible.

*Intellectual Formation:* Here we look at the Seven Sacraments with a special focus on the graces of each Sacrament available to the people in the parish. We also must prepare a parish presentation that would be delivered in the second part of the year. My presentation is an afternoon of formation for Readers at Mass.

*(Continued on Page 9)*

# The Pope's Intentions



## The Pope's Intention for January

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 January he asks us to pray for the right to an education: Let us pray for migrants, refugees, and those affected by war, that their right to an education, which is necessary to build a better world, might always be respected.

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## Reflection on the Pope's Prayer Intention

Refugees, immigrants and people whose lives have been disrupted by war have lost their homes and the ordinary security of daily life. The adults among them, however, do not commonly focus on themselves and in their own needs but on the future of their children. They long for education, not simply because it gives their children access to a career, but also because it is critical for their development into reflective, resourceful and wise human beings. They fear that the alternative will be barbarism. Although children do need training in the needs to master technology and to find work, they need also an education that reaches beyond their immediate needs. It must also attend to what is central for them to grow into good human beings and will and prepare them to help other people who live with disadvantage.

People driven from their home nations, however, often find such an education hard to find. They have few resources, and they often find resistance in the nations to which they come. Their citizens fear that they will take away their own resources. In response they limit access to the education that will prepare people for work. To provide education is an act of respect and of generosity. In Pope Francis' phrase, it is about building a better world and not restricted to citizens of the host country.

Pope Francis also describes the role of education as to welcome, protect, promote and integrate. These goals go deeper than providing people with the skills and tools that will be useful in the economy. Education invites children into a world larger than the home and allows them to feel welcomed in a world that often rejects them. Education for persons who live with the disadvantages of homelessness or war, too, helps protect children. Schools can be a safe environment in a world of insecurity. This demands that the schools should be protected from targeting by robbers or by the armed forces of parties to war.

Education also promotes human values, including religious belief. In a world marked by insecurity and cultural dislocation, it affirms values and helps communicate them. Finally, it helps to bring together what has been broken apart. It knits the strands of a full human life, by introducing children to the skills needed to contribute to the economy, the values that will help guide them in living an adult life, to live in two cultures, and to serve the good of the community as well as themselves.

*Fr Andrew Hamilton SJ*

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*(Seminararian Farvin Gonsalves Continued from Page 8)*

*Pastoral Formation:* Here we focus on Mission and Evangelisation within a parish using the Genesis Mission method. We had six weeks of formation in this method and then spent about two hours in Battersea Park having conversations with strangers.

*Human Formation:* Here we focus on journalling, self-care, hobbies and maintaining boundaries during our time in the parish. I also enjoyed having cooking lessons and learnt the importance of meal prep and healthy cooking.

Part 2 of YPT is spent in the parish. The focus of this part is to observe and to reflect life in the parish, but also to assist and shadow the parish priest. I am looking forward to my time in St Colman's and what is affectionately known as the 'Happening Havant' Pastoral Area!

Recently, I met with the UCM [Union of Catholic Mothers] foundation in Windsor to share a bit of my journey. The Windsor UCM specially prays for me and I'm very grateful for them. I would like to thank the whole UCM and all others who pray for vocations and support seminarians.

At the end of this academic year, I will be going to St Beuno's for an 8-day Ignatian retreat after which I will be invited to apply for Candidacy to Holy Orders. So, I ask for your prayers for this important stage in my formation. Also, please pray for more vocations to the priesthood and if you know anyone who you think would make a good and holy priest then encourage them to speak to a priest or get in contact with Vocations Promotions Team.

# Seekers Saturdays

**S**eminarian Farvin has touched on the importance of praying for more vocations to the priesthood and religious life. (See pages 8 & 9 of this issue). The Vocations Promotions Team hold regular events inviting people to discern God's will. Known as "Seeker Saturdays", the next series of events will be held at Sacred Heart Church, Fareham, PO16 0NQ, from 11am to 3pm on **25th January, 22nd March, 3rd May and 28th June.**

Pope Francis recently reflected on the significance of discernment, "Discernment is part of life, whether at momentous times involving major decisions or in our daily decisions about small, routine matters," said Pope Francis. "Discernment is demanding and requires listening to the Lord, to oneself, and to others. It is a process that calls for 'prayer, reflection, patient expectation, and, ultimately, courage and sacrifice'." The Pope also highlighted the joy that comes from making good decisions, stressing that "making a good decision, a right decision, brings us much joy." He urged that we especially help young people understand that "being free means risking to embark on a particular path, with wisdom and prudence of course, but also with boldness and a spirit of renunciation, in order to grow and advance in self-giving, and thus to find happiness in loving others in accordance with God's plan."

The days will include Mass, formation, fellowship and food! To find out more about these events, please email the team: [vocations@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:vocations@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)



Fr Austin, Deacon Michael, Teresa and the Editors of the Parish Journal wish all parishioners a happy, peaceful, blessed and fruitful Jubilee Year of Hope.



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## From The School

**A**s we start the new term, and the new year, we can reflect on some wonderful events with which we ended 2024. Advent, a time of waiting and preparation for the coming of Christ, began with Fr Austin celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation with Key Stage 2, to renew our commitment to live in God's grace.

Also, in the season of Advent the school joined hundreds of Catholic schools across the country in the "One Life" initiative "Open for Advent". Each morning, before lessons started, there was a pause for prayer, focussing on the Advent Candle, sharing faith and peace and connecting with children across the country to reflect and hope on the coming of Christ at Christmas.

Throughout Advent classrooms and corridors in school have been beautifully decorated with Advent wreaths and candles, and the "Advent Doors" filled with prayers expressing hopes for the coming year. The Christmas tree was also decorated with messages of love and hope.

After a visit from the charity *Unity*, when the wide-ranging work of the charity was explained, Year 5 busied themselves making Christmas cards for *Unity's* donation packs, given to people who use their help and services. *Unity* is a local charity supporting the community and embodying the spirit of giving and unity. The children hope the cards will bring a smile and some Christmas cheer to those who receive them.

The preparations for Christmas culminated at the end of term with the younger children's telling of the Christmas story, after which a collection was held for *Unity*. Not to be outdone, Key Stage 2 led a memorable Advent Service in the parish church. The service included readings, reflections, and prayers, supported by the singing of the Advent choir.

The Christmas Fayre was a great success thanks to the hard work of the volunteers and the generosity of those who contributed and came to the event. The total raised by events throughout the year was just over £7,000. The funds raised helped fund the Christmas panto, the girls' football kits, new and updated murals in the school and grounds, author visits to inspire the next generation of writers, a greenhouse and many other beneficial "extras". Many thanks to the hardworking people who consistently and generously support the school, its children and staff, and help maintain its aims and values. Thank you!



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## New Catholic Medical School

**S**t Mary's University, Twickenham, recently celebrated the 175th anniversary of its foundation in 1850. In its first century or so, it went from training a small number of teachers who educated the poor in the slums of London to training a large proportion of all the Catholic teachers in our country. If you went to a Catholic school in Britain, it is highly likely that you were taught by at least one alumnus of St Mary's University.

For the last few years, St Mary's has been close to or in the top 50 universities in the country according to the *Sunday Times* league table and consistently ranked in the top ten for the experience of students in a range of national publications and rankings. Academics from St Mary's University regularly participate in important events in Vatican institutions or with international Catholic universities on a range of subjects.

Just as the great need in the 19th century was teachers, today there is a great need for medical practitioners in the Western world. So the next step for St Mary's University is to open a School of Medicine.

But why a school of medicine in a Catholic university? Prominent groups are opposed to faith-based education in Britain today. And yet only 37 per cent of the UK's population have no religion – and many of these may still be believers or have an affinity with Christian ethics. Is there not a case for some pluralism in the medical school sector?

In those areas where the law permits practices which the Church regards as unethical, rights of conscientious objection exist, and it is important that all doctors understand those rights and exercise them in accordance with their conscience. Of course, it is possible that assisted suicide will be added to the list of such practices in the near future.

Vice Chancellor Professor Anthony McClaran stated: "Just as we put the student at the centre, we will also encourage our graduates to put the patient at the centre. The phrase we are using as we develop the curriculum is the "complete doctor". We would like our graduates to be ethically discerning, caring practitioners who consider the medical needs of their patients in their totality.

"Of course, many other medical schools have student-centred medical programmes producing patient-centred doctors. But we hope that the culture of St Mary's University, which has developed over nearly two centuries, will ensure that we excel in these and other respects."

*(Adapted from an article by Professor Anthony McClaran)*

**Please pray for those who have died recently**

Teresa Jane Blackwell

**and for those whose anniversaries occur in January:**

James Mackrell, Kathleen Stefano, Margaret McKeever, Shelagh Barber, Nichola James, Arnold Baxter, Clive Baxter, Lilly Irwin, Mary Scott, Jack MacDonald, Thomas William Bush, Mary Glasspool, Albert Glasspool, Adelee Romersa, John Townsend, Eleanor MacPherson, Patrick Campbell, Edward Collins, John O'Donnell, Jim Hand, Barbara Barton, John Heyes, Charlotte Kempster, Kevin Murray, Kathleen Sullivan, Ellen Philomena Shepherd, William Randall, Clare Jeans, Margaret Murrane, Joseph Blundell, Sheila Lewis, Brian Doherty, Mr Balzic, Maureen Mansfield, Ronald Talbut, Kamil Lassow, Bridget O'Haire, Dorothy Rimell, Pauline Myers, Annette Muerelli, Marion Butcher, Peter O'Reilly, George Watkins, Tom Saunders, Earnest Graham, William Thompson, Alexander Mutton, Fr Nico Alleman SMM, John Morgan, Hannah Day, Raymond Donovan, Margaret Chase, Victoria Laughler, John Smith, Robert Newth, Sandor Zalavolgy, Michael Murray, Mary Corr, Ivor Sellors, Leslie Whewell, Marjorie Jones, Bernadette Thorpe, Louie Collins, Michael Fitzgibbon, Mary Ravenscroft, Patrick Adams, Edmund Smith, Marion Giddens, Tony Clemas, Patricia O'Hare, Ruth Parsloe, Kathleen Stafford, Kenneth Patterson, John Boyton, Rose Drugan, Edwin Bystranowski, Mary Comerford, Charles Holdway, Edward Waters, Walter Keen, Rudolf Biazio, Myrtle Hall, Thomas Lockyear, Thomas Davis, Jonathan Cronin, Gerard Denault, John Graham, Alan Ramsell, Miriam White, Dorothy Morton, Raymond Stevens, Archbishop Paul Verdzekov, Monique Regnier, Anna Samuels, Father Thomas Grundy, Bernadette Thorpe, Sandor Szereres, Teresa Johnson, Fr. Francis McAlindin, Fr. Colm Kelleher, Irene Coveney, Margaret Leach, Marjorie Pontet-Picolomini, Fr. Livinus Donohoe, Ivor Roach, Bernard Payne, Lettice Plowden, Carmen Suanes, Mary Sale, Archbishop Serge Miot, John Dunne, Mrs Pam Brown (Snr), Maria Borra, Margaret Mears, Esme Kelly, Eddie Flood, Christine Walton, Sheila Scott, Fr Peter Sprague, Ann Crozier, Kathleen Ayling, Sheila Allen, Christopher Kennelly, Ray Chase, Mieczslaw Satala, André Mussert, Penny Mussert, Lena Pietrzak, Bob Munnery, Joan Bruce, Paulette Jakob, Peter Mullaley, Andrew Ross, James Hayes, Fred Brasier, Jean Charlwood, Priscilla Evans, Margaret Fuller, John Parsons, Sheila Barber, Mary Smith, Nicholas Woodward, Rosa O'Reilly, Tim Sellors, Albert Bullough, Eve Cook, Valerie Harvey, Mabel Glenn, Michael Pearce, John Wilson, Rosemary Johnson-Ferguson, Jim Cullen, Claire Treneman, Gerald Woodward, Tony Hughes, Audrey Francis, Winnie O'Grady, Pauline Richards, Angela Ramsell, Antoinette Thomas, Jean Sherlock, Therese Ayres, Jean Arnold Jones, Paul Bond, Peter Chen, Rosemary Gallagher, Josephine Kane, Lyvette Hicks, Teresa Thorpe, Emmanuel Scicluna, Judith Polley, Collette McIvor and Donald Walker

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

Esmé Coveney, Rita Lane, Margaret Williams, Patrick Arnold, Sheila Muir, Mary Oak, Bernard Ivinson, Fiona Hilleard, Tony Fabian, Helen O'Connell, Douglas Manning, Victor Trapani, Diane Mahoney, Catherine Ash, Sile Monnelly, Bill Jago, Linda Creaven, Rose Bull, Wendy Rawlings, Paul Owens, Tom O'Regan, John Baxter, June Saunders and Jane O'Kelly.

*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 8th & 9th of February. Contributions should be with the editors by Monday 3rd February. Please leave contributions at the Presbytery or email them to: [stjohnsjournal@googlemail.com](mailto:stjohnsjournal@googlemail.com)