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# The JOURNAL

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## Urbi et Orbi

Since the 13<sup>th</sup> Century the Pope, as Bishop of Rome and Leader of the Universal Church, has given a papal blessing, “Urbi et Orbi”, to the city and the world, notably at Christmas and at Easter. The address is customarily given from the central balcony of St Peter’s Basilica, and in modern times is broadcast to the whole world and watched by millions of people.



The central core of the message usually reflects major global concerns and challenges – such as war or poverty – but in a way which reflects hope and optimism. Pope Leo’s first pascal address since his election was delivered on Easter Sunday following an open-air Mass in St Peter’s Square. Not surprisingly a central theme of the address was a plea for peace.

The Pope urged world leaders to reject violence and to pursue peace. He focused on Easter as “the victory of life over death, of light over darkness, of love over hatred,” he said. “In the light of Easter, let us allow ourselves to be amazed by Christ! Let us allow our hearts to be transformed by his immense love for us! Let those who have weapons lay them down! Let those who have the power to unleash wars choose peace! Not a peace imposed by force, but through dialogue! Not with the desire to dominate others, but to encounter them!”

Pope Leo also highlighted the danger of society becoming indifferent towards suffering, what Pope Francis had termed a “globalisation of indifference”. He claimed that we are becoming so accustomed to violence that we are resigning ourselves to it and becoming indifferent to the deaths of thousands of people, indifferent to the repercussions of hatred and division, to the economic and social consequences such hatred and violence produces.

He again quoted Pope Francis who one year ago reminded us: “What a great thirst for death, for killing, we witness each day in the many conflicts raging in different parts of the world!” Pope Leo went on to say that we are all afraid of death, and our fear leads us to turn away, to prefer not to look, yet Saint Augustin urges us “If you fear death, love the resurrection!” So we too should love the resurrection which reminds us that evil does not have the last word, because it has been defeated by the Risen Lord.

In the Mass we hear: “I leave you peace; I give you my peace. Not as the world gives it, I give it to you” (*Jn* 14:27). The peace that Jesus gives us is, “not merely the silence of weapons, but the peace that touches and transforms the heart of each one of us! Let us allow ourselves to be transformed by the peace of Christ! Let us make heard the cry for peace that springs from our hearts!” The Pope then invited everyone to join him in a prayer vigil for peace which he will celebrate in Saint Peter’s Basilica on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April.

He concluded by urging us all to abandon the desire for conflict, domination, and power and implore the Lord to grant peace to the world, and he gave his blessing and wished us all “Happy Easter”.

# Women's Leadership in Times of Crisis

**T**he Prefect of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, Cardinal George Koovakad, addressing a conference on “*Women, Leadership, and Dialogue: Bridges Between Knowledge, Cultures, and Society*” held in the Convent of Santa Maria in Rome, spoke of what he saw as the vital role of women in fostering dialogue and cultural cooperation in a world ravaged by conflict and division.

The event was attended by diplomats, political leaders, academics, and civic representatives. Noting that this year Lent coincides with the Muslim observance of Ramadan, something that only happens every thirty-three years, Cardinal Koovakad felt there was particular relevance to discussing intercultural relations. He referred to Pope Leo's declaration that in the ashes of Ash Wednesday we can see “the weight of a burning world”, a world of destruction mirroring the weakening of international law, degradation of the environment, and an erosion of critical thinking and wisdom. The world must not stop among the ashes but rise up and rebuild.

The rebuild requires the leaders of the world to seek a new direction. While modern warfare employs technology to create more advanced weapons, peace requires what the Cardinal described as a deeper “disarmament of the heart, mind, and life.” Peace calls for leadership formed through education and dialogue between cultures, and the participation of society as a whole.

The Cardinal went on to highlight the vital contribution women have made throughout history in the pursuit of peace, from Saint Catherine of Siena, who in the 14<sup>th</sup> century mediated between powerful leaders, to Eleanor Roosevelt who played a key part in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Wangari Maathai. Maathai, the founder of the Green Belt Movement focussing on environmental issues and women's rights, who once said: “There comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness... a time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other. That time is now.”

Un-named, unacclaimed, are also the thousands of Palestinian and Israeli women involved in peace movements in their communities. The leadership of women can, said the Cardinal, often bring distinctive qualities which are valuable in times of crisis. Women demonstrate courage in rebuilding bridges, showing empathy toward the suffering of others, and demonstrating the ability to confront complex social challenges with determination and resilience.

Women, he said, often demonstrate a capacity to overcome prejudice, involve both allies and adversaries in dialogue, and promote justice, care for the environment, and the common good. Their resilience allows them to face social divisions, poverty, and the anxieties of their communities while nurturing hope and wisdom.

Many of yesterday's solutions are no longer adequate for today's complex problems. There is a need to rediscover the world's identity as a single family sharing a common planet. He saw promoting and valuing the original qualities of women's leadership as being not only a matter of justice but as a “guarantee for the future.”

The Cardinal concluded by stressing the importance of collaboration among all people. “Building a future of peace, fraternity, and solidarity requires the commitment and synergy of all hands and all hearts,” he said. “Only together can we overcome prejudice, sow seeds of hope, and contribute to a more humane and fraternal world.”



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## Bishop Visit to Allen Hall

**L**ast month, Bishop Philip paid a visit to Allen Hall in Chelsea, the Westminster Diocesan Seminary, to visit our Portsmouth diocesan students who are studying there: Francis Ezeani, Farvin Gonslaves, Nathan King and Adam Trzebinski. There are two other students there too from our Diocese: Brother Edmund from the Sacred Heart Oratory in Bournemouth and Brother Matthew from Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight.

The bishop arrived at Allen Hall in the early afternoon and first met up with Canon John O'Leary the Rector before meeting our students for a chat one by one. He was impressed by their remarkable zeal and real desire to serve, and he felt that this bodes well for the future.

He asks us all to pray for them that they will keep at their work of formation and remain faithful.

Bishop Philip then joined the seminarians and the whole house for a Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction, after which he took our diocesan students out to supper.

“I always enjoy visiting Allen Hall,” said the bishop, “as it brings back for me many happy memories of my two years there studying philosophy before I was sent on to Rome for theology.”

Please pray for all our seminarians that they will keep at their work of formation, and also to pray for more vocations in our Diocese.



# Cardinal Radcliffe in Ukraine

In the midst of the on-going war in Ukraine there are still people willing to visit that country and to offer support to its Church and its people. Last month, Dominican Cardinal Timothy Radcliffe, who has strong family connections to our parish, made just such a visit.

Interviewed by Vatican News, the Cardinal said he was happy to visit Ukraine, a country he had first visited thirty years ago. He had been invited by his brother Dominicans, and he said when he visits a country where there is suffering, he always learns something. He had not come with a ready-made message, but to listen. What one has to say should, he said, “first be born from listening to people,” so he had not come so much as to speak as to hear – something which he said was at the heart of synodality: “we come as those who listen – listening to God and listening to one another.” He had come to be with his brothers and sisters as he was convinced that they had much to teach him.

On his arrival in Kyiv Cardinal Radcliffe was greeted by Bishop Vitalii Kryvytskyi of Kyiv, and he then visited a memorial to soldiers who have died in the war before he led a two-day retreat, taking The Lord’s Prayer as his theme. He had chosen the theme because in times of suffering and war, prayer is vitally necessary. The ‘Our Father’ is the greatest of all prayers, the Lord’s Prayer. Jesus Himself prayed it as He was going up to Jerusalem to suffer and to die. He prayed it looking ahead—to the moment when He would be in the Garden of Gethsemane. Therefore, for each of us, especially when we face suffering, the Lord’s Prayer is a great gift. The Cardinal reflected on the first days of his journey that there is the need for Christians to pray and hold on to hope in the face of the uncertainty and suffering that comes with war.

During his visit the Cardinal spent time with his fellow Dominicans, as well as sharing liturgy with Greek Catholics, and seeing the work of the Religious Sisters who look after single mothers, children, farmers and others whose lives have been devastated by the war. He was deeply moved by his visit to the military hospital tending wounded soldiers.

His journeys took him to several cities, including Odesa, Kharkiv, and Kherson which is on the front line. Wherever he went he found great courage and a determination to endure and rebuild in the future.

The Cardinal reflected that we see more and more violence everywhere; Europe, the Middle East, Africa. Now, more than ever, he said, we need a Christian witness that peace is possible, that war is not inevitable. In a time of war, we are called to be people of hope.

“I would say that the main message of Christians today is hope. Our Sacrament of the Eucharist was instituted at a moment when it seemed that no hope remained—during the Last Supper, when only death and violence lay ahead. It was precisely then that Jesus gave us Himself. And this is our great Sacrament of hope. Therefore, my only message to the people of Ukraine or anywhere war continues is this: we place our hope in the Lord. His peace will ultimately prevail.”

Cardinal Radcliffe’s book, “The Seven Last Words” – which focuses on Christ’s last seven phrases on the cross – has been published in Ukrainian. Asked how he would describe it, he replied: “This small book is closely connected with the theme of synodality—with learning to listen to one another. In times of violence, there is a temptation to close our ears. But we must listen. In our communities, as human beings, we listen to one another—especially when we disagree. It is precisely in disagreement that we can learn from one another. Our world is filled with slogans in which people are not truly trying to think or to open themselves to others. Instead, God’s call is to open our minds and hearts.

That is why, in a time of war, the synodal path is so important. During the consistory in Rome in January, all the cardinals gathered together, and the first thing Pope Leo wanted was for us to listen to one another so that he could hear us. I believe this is a great gift of the Church to a world filled with violence. We listen not only with our ears and our minds, but also with our imagination. Can we imagine why others think differently from us?”



Cardinal Radcliffe with Dominican and Basilian Fathers in Kharkiv

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## Pilgrimage to Turin and Assisi

This summer, the diocese is planning a pilgrimage to Turin in northern Italy and Assisi in central Italy to learn about and experience the lives of our two newest saints - St Carlo Acutis and St Pier Giorgio Frassati.

The pilgrimage will leave from Gatwick on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July flying to Turin, and will return to Heathrow via Perugia on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July.

Pilgrims will start in Turin where St Pier Giorgio Frassati was born, lived and died at the age of just 24 in 1925. The group will visit his parish church and the family summer house in the foothills of the alps very close to the Marian shrine at Opora. There will be an opportunity to visit the chapel in the Royal Palace where The Shroud is located.

Travelling by coach, the pilgrims will go to Assisi to visit the tomb of St Carlo Acutis. St Carlo is very much a modern day saint, noted for his skill in using the internet to spread the Good News of the Gospels. He died in 2006 when just 15 years old.

Included in the cost of the pilgrimage are return flights, accommodation in central Turin and Assisi with breakfast and dinner, local transfers in and around Turin and Assisi, visit to the Royal Palace Chapel to see The Shroud, long distance coach journey with stops en route, a visit to the Marian Shrine in Opora, and visit to the tomb of St Carlo Acutis in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore.

For further details, including how to reserve a place, please contact Canon PJ Smith by email at [fatherpj@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:fatherpj@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

# St John Baptist de la Salle

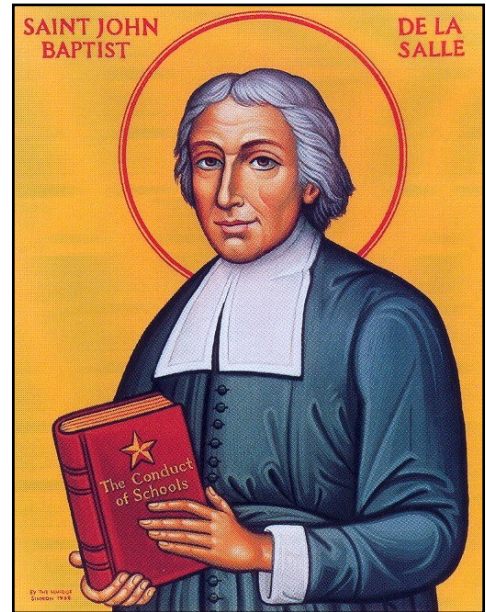
**J**ohn Baptist De La Salle was born in Rheims in 1651, the eldest son of wealthy parents. He received the tonsure at the age of eleven and by the time he was sixteen he had been appointed Canon of Rheims Cathedral. He completed his theological studies, despite having to take responsibility for administering his family's affairs on the death of his parents, was ordained a priest in 1678 and received a doctorate in theology two years later.

John Baptist had been born in to wealth and luxury, but he was keenly aware of the desperate poverty in which the majority of the people lived. Most families could barely feed their children, never mind educate them. Moved by the plight of the poor who seemed "so far from salvation", he determined to put his own talents and education at the service of the children "often left to themselves and badly brought up". He renounced his position as Canon, abandoned his family's privileged way of life and formed the community that became known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

His novel idea of forming teachers into a community of consecrated laymen in a new form of religious community dedicated to conducting free education "together and by association", met with considerable opposition from the ecclesiastical authorities. The educational establishment were equally hostile, especially as the de la Salle system offered free education irrespective of ability to pay, and this threatened their very livelihood. Despite this, De La Salle and his Brothers succeeded in creating a network of high quality schools throughout France that employed well qualified teachers with a sense of mission and vocation. The schools offered instruction in the vernacular, grouped students according to ability and achievement, integrated secular subjects with religious instruction and actively sought to involve the parents.

As well as introducing Sunday courses for young working men and developing one of the first institutions in France dedicated to the care and rehabilitation of delinquents, De La Salle pioneered programmes for the training of lay teachers. His ideas spread throughout France and, after his death, continued to spread across the globe. The De La Salle teacher training college at Hopwood Hall in Manchester for many years played a considerable role in providing Catholic teachers for Catholic schools in England and Wales, and De La Salle schools are to be found throughout our country and in some eighty different countries around the world. Through his example of how to teach and care for young people, how to meet failure and frailty with compassion, how to affirm, strengthen and heal, he was an inspiration for those who wished to devote their lives to the field of education.

His dedication, devotion to duty and austerity exhausted him and he died aged sixty-seven on Good Friday 1719. He was declared a Saint in 1900 and in recognition of his pioneering work, his way of life and his writings, in 1950 he was made Patron saint of all those who work in education. His feast day is April 7<sup>th</sup>, the day on which he died.



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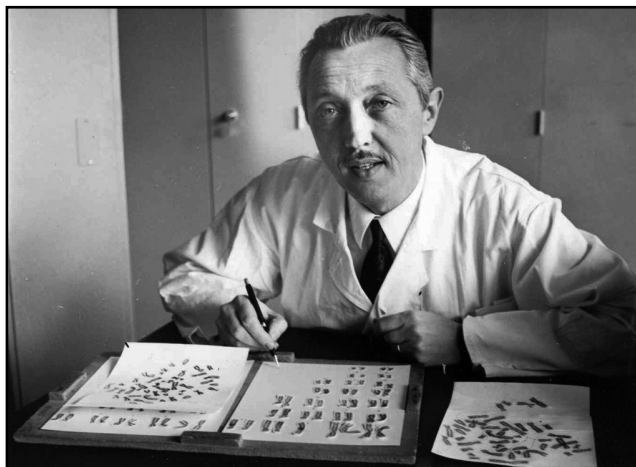
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# Holy See Calls for Increased Inclusion of People with Down Syndrome

**A**rchbishop Ettore Balestrero, Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, speaking at an event organised by the Jérôme Lejeune Foundation for World Down Syndrome Day 2026, gave a solemn reminder that : "Persons with Down syndrome are more than a diagnosis, more than a condition, and certainly more than the limits others may imagine. All of them, like all of us, possess the same inherent dignity and sacred value, intentionally and lovingly imprinted by the Creator from the very first moment of conception."



The Venerable Jerome Lejeune

The theme for this year's Day, which took place on Saturday, 21 March, was "From Loneliness to Inclusion: Valuing Human Genetic Diversity to Enable the Effective Realization of Rights for Persons with Down Syndrome."

Archbishop Balestrero stressed that persons with Down syndrome have the same fundamental rights like everyone else. Inclusion, he said, is not "merely a matter of providing services or accommodations," but rather of "recognizing persons with Down syndrome as full members of our communities."

In an impassioned appeal, the Nuncio called on the participants and organizers of the event to be encouraged to reaffirm unwavering efforts to promote and defend the inherent dignity, fundamental rights, and value of all persons at every stage of life.

"Discriminatory and eugenic practices linked to prenatal screening and the selective termination of pregnancies targeting babies diagnosed with Down syndrome," he said, "must be firmly rejected." He also acknowledged and thanked the many professionals and institutions around the world that are committed to the continuing care for persons with Down syndrome and their families.

The Archbishop reaffirmed the importance of love, humanity and heartfelt concern. "A system of care and support may be operationally perfect, but if it is heartless, it becomes cold and impersonal," he said, recalling when Pope Leo XIV reminded that the quality of human life is not dependent on achievements, but on love. A person's value should not be measured by "utility or performance", but by the simple fact of being human.

He concluded: "May our collective efforts continue to build a culture of life and humanity where every person with Down syndrome is recognized as unique and unrepeatable, and welcomed with equal dignity and respect."

The organisers of the event, The Jerome Lejeune Foundation, was established in 1996 to continue and develop the work of paediatrician and geneticist Jerome Lejeune whose work on chromosome abnormalities led to a greater understanding of Down Syndrome. Lejeune's work earned him the award of the first Kennedy Prize in 1962.

Lejeune's work on chromosome abnormalities paved the way for research into how changes in gene copy numbers could cause disease but, to his dismay, the development of prenatal diagnosis of such abnormalities also led to abortions of affected pregnancies. As a devout Catholic, Lejeune was greatly distressed by these developments, and he fought strongly for the anti-abortion cause. He strongly opposed the use of amniocentesis prenatal testing for selective and elective abortion.

Jerome Lejeune died of cancer in 1994. A cause for beatification was opened, and the Catholic Church gave Lejeune the title of Servant of God. In 2021 Pope Francis declared Lejeune's heroic virtue and he was declared Venerable.

## Andover Chamber Choir Concert



On 18<sup>th</sup> April, Andover Chamber Choir is celebrating the spring season with their concert, 'Thine be the Glory: Choral Favourites for an Eastertide Celebration'.

While Easter Sunday may have passed, the fifty days of Eastertide will still be in full flow, and the choir's latest programme is designed to keep that flame of joy burning bright. "Easter Sunday is the start of a whole season of celebration and renewal," says Musical Director, Lucy Hole. "I wanted a programme that captures the feeling of spring arriving and the continued joy and importance of the resurrection."

The concert aims to showcase the diverse textures of the Easter story - from quiet moments of individual devotion to the rousing collective joy of full choir and organ. The programme features choral favourites and organ classics, celebrating composers who have defined the British choral tradition. These include Vaughan Williams' 'O clap your hands', Widor's 'Toccat', the world-famous 'Hallelujah Chorus', and the iconic hymn from which the concert takes its name, Handel's 'Thine be the Glory'.

The concert takes place at 7.30 pm Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> April at St Michael and All Angels' Church, West Andover, SP10 3BB. Tickets are £15 on the door or £12 in advance from The Lights (in person and online) or through choir members. Under 16s are admitted free. Interval refreshments are included in the ticket price.

Proceeds are in aid of Andover Young Carers, providing vital support and respite to young carers in Andover and the surrounding areas.




# THINE BE THE GLORY

*Choral Favourites for an Eastertide Celebration*

7.30pm Saturday 18th April 2026  
St Michael and All Angels Church, West Andover

Tickets: £15 on the door, £12 in advance, under 16s free. Refreshments included.  
Available at The Lights, Andover (in person and online) and through choir members.  
Proceeds in aid of Andover Young Carers



[www.andoverchamberchoir.org.uk](http://www.andoverchamberchoir.org.uk)

## Foreign Debt Perpetuates Poverty and Inequality

Archbishop Ettore Balestrero is the Holy See's Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer to the United Nations. In a recent regular session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, the Nuncio spoke out about the effects of state debt on developing countries, and how the situation perpetuated cycles of poverty and inequality. Calling for efforts to overcome the worldwide inequalities exacerbated by foreign debt, he condemned the current situation as a plague on the most vulnerable.

The archbishop noted that funds desperately needed for "basic necessities such as food, clean water, health, housing and social protection" are being diverted to servicing the debts of the poorest countries. "When debt burdens become crushing, States face impossible choices: repay creditors or fulfil basic obligations to their people,"

This was, he said, not simply an economic dilemma but a profound crisis, both in terms of morality and of basic human rights. Excessive debt reduces fiscal choices. Imposes austerity, creating that cycle of poverty and inequality which affects the nation's ability to deliver economic, social and cultural rights.

There was a need for debtor countries to adopt appropriate fiscal systems that follow "the principles of good governance, transparency, accountability and responsibility." Public finances should be based on trust, and when taxation and public expenditure are seen as fair and directed toward the common good, "social cohesion and voluntary compliance are fostered," allowing States to expand their capacity to mobilise resources.

Creditors must ensure that lending practices respect human dignity and do not increase poverty or hardship, and "when conflicts arise, human rights obligations must take precedence over debt repayment." He added that: "illegal debts, tax competition and predatory lending erode the social contract and hinder States' capacities to meet core obligations."

Archbishop Balestrero quoted Pope Leo XIV saying: "Every effort should be made to overcome the global inequalities [...] that are carving deep divides between continents, countries and even within individual societies."



# *Cinema's Miracles and Easter Sunday*

**A**s Cinema is a visual format and since the Church defines a miracle as, “A sign or wonder, such as healing or the control of nature, which can only be attributed to divine power”, then film can be the *least* imperfect medium to illustrate a miracle to human eyes. There are two films, when taken together, that clearly argue this. These two films are *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1998) and *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973).

Directed by Martin Scorsese and with leading actor Willem Dafoe as Jesus, *Last Temptation* is not an adaptation of Scripture as such but based on a novel by Greek author Nikos Kazantzakis. This film emphasises the “control of nature” side of miracle by focusing on Jesus's first and last miracles prior to the Easter Weekend. These are Cana and Lazarus. At the Wedding at Cana, when Jesus is asked to help, all the Director has Jesus do is to glance (nothing more) towards the water jars. And it's done – water into wine - simply with Jesus thinking it to happen.

Again, and with the last miracle before the Passion, it's about Jesus having control over nature and the natural processes of both physical life and physical death. Lazarus is dead and four days dead and buried. In that Mediterranean climate of about mid-thirties centigrade, decomposition would have started very soon. So, as the stone is moved from Lazarus's tomb, people (including Jesus) visibly gag from the smell of Lazarus's putrefying corpse emanating from within. This guy is truly dead. Then Jesus raises him back to mortal life by simply calling Lazarus out from the tomb. Yet in the future, having lived further years, Lazarus will again physically die.

This brings us to Easter Sunday and the Resurrection of Jesus. Surprisingly enough, it's *Jesus Christ Superstar*, the musical by composer Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyricist Tim Rice that makes this both tangible and believable. Directed by Norman Jewison and shot on location in Israel, the film gives a sense of physical immediacy that works. It ain't 33 AD but it feels like it could be. Crafted and honed by masters of their craft, this film concentrates on Jesus's final weeks of ministry and then the entrance into Jerusalem and Good Friday. However, it's the closing sequence on screen that cuts to Easter Sunday and of Jesus as now risen that involves us here.

This sequence opens with the viewer looking down at Jesus a small distance away. Jesus has his back to us. His robe is torn. He is dirty and dishevelled and we see the marks of the scouring upon Him. Slowly, He turns towards us, moving in an anti-clockwise motion. As He turns towards us, when Jesus gets to about the 10 o'clock position His image begins to change and morph. By when Jesus has fully turned to look at us, face on, it is plain that He has been raised from the dead and is glorified. His skin is glowing, His hair is glistening clean and He is wearing a snow-white robe and His entire person is lit and made radiant by soft-focus spotlights. Working through both films, it's all come together in this single final image. Can't be bettered.

*John Newland*

*(Editors' note: The film “The Last Temptation of Christ”, was controversial and regarded by many as containing material which was nothing short of heretical. In his article John has focussed on just two miracles in the film, cinematic moments which combine and contrast with the miracle of Easter itself. In the light of this we hope that none of our readers feel offended by references to The Last Temptation of Christ. There are several interesting pieces to be found on the internet reflecting differing views of the film.)*

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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.



# Diocesan Pastoral Council

Last month the Diocesan Pastoral Council held the first of two meetings planned for this year on the subject of synodality. Some fifty people from across the diocese gathered for the Council meeting at St Peter's Pastoral Centre in Winchester.

The day began with two presentations, one from Abbot Hugh Allan, O. Praem, the superior of the Norbertine Priory of Our Lady of Sorrows in Peckham. Abbot Allan, was born into a Presbyterian family and converted to Catholicism in his teens. After training to be a teacher at St Mary's Catholic University in Twickenham, he joined the "White Canons" and was ordained to the priesthood in 2001.

The Abbot is also Director of Mission at the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, and his talk was about synodality as a spirituality, an approach, an attitude that is open to being led by the Holy Spirit and is inclusive of everyone.

The second speaker was Father Bernard Barrett. He has been parish priest of St Francis de Sales with St Mary Magdalene in the Northampton Diocese for over thirty years. He spoke of how the vision for his parish has changed during those years and how the faithful are involved in its life and mission.

Round table discussions, following the synodal method, then engaged the participants as they looked at how synodality might be more effectively lived in the families, schools and parishes of our diocese.

The Diocesan Pastoral Council will have a second meeting on the subject in November, where they will focus on more practical, rather than general, issues.

Bishop Philip expressed his thanks to the diocesan Synodal Team, under Fr Gaston, who had led the day.

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## Life in the Spirit

Judith Aylmer of the Portsmouth Diocesan Charismatic Renewal team invites you to a series of mainly online seminars on "Life in the Spirit". The seminars start on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> of April and will run until Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June. Each session begins at 7.15pm.

These seminars, which will be run by the diocesan Charismatic Renewal team, are described as "a guided, community-based journey into a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit, rooted in Catholic teaching and Charismatic Renewal". There will be a series of talks, discussions and prayer sessions, designed to help you experience a renewed relationship with God through the Holy Spirit.

The seminars are designed to help the participants understand God's love, rediscover salvation and the core Gospel message, experience new life in Christ, become open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and learn to grow and live a Spirit-filled Christian life.

The team have secured world-renowned speakers including Fr Chris Thomas, Daniella Stephens, Gerry penfold, Ros Powell and Allegra Mutanda.

While most sessions are online, there will be a "Holy Spirit Day" which will be run on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May from after 9.30am Mass until 2.15pm at St Bede's, Basingstoke.

For further information and to find out how to register, please contact Judith Aylmer on [charisportsmouth@gmail.com](mailto:charisportsmouth@gmail.com)

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## New Parish Registration for Everyone

The Diocese is now using a new system called ChurchSuite, to manage our parishioner database and our communications like the newsletter. To do this we need to renew all the information we hold about parishioners.

To ensure you remain registered as a parishioner and to continue to receive communications from the parish, including the newsletter and journal, please make sure you have filled out a new Registration Form.

There are separate adult and child registration forms. You can use the QR codes on your smart phone to bring up the form, and it's a very simple form. Or you can use the link on the website to register.

We understand if you are not smartphone or internet users - we can provide a hard copy form, but the idea is to reduce the work needed to enter the details on a database. Maybe you have a friend of a relative who could help you complete the form? (The old database had 1,839 entries and many details were out of date!)

As a 'last resort' do contact the Parish Office and we will endeavour to help you.

Thank you in advance for your help and co-operation.

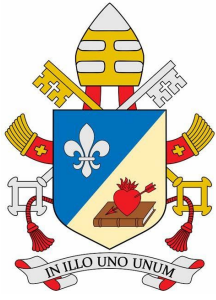
**You will only receive the newsletter and Journal by email if you have registered!**

### Adult Parishioner Registration Form



### Child Parishioner Registration Form





# The Pope's Prayer Intention for April

At the beginning of each year, the Holy Father sets out the intentions for which he asks us to pray. For this month of April he asks us to pray for priests in crisis: Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the accompaniment they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer.

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## Reflection on the Pope's Prayer Intention

**I**n my ministry with the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network USA office, I preach retreats occasionally for clergy and seminarians. I'm able to offer them reflections from the first part of the Spiritual Exercises where St. Ignatius of Loyola invites us to consider our sinfulness and need for a Saviour: we are all "sinners, yet deeply loved."

I share in those retreats that at times some people don't think of priests in this way: as human beings like everyone else, with all of our weaknesses. In other words, people can tend to put us on pedestals. At other times, due to the clear wrongdoing of some clergy, people can tend to lump all priests into the category of ne'er-do-wells. But, I conclude, neither characterization is true or helpful. We should neither be put on pedestals just because we are priests, nor looked down upon just because we are priests. We also are sinners, yet deeply loved by the Lord.

This month Pope Leo wisely invites us to pray for priests in moments of vocational crisis. He knows very well, as a priest and a bishop, now the Bishop of Rome, that we as priests face challenging moments: spiritually, emotionally, physically, or some combination of these.

At times of difficulty in my own life and priesthood, I've been so grateful for the prayers of others, the support of good practices like speaking regularly with a spiritual director, and having friends in faith among both the clergy and the laity who support me and with whom I can talk honestly.

There are certainly tremendous blessings, even privileges, of being a priest. But it can also—at times—feel like a lonely and challenging vocation. Let's pray this month together with Pope Leo, for all priests who are struggling: that they might let themselves be drawn closer to Jesus who loves them unconditionally, and receive healing and strength to continue bringing the word of God and the sacraments to all the faithful. Who, together with them, are sinners—yet deeply loved.

*Father Phil Hurley, SJ, who is the National Director of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network-USA*

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## Support for Young Priests

**I**t is good to know that there is within our diocese a support group for young priests. Those priests from our Diocese who have been ordained for 7 years or less meet regularly for fellowship, prayer and formation. Mgr. David Hopgood, Vicar for Clergy, and his team coordinates the group which had the latest meeting last month at Sacred Heart, Waterlooville.

The meetings last from 10.30 till lunch. On this occasion, Bishop Philip was asked to give a short address to the group. He chose the topic of 'The Conversion of England.' He recalled the inspiring example of St. Edmund Campion, who in 1581, after but one year of ministry in England, was arrested, tried and sentenced to death by being hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn.

The bishop said that when he was a youngster, people read a lot about the martyrs of England and Wales and regularly prayed for the conversion of England. Since then, he said, we have had rising tides of secularism, mass immigration and a decline in church attendance, all of which seems to make the conversion of England, however laudable an intention, seem a long way off. Yet, he argued, that while we must still pray and hope for the conversion of England, it is urgent here and now that we pray and work for the evangelisation of England: that we ourselves are more deeply evangelised (*ad intra*) and that we seek to evangelise and welcome all those with whom we come into contact (*ad extra*).

Indeed, he said, at this time there are some positive developments. Although attendance at Mass in our Diocese has plummeted – in 1962, there were over 70,000 at Sunday Mass whereas today it is just 30,000 and that, despite much immigration - there are nevertheless new pockets and centres of lively faith among young adults, for example those who belong to the Syro-Malabar community, the Cath-Socs of our universities, those who like the Latin Mass, members of the various charismatic prayer-groups, and others.

More, in many of our parishes, there are young adults who want to be received into the Church, often white -Anglo males in their 20s. All of this is corroborated by a report called "The Quiet Revival" from the UK Bible Society. "The young," said Bishop Philip, "are attracted to the Catholic Church because of its 2,000 year tradition, its clear teaching and challenging moral code, its solemn liturgy and its authoritative structure. All of this can give us hope and a new direction to our pastoral approach and method".

The bishop asks: "Please pray for our under 7s priests that they may grow in their faith, remain faithful to the Lord and minister happily in our parishes for many years to come."

# Vocations and Good Shepherd Sunday

**G**ood Shepherd Sunday will be celebrated on Sunday 26th of April. To mark the 63<sup>rd</sup> World Day of Prayer for Vocations, Pope Leo has released a powerful message inviting the faithful to slow down, listen, and discover the quiet places where God speaks. The pope's message is *The Interior Discovery of God's Gift*. **It asks** what if your vocation isn't something you choose, but a gift already waiting within you? You might just discover that God has been calling you all along.

Christ, the Good Shepherd, calls each of us, not with pressure but with love. Through prayer, silence, and trust, we can begin to recognize His voice and uncover a unique purpose shaped just for us.

There is no one-size-fits-all sort of journey, instead there is an adventure calling each of us to our vocation, be it in marriage, priesthood, or consecrated life. Every vocation grows through relationship with Christ, deepens through trust, and blossoms through daily faithfulness.

For the full text of the Pope's message go to: <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/vocations/documents/20260316-messaggio-vocazioni.html>

Pope Leo XIV recently called for the creation of communities where young people can feel accepted, listened to, and encouraged in their vocational discernment. The regular gathering for Seekers is for exactly that purpose. If you are discerning if the Lord is calling you to the priesthood, diaconate or religious life, then spending time with like-minded people can be really beneficial to any vocational journey.

The next Seeker Saturday will be on **Saturday; 25th April 11am-3pm, at Sacred Heart Church, Fareham. PO16 ONQ**  
The time together includes prayer, discussion, Mass, Adoration and lunch too.

To find out more about this regular event or to enquiry about attending (as booking is required for the hospitality which is offered) please email: [vocations@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:vocations@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

## Please pray for our Seminarians

April 2026



Rev. Jack Ryan  
Fisher House,  
Cambridge



Owen Dugan  
St Mary's, Oscott



Farvin Gonsalves  
Allen Hall, London



Francis Ezeani  
Allen Hall, London



Adam Trzebiński  
Allen Hall, London



Nathan King  
Allen Hall, London



Sean Barnes  
Pontifical Beda College,  
Rome



Ryan Hawkes  
Venerable English  
College, Rome



John Ware  
Sacred Heart House,  
Fareham



Rev. Diego Hoyos  
St Joseph's & St Edmund's  
Parish, Southampton

## Lord, send us many holy Priests



[www.portsmouthvocations.org](http://www.portsmouthvocations.org)



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# From the School

The school community came together to mark the beginning of Lent with Mass celebrated by Canon Chris. The liturgy, prepared by pupils across the year groups, reflected on the meaning of Lent as a season of repentance, renewal, and hope.

For Year 3, who were preparing to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time, Canon Chris led a special service to help them understand the importance of the Sacrament. He spoke to them about God's love, mercy and readiness to forgive, and he guided them through what will happen on their special day. Canon Chris returned the following week to give Years 4, 5 and 6 the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to reflect on the season of Lent as a time to grow in faith and love.

Eight pupils from the school had the special privilege of travelling to St John's Cathedral in Portsmouth to celebrate Mass with other children from the diocese to mark the visitation of the relics of St Carlo Acutis, a young modern Saint whose life inspires people world-wide. Venerating the relics of St Carlo, including a lock of his hair, and a piece of his clothing and even a fragment of his heart, was a powerful reminder of Carlo's faith, lived in very ordinary, everyday circumstances. He lived a normal teenage life, enjoying football, video games, using computers, but Carlo made it his life's plan to "stay close to Jesus". Carlo died after a short illness in 2006 aged 15. The visit to venerate his relics left a deep and lasting impression on the children.

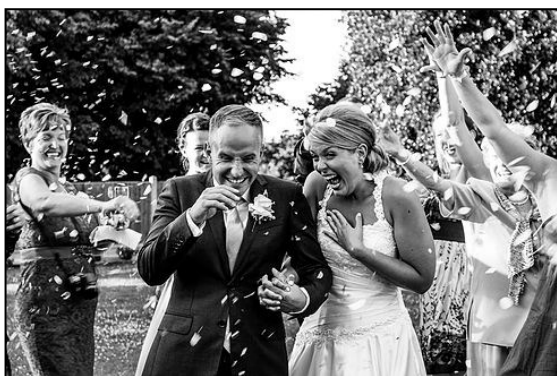
The school was excited to launch the "Walk to School" challenge, a whole school initiative to encourage healthier, greener and more active travel, be it walking, cycling or "Park and Stride". During the first week, over half of the children travelled actively to school. The most popular choice was "Park and Stride", where families parked at least 10 minutes' walk from school. For the younger pupils it is simplified – if you can't see the school from where you park, that counts!

Following their research into bread from around the world, Year 5 have been busy making bread, choosing between sweet and savoury breads. They worked in groups, weighing, kneading, and adding chosen ingredients such as herbs, chocolate, raisins. The end results were a great success.

In football news, the Andover Football Competitions are nearly concluded and both the boys' and girls' teams are to be congratulated for qualifying for the semi-finals. The final stages will be after Easter but well done to the players who have represented the school this season, as well as to the parents who have supported the teams so well and have helped with transporting them to the games.

The pupils from Key Stage 2 took their turn leading the congregation during the Stations of the Cross in the parish church. At each Station they reflected on Jesus' journey to his crucifixion and on how we can apply each stage to our own lives, following him on his journey in our own way.

At the end of term, families and friends were invited to the school's Passion Play. With readings, prayer, music and dance we were led from the Agony in the Garden through to the Crucifixion. As the Passion play drew to a close, the hall was in darkness, Jesus was gently laid on the floor, covered with a white cloth and surrounded by candles, and everybody filed silently out of the hall. The school's Lenten preparations for the feast of Easter were complete.



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

Sarah Towland

**and for those whose anniversaries occur in March**

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

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

Esme Coveney, Rita Lane, Margaret Williams, Patrick Arnold, Fiona Hilleard, Bernard Ivinson, Tony Fabian, Helen O'Connell, Douglas Manning, Diane Mahoney, Rita Casey, Rose Bull, Carol Keenan, Eileen Wharton, Oran Keenan, Margarita Hardiman, Tom O'Regan, Robert Colledge, Eileen Price, Concepta Cuddihy, Frank Hinds, Clan Furtado, Lisa Rammage, Susanne Church, Sandy Saunders and Ben Dunne.

*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 9th & 10th May. Contributions should be with the editors by Monday 4th May. Please leave contributions at the Presbytery or email them to: [stjohnsjournal@googlemail.com](mailto:stjohnsjournal@googlemail.com)