

Losing our
Christian roots

£3.50 – discounts available for subscribers

Friday, 12th April 2024



UNIVERSE

CATHOLIC WEEKLY

Keeping your faith in the news

www.universecatholicweekly.co.uk

Want to read
The Universe
in print every
week?

Subscribe
today...

Call Michelle Jones on
07436 617650

Vatican speaks up to save human dignity

New declaration reinforces Church position on key hot topics including abortion, gender and surrogacy

Andy Drozdziak

A new Vatican document has attacked what it describes as “grave violations” of human dignity and underlined the importance of Christians opposing abortion, the death penalty, gender transition surgery, war, sexual abuse and human trafficking.

The pope-led declaration, *Dignitas Infinita* (*Infinite Dignity*), was released at the Vatican on 8th April.

Striving to address critical contemporary issues, and having taken five years to compile, Dicastery prefect Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández said: “The document before us reflects the gravity and centrality of the theme of dignity in Christian thought.”

Addressing controversial ‘hot’ topics, the document condemned gender theory as “extremely dangerous since it cancels differences in its claim to make everyone equal.”

At the same time it also condemned discrimination against LGBTQ+ people and situations in which people are persecuted due to their sexual orientation.

The Catholic Church, the document said, teaches that “human life in all its dimensions, both physical and spiritual, is a gift from God.”

Members of the doctrinal dicastery included the death penalty among violations of “the inalienable dignity of every person, regardless of the circumstances”.

The document was welcomed by James Somerville-Meikle, deputy director of the Catholic Union, as “timely and important.”

Mr Somerville-Meikle told the *Universe* “Human dignity is central to our faith and how we see ourselves and other people.”

“Many challenges in the world today relate to concepts of the human person. As Catholics, we are called not only to be concerned about rights and responsibilities, but also value and virtue.”

Quoting Pope Francis in *Amoris Laetitia*, the new document said that gender ideology “envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family.”

Continued on page 2

Bishops’ Conference support: pg 2
Full review of report: page 20-21

INSIDE



Glimmer of hope for ‘scrap the cap’ campaign
– pg 3

The world’s shame: Rwanda 30 years on
– pg 6

Restoration project starts to reveal Pugin’s secrets
– pg 11

Caritas workers vow to stay in Gaza
– pg 17

LOURDES IS THE LIGHT THAT ALWAYS SHINES



The HCPT (Hosanna House & Children’s Pilgrimage Trust) was in Lourdes last week for its annual Easter pilgrimage. Around 2,500 were involved, including more than 1,000 disabled and disadvantaged children, organised into 104 groups. As well as visiting the Grotto and

leaving candles, Masses were celebrated by participants at many of the chapels around the town, with many also joining in with the Stations of the Cross.

HCPT Scotland co-ordinated liturgies this year and bagpipes were heard regularly around the

town. Bishop Joseph Toal of Motherwell was lead celebrant in the main Trust Mass on the Thursday, alongside Archbishop Leo Cushley of St Andrews & Edinburgh.

More from Ellen Teague on page 12

BEATING THE SLIMIES!

COMPANION



UNIVERSE CATHOLIC WEEKLY

Keeping your faith in the news

www.universecatholicweekly.co.uk

Available
every week
in **Print**
or **Digital**
format

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!



Your
personal
printed copy
delivered to your
door, from just
£2.69
a week

The Universe Catholic Weekly

The **ONLY CATHOLIC WEEKLY
NEWSPAPER** in the UK

Available in **PRINT** and **DIGITAL**

Always up to date with a **CATHOLIC**
perspective on **FAITH, HOME** and **WORLD** news

GET IN TOUCH today to
secure your copy.
To **subscribe** or for further
information, please call
Michelle Jones on
07436 617650
or email her at
michelle.jones@universecatholicweekly.co.uk
or see
www.universecatholicweekly.co.uk



PRINT SUBSCRIPTION RATES

(all inclusive of delivery to your home)

- Cover price for a single copy – £3.50
- 3-month subscription (13 weekly copies) – £42 (£3.23 per copy)
- 6-month subscription (26 weekly copies) – £75 (£2.88 per copy)
- ANNUAL RATE (52 weekly copies) – £140 (£2.69 per copy)

DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

(a link is sent direct to you every Friday)

- Cover Price for single copy – £1.54
- 3 months subscription (13 weekly links) – £20.00
- 6 months subscription (26 weekly links) – £40.00
- ANNUAL RATE (52 weekly links) – £75.00

Bishops' Conference welcomes renewed focus on human dignity

Andy Drozdziak

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has welcomed the new Vatican declaration on human dignity, *Dignitas infinita*, and called on Christians to “proclaim the inherent and unconditional dignity of all human beings.”

Department Chair, Bishop Richard Moth, and Lead Bishop for Life Issues, Bishop John Sherrington wrote: “The promotion and defence of human dignity continues to be at the heart of the mission of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

“In our troubled times, it is important for Christians to proclaim the inherent and unconditional dignity of all human beings, without exception, as being the basis for authentic human rights.”

The bishops pointed to areas in which “human rights are under attack”, such as abortion and the imposition of gender theory, which the document highlights as incompatible with Catholic teaching.

“Our abortion laws promote a false understanding of human dignity based on age, level of development, and mental capacity rather than on our shared humanity from conception until natural death,” the bishops wrote.

“In addition, our laws and culture

“Dignitas infinita emphasises the links between the dignity of the sick and dying, our duty to care for them, and need to resist the growing threat of assisted suicide and euthanasia. We must respond to the suffering of the sick and dying with appropriate personal and medical care.”

Continued from page 1

Sex changes are seen as “threatening the unique dignity the person has received from the moment of conception.”

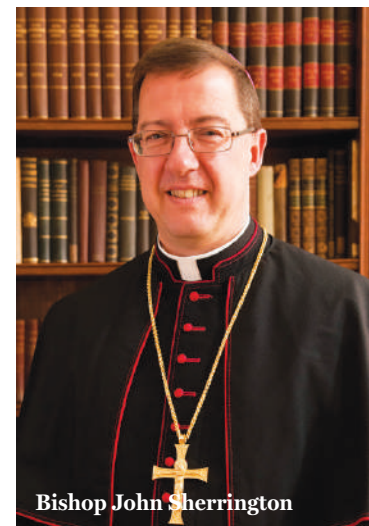
Meanwhile, the acceptance of abortion is condemned as “a telling sign of an extremely dangerous crisis of the moral sense.”

The document also repeats Pope Francis' call for a global ban on surrogacy, while the promotion of euthanasia and assisted suicide “utilises a mistaken understanding of human dignity to turn the concept of dignity against life itself.”

James Somerville-Meikle underlined the “vitaly important” content of the new document. He said: “So many of the arguments we make in the public sphere, especially around the beginning and end of life, are based on the understanding of our shared human dignity. Reaffirming



Bishop Richard Moth



Bishop John Sherrington

must allow us to recognise the difference between and complementarity of male and female whilst resisting the sometimes intolerant imposition of a gender theory that ‘cancels differences in its claim to make everyone equal’. (*Dignitas infinita*, 56).

Assisted suicide is also addressed, which has become a key contemporary issue in the UK.

They wrote: “*Dignitas infinita* emphasises the links between the dignity of the sick and dying, our duty to care for them, and need to resist the growing threat of assisted suicide and euthanasia. Instead, we

must respond to the suffering of the sick and dying with appropriate forms of personal and medical care.”

With wars continuing in Ukraine and Gaza, and the Migrant crisis ongoing, the bishops underline the need for Catholics to be peacemakers.

“We also echo the Dicastery’s call to bring an end to all war and end the scourge of violence within our local communities and in our homes,” they wrote.

“There is an urgent need for all of us to be peacemakers. This requires us to welcome migrants, work to tackle human trafficking and speak up for women who “endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment, and violence” (*Dignitas infinita*, 44).

“It is our hope that recognition of this shared responsibility will strengthen the social action of the Catholic Church in England and Wales and transform our civil and political life.”



the Church’s teaching on this is vitally important as we wrestle with challenges new and old to the value of life and its dignity.”

A copy of the ground-breaking declaration is seen on Cardinal Fernandez’s desk at its launch

Glimmer of hope for ‘scrap the cap’ school plan

Andy Drozdziak

The Catholic Union has welcomed the news that the lifting of a 50 per cent cap on faith-based admissions to new free schools is being ‘seriously considered’ by the Government.

The 50 per cent cap on faith-based admissions applies to over-subscribed free schools with a religious character in England.

Introduced by the Coalition Government in 2010, the cap has made it impossible for new Catholic free schools to open as the policy is incompatible with Church law.

The Catholic Union, along with the Catholic Education Service and Catholic MPs, have been calling for the policy to be reversed since it was first introduced. The 2017 Conservative manifesto committed to lifting the cap, but this was never achieved. At the time, Catholic MP Sir Edward Leigh called the cap “a source of huge frustration to the Catholic community in this country.”

Now it seems that the Government is actively reviewing proposals to allow faith-based schools to reject applications from children who do not share their beliefs.

James Somerville-Meikle, deputy director of the Catholic Union, said: “Our campaign to ‘Scrap the Cap’ on new religious free schools was in the papers again over the weekend.

“The proposal to lift the cap, which would finally allow new Catholic free schools in England to

open, is now being seriously considered by people in Government.”

Mr Somerville-Meikle thanked the 1,000 people who signed an open letter to Education Secretary Gillian Keegan calling for the cap to be lifted, adding that the move would go some way to “allowing more young people to benefit from a Catholic education.”

The letter was presented to Education Secretary, Gillian Keegan, in person last year and was mentioned in the *Sunday Times* coverage. Gillian Keegan is understood to be in favour of changing the law.

According to the Catholic Education Service, the Catholic Church is the country’s largest provider of secondary schools and second-largest of primary schools, along with four universities. Catholic education is also the largest charitable activity of the Church in this country.

James Somerville-Meikle encouraged Catholic supporters to not rest on their laurels but to continue to campaign for the removal of the cap, calling it “a really important moment in the campaign.”

He suggested contacting local MPs about the campaign and to keep praying.

Pictured below is Conservative MP Sir Edward Leigh presenting the Catholic Union’s letter to Education Secretary, Gillian Keegan, last year



Let’s make this a special day for all the world’s children

The Catholic Church’s first World Children’s Day will take place from May 25-26 – and Missio is encouraging schools and parishes to get involved.

Mission Together – the children’s branch of Missio, the Pope’s charity for overseas mission – is helping UK children to join their global sisters and brothers in celebration of World Children’s Day in their school or parish.

Although the event’s focus is in Rome, the pope has called on Catholics around the globe to celebrate this special event in their own diocese. Pope Francis said: “Like Jesus, we want to put children at the centre and care for them.”

As Catholic schools in the UK are significantly more diverse than the national school average, World Children’s Day provides a great opportunity to celebrate the many cultures within our school communities and remind pupils, parents, and staff that all belong to God’s global family.

To help schools celebrate World Children’s Day, Mission Together has produced several free resources. These include an introductory assembly, Celebration of the Word, Activities, Celebrating our Cultures



The official logo for the day. Visit Mission Together’s site for free World Children’s Day resources; **CLICK HERE** for details

ideas sheet, Virtual map Explorer Worksheets, and more.

The concept came from a nine-year-old boy, Alessandro, who, just a few months earlier had written to Pope Francis with an idea to bring children together from different countries for a special event.

Alessandro’s hope was that the children could get to know one another, play and pray together, and become friends.

Cardinal Mendonça, director of World Children’s Day, explained the vision for the day. “This is an occasion to put children at the centre of

the world’s attention. It offers children the possibility to become protagonists through moments of prayer, friendship, and formation.”

All Mission Together resources aim to help children recognise themselves as members of God’s global family, working in solidarity for the benefit of all, with a special concern for those living in poverty.

Supporting Mission Together through prayers and donations helps to provide aid, educational assistance and pastoral, and spiritual support to some of the world’s poorest children.

Ursuline Links is seeking a Director

An exciting opportunity has arisen to join Ursuline Links as the Director, to action the strategic direction for the charity’s future. The ideal candidate will have a personal faith commitment and previous experience of working to motivate and inspire young people. This role will involve working with the Ursuline schools and other interested groups involved in Catholic youth ministry.

Job details
Hours - 37.5 hours per week

Location – Forest Gate, London (flexibility for home working)

Contract - Permanent

Salary - £38,500 - £45,500 PA

Annual Leave - 33 days holiday (pro rata) per year inclusive of bank holidays.

YOUR MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Develop further an exciting programme of service projects suitable for students aged 9-18+
- Manage existing resources and prepare a budget for new equipment.
- Fundraise for projects as required.
- Co-ordinate participation of UL students at third party events such as Flame.
- Manage the website and social media.
- Keep contacts with past student and arrange reunions.
- The preparation of liturgical services and parent meetings as required.
- Review policies and guidelines, and Charity Commission reports.

WHAT YOU NEED TO HAVE:

- Education to degree level
- Recent experience of working (for at least 2 years) with young people up to the age of 20 either as a teacher, chaplain or within a youth retreat centre, including presenting to large and small groups of adults and young people and delivery of prayer and activity sessions
- Understand safeguarding requirements for working with young people.

HOW TO APPLY:

If you feel you have the relevant skills and experience to fulfil this role successfully, please apply in the first instance with your CV to officemanager@ursulines-ru.uk. All suitable applicants will be sent the full job description and an application form to complete. If you have any further questions, please contact Elizabeth Durrant on 020 3422 0901.

Closing Date 19th April 2024
Interviews w/c 6th May 2024



URSULINE LINKS is a youth volunteer programme sponsored by the Ursuline sisters. For more information visit www.ursulinelinks.org

In Brief

Gender treatment criticised in report

Children who think they are transgender should not be rushed into treatment they may regret, a report has concluded.

The report by paediatric consultant Dr Hilary Cass has made 32 recommendations, including: calling for the “unhurried” care of those under 25 who think they may be transgender; an end to the prescribing of powerful hormone drugs to under-18s; and early help for primary school children who want to socially transition.

Half of Tories want to quit convention

Half of Conservative voters believe the UK should leave the European Convention on Human Rights.

Some 49 per cent of people who backed the Tories at the 2019 election want to quit the convention, said Savanta polling, with 35 per cent wanting to stay.

Support for the move among Tories is higher than among the wider population and much higher than among Labour voters, just 14 per cent of whom would want to walk away.

Post Office run by ‘thugs in suits’

Alan Bates described ex-Post Office executives as “little more than thugs in suits” in a letter to then Postmaster General Sir Ed Davey.

The disclosure was made as the former sub-postmaster appeared at the Post Office inquiry on Tuesday.

Mr Bates, who led 554 others to a High Court victory against the Post Office in 2019, criticised civil servants and union reps as well as past and present governments.

Callous ex-MP criticised for calling assisted suicide ‘healthy’

Andy Drozdziak

Christian social justice charity CARE has hit back at former MP Matthew Parris after he said assisted suicide legalisation would be a “healthy development”.

Writing in *The Times*, Mr Parris referred to people as “units” and argued that society must “adapt its norms” as it cannot afford to keep elderly people who are infirm and extremely ill.

He wrote: “It may sound brutal, but I don’t apologise for the reductivist tone in which this column treats human beings as units — in deficit or surplus to the collective.”

“For a society as much as for an individual, self-preservation must shine a harsh beam on to the balance between input and output. To protect its future, a healthy society must adapt its norms, its cultural taboos and its moral codes. This does not usually happen by decree but by a largely unconscious general creep. People begin changing their minds, often unaware of why.”



Mr Parris

He also said he would “welcome” terminally ill people to hasten their own deaths so as “not to be a burden” on others or themselves.

CARE hit back by saying that Parris had gone “horribly wrong” in his “units” reference, referring to Biblical teachings which contradict Darwinist beliefs. “If all we are is a bag of chemicals, when the ‘machine’ that is our body goes wrong, what’s the harm in ‘switching it off’?” CARE said.

“In the Christian worldview, we

are not just machines. We are ‘fearfully and wonderfully made’ (Psalm 139:13-14). We are both frail (Psalm 8:4), but also magnificent creations by a good God, made in His image (Psalm 8:5). We are both body and soul, made by God, for God.”

The issue of assisted suicide has come to the fore after former journalist and television presenter Dame Esther Rantzen, who has terminal cancer, called for a vote on the issue in parliament. Backed by Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer, the *Daily Express* and the campaign group Dignity in Dying, a petition demanding a vote on the subject has amassed 177,000 signatures.

Assisted suicide is currently banned in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. If convicted, people can face up to 14 years in jail. Although it is not a criminal offence in Scotland, helping someone to die can leave a person open to a murder charge or other prosecution. MSP Liam McArthur has introduced the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill

Adults (Scotland) Bill to the Scottish Parliament to change this position. Meanwhile Sir Keir Starmer has promised a parliamentary debate on the issue if Labour win this year’s election.

CARE’s comments come after Archbishop of Southwark John Wilson’s recent pastoral letter, in which he underlined the Church’s opposition to assisted suicide.

“We cannot approve of any form of euthanasia and assisted suicide,” Archbishop Wilson said. “The Catholic Church believes and teaches that every life is valuable, regardless of one’s physical or mental state or ability.”

CARE said what was needed was more support for the terminally ill.

CARE said: “Life really is sacred. It is to be protected. And thanks to palliative care, the hospice movement and advances in medical understanding, we are in a far better place today to address an ageing population than we were even 50 years ago.”

UK public rejects decriminalising abortion

Andy Drozdziak

Over half of the British public have expressed opposition to proposals that could see the decriminalisation of abortion.

A survey carried out by Whitestone Insight revealed that 55% of respondents believe terminating a pregnancy after the 24-week limit, when the baby is healthy, should remain illegal. Just 16% supported a change in the law, while 29% were either undecided or did not express an opinion.

71% felt that a year-long imprisonment for a woman who underwent an abortion at 32-34 weeks was justified or even lenient, with only 20% deeming it excessive.

Parliament is currently preparing

to consider amendments to the Criminal Justice Bill, potentially altering abortion legislation for the first time in over three decades.

One amendment, from Labour MP Diana Johnson, seeks to stop women from being prosecuted for terminating pregnancies past the 24-week mark, garnering the support of 35 MPs across the parties.

Critics of decriminalisation warn that this “extreme and radical abortion law” would lead to more late term DIY abortions.

Catherine Robinson, spokeswoman for Right to Life UK, said: “It would likely lead to a tragic increase in the number of babies’ lives being ended through late-term abortions performed at home, as well as the

lives of many more women being endangered,” she said.

“This extreme and radical abortion law has no place in the UK. This polling clearly shows that the public do not support this change to the law. We are calling on MPs to reject Johnson’s amendment”.

Pro-life Tory MP Miriam Cates said decriminalisation would “remove any consequence” for a pregnant woman who decided to terminate their baby after the current 24-week limit. “In a civilised and compassionate society, we must not change the law to remove all rights and value from an unborn baby just a few weeks or days before birth.”

Meanwhile, a separate amendment tabled by Conservative MP

Caroline Ansell, to reduce the legal time frame for abortion from 24 to 22 weeks, has received widespread support.

It has attracted the support of 36 MPs and is backed by public and female majority preferences for lowering the time limit to 20 weeks or below.

Backing the amendment, Catherine Robinson said: “A baby at 22 or 23 weeks gestation could be born prematurely and have a dedicated medical team provide expert care to try to save his or her life, while another baby at the same age could have their life deliberately ended through an abortion.”

“This is a contradiction in UK law that must end.”

UNIVERSE CONTACTS

Universe Catholic Weekly, PO Box 585, Sale M33 0JH

General enquiries: t: 0743 6617650
e: Info@universecatholicweekly.co.uk

Editorial enquiries: t: 0743 6617604
e: news@universecatholicweekly.co.uk

Executive Chairman
Clive W. Leach, KSG, CBE
t: clive.leach@universecatholicweekly.co.uk

Managing Editorial Director: Michael Winterbottom
e: michael.winterbottom@universecatholicweekly.co.uk
t: 0743 6617650

News: Andy Drozdziak
e: andy.drozdziak@universecatholicweekly.co.uk
t: 07527 237293

Advertising and Sales
Director of Sales & Marketing:
Andrea Black
e: andrea.black@universecatholicweekly.co.uk
e: advertising@universecatholicweekly.co.uk
t: 0791856 0608

Circulation Sales Manager:
Michelle Jones
e: michelle.jones@universecatholicweekly.co.uk
e: sales@universecatholicweekly.co.uk
t: 0743 6617650

Finance & Operations Director:
Mary Concannon
e: mary.concannon@universecatholicweekly.co.uk
e: accounts@universecatholicweekly.co.uk
t: 0743 6617605
www.universecatholicweekly.co.uk

Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of material in this publication, the publishers cannot accept any responsibility for the veracity of claims made by contributors in either advertising or editorial content. Views expressed may not be those of the publishers.

Down babies being screened out as abortion rates soar

SPUC has slammed the “terrible discrimination” which has led to 87.26 per cent of unborn babies who were prenatally diagnosed with Down syndrome in England and Wales (and Crown Dependencies) being aborted in 2021, according to NHS data released last month.

973 out of 1,115 unborn babies prenatally diagnosed with Down syndrome were killed by abortion in 2021.

108 babies with a cleft lip/palate were also aborted, as well as 53 babies with a club foot.

Don't Screen Us Out, a group that

campaigns for equal rights for all people with Down syndrome, expressed its sadness at “the shockingly high percentage” of abortions. “These statistics show the urgent need for MPs to update legislation to ensure that babies with Down's syndrome cannot be aborted up to birth,” the group said.

Last month, Sir Liam Fox MP tabled an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill that, if passed, would stop babies diagnosed with Down syndrome from being aborted after 24 weeks.

The current law, which allows

such abortions up until birth, treats babies with Down syndrome like “second-class citizens”, said Fox.

Over 50 per cent fewer babies diagnosed with Down syndrome have been born in Europe in recent years because of abortion enabled by non-invasive prenatal screening, a study estimated in 2021.

A SPUC spokesperson said: “Abortion permits a terrible discrimination against people with disabilities, especially children with Down syndrome who are made to feel unwanted by society.

“No nation that claims to be ‘civi-

lised’ should accept such blatant discrimination that ultimately results in the killing of minority populations, which Europe has seen before when disabled people were euthanised by intolerant regimes.

“Rather than telling children that they might be better off dead, societies should cherish and promote life for all people.”

Don't Screen Us Out campaigner **Heidi Crowther (right)** has called for more protection to be given to babies in the womb diagnosed as having Down syndrome



Catholics are ready to play a major role in next general election

‘There are over 4.5 million Catholics in Britain so this is not a community politicians can ignore’

The Catholic Union has found that participation by Catholics in the next General Election is likely to be extremely high.

A survey of the Catholic Union's members and supporters found that just over 90 per cent of responders were planning to vote in the upcoming General Election, which the Prime Minister has said is due to take place in the “second half of this year”.

The figure is significantly higher than the average turnout for national polls, showing the importance of Catholic voters going into this next election. Average turnout for the past three General Elections stands at 67 per cent nationally.

The survey also found a strong link between politics and religion, with 92 per cent of people saying that their faith and the teachings of the Catholic Church “help to influence” how they vote.

The results from the survey add further weight to the contribution of Catholic groups and charities ahead of the next General Election. The 4.5 million Catholics are the largest religious minority group in the country and one of the most politically active.

The top five issues identified in the survey as being of most concern to Catholics ahead of the election were: care for the poor, religious freedom, family life, education, and life issues.

Mike Kane, Vice President of the Catholic Union, said it was a “really important election” and he “strong-

ly encouraged Catholics to get involved and make their voices heard,” he said. “Whatever your views, please make sure that you vote. Taking part in free and fair elections is a great gift and we should not take it for granted.”

The Catholic Union will be using the results of the survey to inform a special election publication which will contain some key themes and questions for candidates ahead of the election. Further information will be coming shortly.

James Somerville-Meikle, deputy director of the Catholic Union, outlined the strength of the Catholic community. “These results show that faith is not something that can be put in a box and kept out of public life. It is hugely important in terms of motivating people to vote and how they use that vote.

“There are over 4.5 million Catholics in Britain so this is not a community that politicians can afford to ignore,” he said.

“This survey is the first step in our General Election plans. We want to make sure that the voices of Catholics in this country are heard loudly and clearly by those who seek to lead and govern us. Please add your voice to ours by becoming a member of the Catholic Union so we can continue this important work.”



Mike Kane



Littleway is a Catholic Charity which recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. Our Mission is for Evangelising through Healing and our Mission Statement is 'Freedom through Jesus'. We run Healing of Memory Foundation Courses in the UK, Ireland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

In addition, we organise Parish Healing Missions, Weekends of Healing and Outreach Days and we welcome invitations to come to your Parish. We also host regular Zoom Outreach evenings.

Prayer Requests can be submitted through our website, alternatively you can call us for prayer on:

+44 (0) 7936 269 143

All information on our events and our Zoom links are on our website:

www.littlewayhealingministries.com

Our Healing of Memories Course schedule for 2024 is as follows:

Mon 8th – Sun 14th April at Mullaghmore, Ireland (now full)

Mon 14th – Sun 20th October at Oblate Centre, Crewe

Mon 28th Oct – Sun 3rd Nov at Mullaghmore, Ireland

Our courses provide foundation training for Healing of Memories Prayer and are intended for those who either already pray with others or are prepared to learn how to pray.

Each person will have the opportunity to receive Healing of Memories Prayer led by an experienced team member. Courses start at 5pm on a Monday and end after lunch on the following Sunday.

You will need to be able to attend the whole of the course.

For more information before booking, please call us on: **+44 (0) 7936 269 143**



UNIVERSE
CATHOLIC WEEKLY

COMMENT

Inquiry has
been too slow
getting to
the heart of
this scandal

More than four years after an independent judicial inquiry was announced into the Post Office Horizon scandal, it is only now hearing from the principal figures, and astonishingly, it was only this week that Alan Bates, the former sub-postmaster who has led the campaign, gave evidence to the inquiry.

Lord Arbuthnot, who has done most among parliamentarians to highlight this injustice, will do so this week too. Paula Vennells, who was Post Office boss during the critical period, does not appear until next month, when three days have been set aside for her side of the story.

Ms Vennells, who gave up her CBE after the ITV drama *Mr Bates vs the Post Office* exposed an alleged cover up at the top of the institution, was seen for the first time in public at the weekend. She declined to answer a reporter's question as to whether she had knowingly misled MPs when she appeared before a Select Committee looking into the scandal in 2015.

Nadhim Zahawi, the Tory MP who was on that committee, said the Post Office should be investigated for corporate manslaughter following the suicides of at least four Horizon victims. We should not have to wait for the inquiry to conclude before senior executives and lawyers are called to account for their part in this outrage.

The inquiry's protracted nature is not entirely the fault of the judge Sir Wyn Williams, since there was a Covid pandemic shortly after it was set up. But it is extraordinary that we are only now about to hear from the principal protagonists at the heart of the scandal, even though there has been a TV series, an announcement of legislation to clear the names of those found guilty of stealing, and widespread public anger at what happened to decent people trying to eke out a living in their communities.

*Keeping your faith
in the news*

www.universecatholicweekly.co.uk

30 years on, Rwanda still feels
pain of its darkest 100 days

POLITICS

Frederick
Nzwili

Catholic bishops in Rwanda have marked 30 years since the 1994 genocide in their country by expressing their closeness to survivors of the killings, while urging those convicted of crimes to seek forgiveness.

The bishops spoke as the East African nation of 14 million people began a week of mourning to remember the nearly one million people killed in 100 days of slaughter.

"This crime caused misfortune and pain, the depth and breadth of which only God knows. Hearts still bleed, wounds are still fresh," Bishop Anaclet Mwumvaneza of Nyundo, president of the Rwandan bishops' Justice and Peace Commission, said in a statement.

He said he sends "a message of consolation and closeness to the survivors of the genocide in this moment of deep pain for the loss of their loved ones."

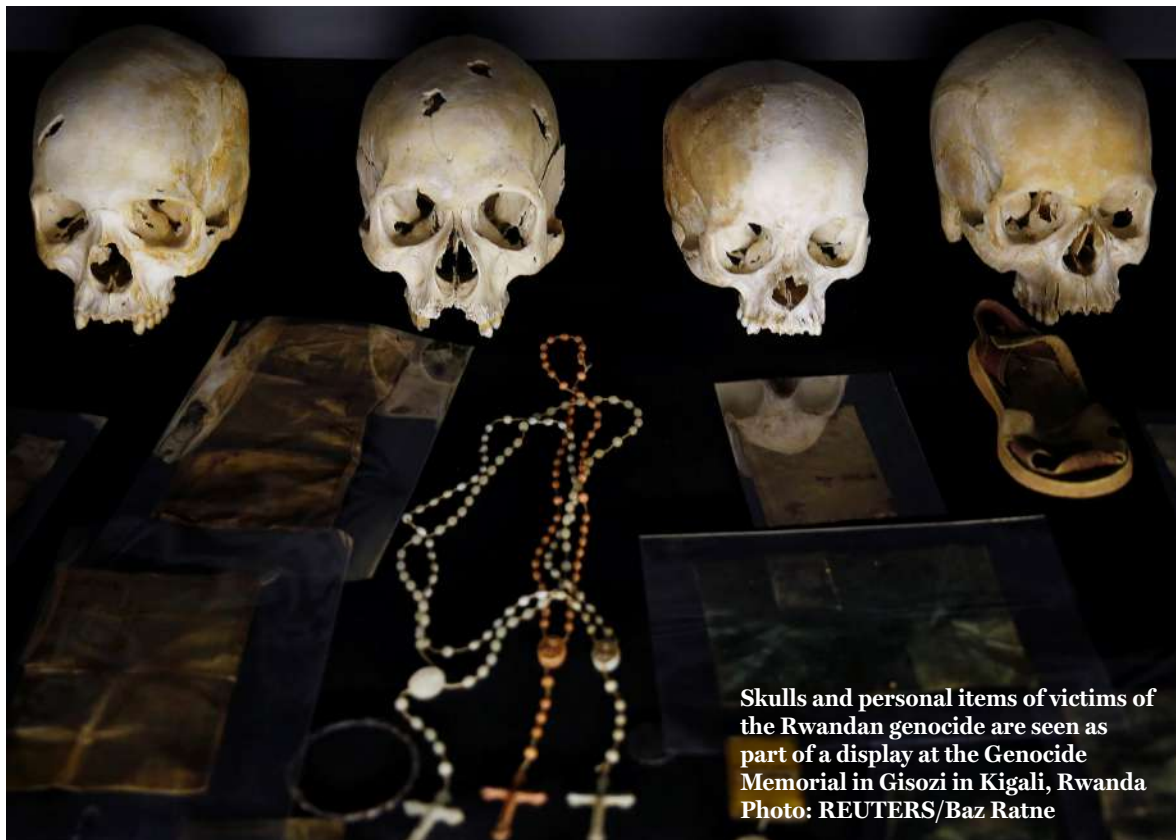
The massacre was triggered on 6th April, 1994, when suspected rebels shot down a plane carrying Hutu President Juvénal Habyarimana. Ethnic Hutu extremists blamed the incident on the Tutsi ethnic group and a group drawn from within it, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, and embarked on a killing spree, targeting ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

What was eventually called genocide is remembered to this day as one of the most horrific mass ethnic murders of the 20th century. It ended in July 1994 by which point the official death toll stood at 800,000, but Rwandans say the genocide took more than a million lives and thousands of others were pushed out as refugees. Thousands of women and girls were raped.

Rwandan authorities have long blamed the international community for ignoring warnings about the killings, and some Western leaders have expressed regret. US President Bill Clinton, at the time in office, cited the Rwandan genocide as a failure of his administration. The former president was among politicians from around the world present at the state commemoration of the killings in Kigali, Rwandan capital, on 7th April.

Bishop Mwumvaneza said the road to healing over the past 30 years was long, but saw actions aimed at rebuilding the country.

"This time gives us the opportunity to look back on this



Skulls and personal items of victims of the Rwandan genocide are seen as part of a display at the Genocide Memorial in Gisozi in Kigali, Rwanda
Photo: REUTERS/Baz Ratne

painful past and opens us to a radiant future that we want to experience together as a national community," the bishop said.

He added that the Church had encouraged forgiveness as a remedy. "Forgiveness requested, given and received constitutes the foundation of good human ... relations."

He also urged "those who have been convicted of the crime of genocide to humble themselves and sincerely ask for forgiveness and the survivors to offer this beautiful gift of forgiveness."

During the week of mourning, national flags were lowered, with people holding night vigils and walks to honor both victims and survivors.

Fr Lambert Dusingizimana, secretary of the bishops' secretariat for Catholic schools in Rwanda, said the Church was looking back at the events of that year while assessing its contribution to the reconciliation and resilience in the past 30 years.

"The remembering and commemoration mean a lot," Fr Dusingizimana said. "The Catholic Church celebrates also with our people: the resurrection, life and resilience (of the nation)."

For Immaculée Ilibagiza, Catholic survivor and best-selling author of *Left to Tell*, the genocide in Rwanda was filled with the

horror of losing her family, but also with hope of finding God.

In the wake of the killing, her father, a devout Catholic, sent 22-year-old Ilibagiza to a house of a local pastor, who managed to shelter her and seven other women in a tiny bathroom for 91 days. Hutu murderers, going door to door with machetes and mercilessly killing entire families, did not find them.

"I knew that my heart and mind would always be tempted to feel anger – to find blame and hate. But I resolved that when the negative feelings came upon me, I wouldn't wait for them to grow or fester. I would always turn immediately to the Source of all true power: I would turn to God and let His love and forgiveness protect and save me," she wrote in her memoir book subtitled *Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*.

Her parents and siblings – except one studying abroad at the time – were killed by Hutus, but Ilibagiza was able to forgive the killer. Throughout the horror of the genocide, she was praying the rosary her father handed her as they were separated.

In launching the commemoration, Rwandan President Paul Kagame laid wreaths at a mass grave in Kigali. He told the gathering that the country commemorated the genocide because the lives lost mattered.

"Murder is no game: If you offend God, you will pay for your fun. The blood of the innocent people you cut down will follow you to your reckoning"

"As the years pass, the descendants of survivors increasingly struggle with the quiet loneliness of longing for relatives they never met, or never even got the chance to be born," he said. "Our journey has been long and tough. Rwanda was completely humbled by the magnitude of our loss, and the lessons we learned are engraved in blood."

In 2016, the Catholic Church in Rwanda apologised for the role played by individual clergy and Church members in the genocide.

The bishops emphasised the Church did not send any priests or its members to kill, although some of its members planned, aided and executed the genocide.

Human rights activists and survivors wanted the Catholic Church to apologise for decades. They argued that people fled to the Churches hoping to be saved, only to be killed there by Hutu militia.

Ilibagiza noted in her book that "instead of negotiating or begging for mercy, (my brother Damascene) challenged them to kill him. 'Go ahead,' he said. 'What are you waiting for? Today is my day to go to God. I can feel Him all around us. He is watching, waiting to take me home. Go ahead – finish your work and send me to paradise.'"

She added: "Murder is no game: If you offend God, you will pay for your fun. The blood of the innocent people you cut down will follow you to your reckoning."

"But I am praying for you. ... I pray that you see the evil you're doing and ask God's forgiveness before it's too late."

Inquiry hears call for world to respond more firmly to Nicaraguan oppression

Andy Drozdziak

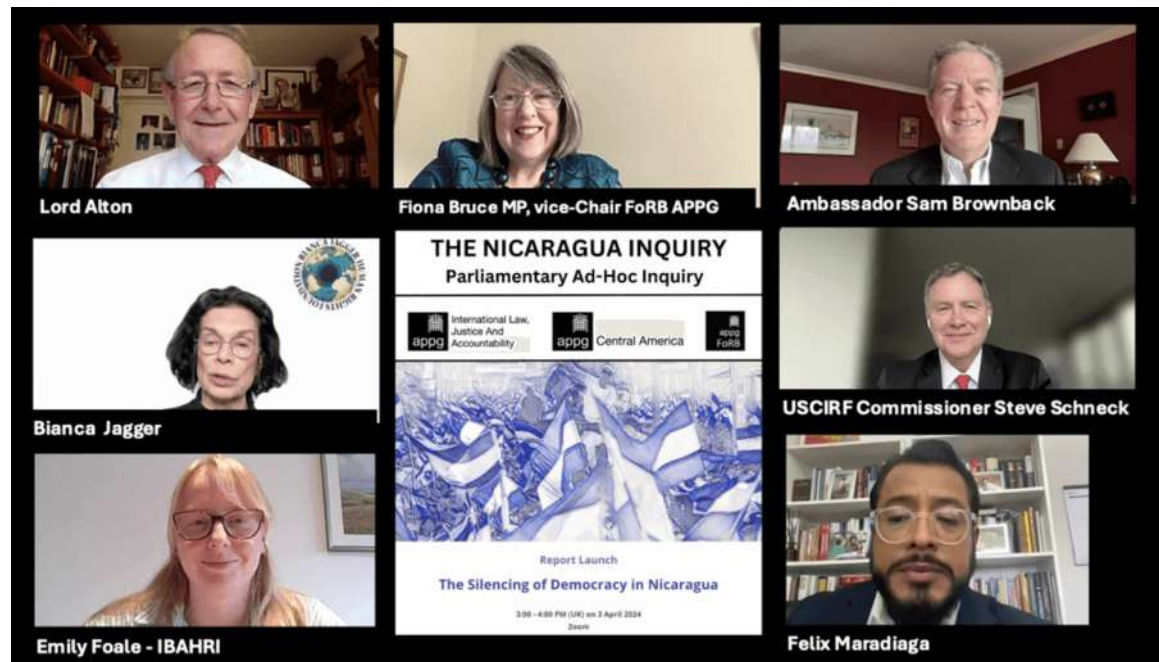
Catholic peer Lord David Alton chaired the launch of a new report into the current political situation in Nicaragua on 3rd April.

The report, *The Silencing of Democracy in Nicaragua*, was organised by three Westminster All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs), and joining Lord Alton at the launch were Fiona Bruce MP (a fellow member of the inquiry team), Nicaraguan Bianca Jagger, Felix Maradiaga, Ambassador Sam Brownback and USCIRF Commissioner Steve Schneck.

The APPGs investigated the ever-growing suppression of the rights of religious leaders and institutions, the media and the opposition in Nicaragua, and identified steps that can be taken by the UK Government, and other states, to address this.

The inquiry was launched after disturbing reports were received of politically motivated targeting of the media, religious leaders, and the opposition in Nicaragua.

Lord Alton said: “Our *ad hoc* inquiry decided to collect evidence of the ever-growing targeting of anyone critical of the Nicaraguan government, including, opposition leaders, human rights defenders, journalists and religious leaders.



assistance for victims of serious human rights violations in Nicaragua and support for independent journalists and media outlets conducting investigative journalism into the situation in Nicaragua.

Lord Alton shared his hopes that the report would empower those persecuted “not (to) be mesmerised into indifference by the regime’s relentless propaganda campaign.”

Witnesses to the inquiry included Baroness Kennedy of the Shaws KC, Mark Menzies MP, the Conservative chair of the APPG on Central America and the Rt.Revd. Philip Mounstephen – Bishop of Winchester,

With every attack, democracy is being eroded piece by piece.

“Our report makes it very clear that anyone critical of the Ortega regime ends up as a target.”

Throughout February and March, several oral hearings were held and evidence taken from witnesses and experts at the Houses of Parliament. A call for written submissions resulted in over sixty responses from individuals and organisations.

A key testimony came from former model and actress Bianca Jagger, the first wife of Rolling Stones singer Mick Jagger, who described how “the Ortega-Murillo regime has been perpetrating crimes against humanity” in her testimony.

She described Nicaragua as ‘probably one of the worst dictatorships in the world today’ and explained that the persecution of bishops, priests, nuns, and seminarians, is

because “the Catholic Church is the last bastion of opposition left in Nicaragua.”

Lord Alton explained that the aim was “to identify practical and meaningful steps that can be taken by the UK Government, and other States, to push this issue up the international agenda.”

The report calls for criminal investigations into senior Nicaraguan officials, support and technical as-

County hits new high for slavery victims

Andy Drozdziak

Catholic anti-trafficking group Medaille Trust has been left “saddened” by news that record numbers of potential victims of modern slavery have been found in Hampshire.

Recent figures from the Home Office reveal that 244 potential victims of Modern Slavery were referred to Hampshire Constabulary in 2023. This is up from 218 the previous year, and the highest number since records began.

The Medaille Trust is one of the largest Catholic charities seeking to provide freedom from modern slavery. The Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre said the statistics show the “harsh reality” of modern slavery as thousands of people are trapped and exploited in harsh conditions.

Medaille Trust works closely to support modern slavery victims in Hampshire, with its Southern Services based there and its Moving On Projects offering continued support for survivors.

Medaille Trust said: “We are saddened but not surprised to hear about this unfortunate statistical increase, which reflects our anecdotal

experience as an organisation offering front-line support to victims.

“This follows a general trend across the UK, where 17,004 potential victims of modern slavery were referred to the Home Office in 2023, up from 16,921 in 2022.”

Average waiting times have also increased: the period from being referred to getting a first decision (known as a reasonable grounds decision or RG), increased from six days to 23 days in 2023.

After Exploitation is a non-profit organisation which uses varied data sources, including Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, to track the hidden outcomes of modern slavery in the UK.

Director Maya Esslemont said: “We remain deeply concerned that action is still not being taken to tackle the root causes of modern slavery, whilst the number of survivors is growing.

“(it is) vital that the Government addresses the gulf between survivors recognised by first responders and those who eventually go on to get support that addresses their needs.”

Do you want there to be a strong Catholic voice in our society?



The Catholic Union is the voice of the laity in society. For over 150 years, we have educated and informed Parliament, the Government, the Media and the Public about the Catholic viewpoint on the issues of the day.

We need your help so please join the Catholic Union today!

As a Member you can

- participate in our work
- attend talks and other social events
- receive regular news and events briefings

For details about how to join (free for students and Under 25s) please click on our website:
www.catholicunion.org.uk



Public Engagement by Catholics for the Common Good

COMMENT

Editorial: Andy Drozdziak – news@universecatholicweekly.co.uk

Eclipsing wonder

Sir John Battle



I have only once witnessed a full solar eclipse. On 11th August 1999 we had two minutes of an eclipse, and for those minutes we were in darkness as the face of the sun was completely blocked by the position of the Moon.

Last Monday a full solar eclipse, lasting four minutes 28 seconds, started in Mexico and arced across North America to Canada.

Millions turned out to watch, and were lucky as a break in the clouds allowed them a great view as the earth plunged into darkness and the temperature dropped suddenly as the eclipse blocked the sun out.

The whole show lasted one hour and 40 minutes only but people travelled from far and wide to gather for a clear view. Of course, eclipses are recognised natural and regular phenomenon, a matter of cosmic geometry and angles, causing a partial eclipse somewhere every 20 years, though a total eclipse is estimated only to occur once in every 375 years in any one place. The next total eclipse visible in the UK will be in 2090.

The media caught the reactions of the watching crowds, gasping and cheering in awesome wonder and not a few using the modern secularised expletive "Oh my God" (OMG!).

In the past, eclipses were times of fear, and sun-worshipping peoples offered human sacrifices to appease the angry sky god.

Perhaps not surprising in our new irrational secular age, the conspiracy theorists were out, as were one or two reading it as a sign of God's anger, demanding that we repent before worse occurs.

In these times of floods and droughts it is harder to keep sight of the rainbow God promised through Noah!

Meanwhile, in these days of celebrating the mystery of the Resurrection, it was good to see the astrophysical scientists focusing their interest on the sun's corona, that outer atmosphere that appears bright round the Moon's edges for a few minutes, as part of their explorations of the mystery of the sun.

Their continuing sense of scientific wonder, taking them back into questions of primary causes of origins, recalled that beautiful line referring to 'the hands that flung stars into space' of the Easter hymn *Servant King*.

If only society cared as much for Christian festivals as Muslim ones

CATHOLIC COMMENT

Caroline Farrow



Call me an intolerant bigot, but I have to confess to being taken aback and admittedly rather saddened by the proliferation of material promoting Ramadan this year.

Every time I visit YouTube an advertisement for the Ramadan appeal immediately pops up on the screen, and when I emerged from Oxford Circus tube the other day, I almost thought it was Christmas, thanks to the dazzling Ramadan illuminations.

Meanwhile Network Rail faced heavy criticism when they decided to display a hadith (Islamic epithet of the day) on a departure board in celebration of Ramadan as part of a diversity initiative.

Having examined my conscience as to why this has made me feel uncomfortable, it is not because of any personal animus or prejudice towards Muslims, but because, to state the obvious, it is a reminder that the United Kingdom has drifted so far away from its Christian moorings. On one level it's perfectly fair to point out that what we experience during Ramadan is similar to what other faiths must experience during Christmas and Easter, but sadly public celebrations of these major Christian festivals have taken on a secular flavour and are far more about consumerism, hedonism and personal indulgence for most people, as opposed to focusing upon the life of Lord Jesus Christ.

It might seem only 'fair' that if Oxford Street is decorated for Christmas then the Muslim community should also be allowed a celebration, and while I have no truck with a jolly display of lights that are a source of joy and pleasure to anyone who sees them, I can't help but feel wistful for a time in my childhood, when the Christian faith had more public prominence. It feels as though everyone is going out of their way to promote and demonstrate their acceptance of the Muslim faith, but anyone who dares to begin citing the Bible is immediately closed down and written off as a crank and a loon, but then, of course, this is precisely what Jesus warned us about.

I suspect that it was this background of Ramadan seemingly being everywhere, that led to my horror when I saw a news story containing a video of an Iftar celebration, celebrating the end of Ramadan fasting, that took place in Bristol cathedral last week. On



Oxford Street's Ramadan light show

further research, it seems as though Christian churches hosting Iftars has become all the rage over the past few years as a way of promoting unity and outreach.

Promoting an Islamic festival inside a Christian place of worship seemed typical of the Church of England who see no issue in hosting silent discos complete with alcoholic drinks and installing helter skelters and mini golf courses inside our country's historic cathedrals, but my jaw absolutely hit the floor when I read that the Catholic diocese of Bergamo is also suggesting that Catholic seek out opportunities for interreligious dialogue during the 'holy month' of Ramadan by praying with Muslims and joining in the Iftar meal.

While there is clearly nothing wrong with interreligious dialogue and promoting community cohesion, talk of Ramadan being a holy month for Christians as well as Muslims, should make us deeply uncomfortable, as too should praying with Muslims. Again, I mean this with no disrespect, especially as unlike most Western Christians during Lent, Muslims really do take the practice of fasting seriously. There are obvious parallels between the two seasons.

There is, however, no escaping from the reality that Christianity and Islam are two entirely separate and contradictory religions, even if we do both worship the God of Abraham. Islam teaches that Jesus was a prophet and that Mohammed received God's definitive revelation. Neither faith believes that the other is true. The reason why I found the celebration of the Iftar inside Bristol cathedral so disturbing was because as well as handing around food in picnic-style fashion and

having an informal relaxed social occasion inside the house of God, the accompanying Islamic prayer, the adhan, could be heard in the background.

The adhan, contains the shahada, one of the most important credal Islamic statements, whose sincere recital is all that is required to become a Muslim. The shahada not only states that Muhammed is God's Messenger but also describes God as 'one', as opposed to the Trinitarian belief. That this should be recited inside a Cathedral beggars belief. It is not tolerant or loving, but is a denial of Jesus Christ.

While the diocese of Bergamo did not go as far as the Church of England in terms of suggesting that iftars should be hosted in Catholic churches, the nature of Islamic beliefs means that we should also be very wary about joining in with Islamic prayers. It is true to note that Jesus had no compunction sitting down at table with the marginalised, but it is also true that He was always invited by others and never the host, apart from at the Last Supper which was an exclusive celebration for His committed disciples.

When Christ sat down and offered hospitality to people, it was as means to call sinners to

There is no escaping from the reality that Christianity and Islam are two entirely separate and contradictory religions, even if we do both worship the God of Abraham

conversion, rather than to have their beliefs and practices foisted upon him. Interreligious dialogue, mutual understanding and tolerance is one thing, implicit celebration of a belief that denies Christ and the Trinity, is quite another.

By all means break bread with people of different faiths, but do it in such a way that it does not defile God's place of worship, does not involve a public implicit disavowal of Christianity and also, crucially, involves some element of evangelisation and call to conversion.

Just as Muslims, would rightly, not permit a celebration of Mass in a mosque, neither should Christians be in a position of having to pray the shahada.

Religious tolerance is the practice allowing and accepting other people to publicly manifest their beliefs, which will often make us feel uncomfortable. It's perfectly understandable to contrast the prominence of Ramadan with how Lent has disappeared from public consciousness and wish for more fervour and conviction from Christian leaders in society. It would have been incredible if Network Rail could have displayed Ash Wednesday sentiments at their stations, but know that they would never even have conceived of this idea.

It's fine to wish that society was more manifestly Christian and perhaps if this were the case, although it may sound counter-intuitive, we might actually have more community cohesion.

After all, wanting people to experience the joy of Easter, is not about hatred, but rather wanting the best for everyone; in this life and the next.

Salford hit again by new thefts from church

Andy Drozdziak

Parishioners from Salford Catholic churches have been left shocked and reeling after yet more statues were stolen in what appears to be a series of targeted and organised thefts.

The one remaining statue outside St Luke's church, Salford, which is part of Our Lady of Hope parish, has now been stolen.

A crucifix and statue of Our Lady have also been stolen from St Mark's, Pendlebury.

The latest thefts come after two similar incidents which have upset the local community. First, vandals are believed to have turned up in the early hours of Monday, 18th March at St Mary's RC Primary and Nursery School in Langley, Greater Manchester. Images showed that the school's large Calvary statue had been cut down.

This was preceded in January by a similar incident at St Luke's, where thieves escaped with statues of Jesus on a crucifix, with the crucifix sawn at the base, a kneeling figure

of St Bernadette and a kneeling angel.

Paul Ashton, who is the parish communications officer at Our Lady of Hope parish in Salford, underlined the sadness felt by parishioners and shared his belief that Catholics in the area are under attack.

"The congregation are understandably upset and feel that we, and Catholics in the area, are being targeted," Mr Ashton told the *Universe*. "However, the other side of this is that the statues are being taken away, stolen not vandalised, and this would suggest that they are being stolen for sale – possibly abroad.

"I had already been in contact with possible dealers in the UK and have now contacted dealers in Europe to alert them to the thefts."

A spokesperson for the Diocese of Salford told the *Universe* of its regret at the "very sad" incidents.

"We are aware of a number of sad events concerning the desecration of religious images," the spokesperson said. "These have been reported to police and, as far as we are aware,

there is no link between these events but the matter will be investigated.

"It is certainly very sad to think that such damage is being done."

Devastated parishioners took to social media to share their dismay. Posting on Facebook, Linda Morgan said that 'this is so terrible and sad', whilst Suzanne Rankin called the incident 'a disgrace' and James Brown said it was 'disgusting'.

Currently, no updates have been provided on the thefts by Greater Manchester Police in response to the *Universe's* request for comment.

Paul Ashton is keen to hear from anyone with any information.

He said: "If you have any information that may help, please do let us know.

"Again we would ask for CCTV or doorbell footage that might pinpoint the time or other vital information."

• If you have any relevant information, Mr Ashton can be contacted at communications@ourladyofhope.org.uk



A photograph of the outside of the church before the thefts, with the stolen statue circled in yellow

Job offer withdrawn over Christian views

Leeds Employment Tribunal heard evidence analysing the validity of 'minority stress theory' in the case of Christian social worker Felix Ngole.

Mr Ngole, 46, brought a case against Touchstone Support Leeds, following the NHS provider withdrawing a job offer after it discovered that Mr Ngole has orthodox Christian beliefs on human sexuality.

Mr Ngole was the best candidate for the role of mental health support worker at Wakefield Hospital, until Touchstone discovered he had won a crucial case for free speech and Christian freedoms at the Court of Appeal in 2019.



Mr Ngole says he was discriminated against for his orthodox Christian beliefs

The NHS provider tried to use 'minority stress theory' to justify withdrawing the job offer. The theory suggests that minority groups, such as the LGBT community, experience stress stemming from experiences of stigma and discrimination.

Giving evidence to support Touchstone's position, Dr H. Eli Joubert suggested that if NHS LGBT service users discovered Mr Ngole's beliefs online, it could lead to "death" because knowledge of Mr Ngole's conservative Christian beliefs will traumatise people, even if

he never said anything on the subject during employment.

Touchstone management suggested that if Mr Ngole told a client that there are only two genders, or expressed opposition to same-sex marriage, the client could commit suicide.

They added that the famous Bible verse, John 3:16, would be "triggering" to an LGBT service user.

The Christian Legal Centre believes it is the first time it has been argued that a person expressing on social media traditional Christian views on marriage and sexuality could be a reason to discriminate in employment against them, due to the potential harm to LGBT people.

However, the view was rejected by an expert evidence on minority stress theory, Rev. Dr Paul Sullins, of The Catholic University of America. He told the tribunal that "social isolation is the number one factor leading to suicide" in the UK.

He said: "Minority stress theory models don't tell us why sexual minorities predict suicide", adding "there are no higher incidents of suicide in the LGBT population than the rest of the population. LGBT persons are more likely to talk about attempted suicide, but not more likely to commit suicide."

Touchstone staff had shown "a basic misunderstanding of what sin means in the Christian tradition."

The hearing continues.

We are Proudly Marymount




Marymount
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL LONDON



With a 100% pass rate, Marymount is the school of choice for girls wishing to complete the IB Diploma.

Accepting applications

In Brief

US ‘zombie drug’ linked to UK deaths

The flesh-eating “zombie drug” xylazine, which is sweeping the US, has been linked to 11 deaths in Britain, researchers have said.

The drug, also known as ‘tranq’ or ‘tranq dope’, is a powerful animal tranquiliser. When injected by humans, it can cause a dangerously slow heart rate and large open skin wounds such as ulcers and abscesses.

It is causing major problems in the US, where addicts are often seen in a catatonic state on the streets; overdoses have risen 35 per cent since 2021.

Top lawyer fell on luxury cruise

A corporate lawyer who vanished on a Mediterranean cruise ship fell feet first from a cabin balcony into the sea, a court heard.

Nigel Blythe-Tinker, 72, former head of legal at gaming giant William Hill, went missing while on board the luxury cruise ship *Seven Seas Mariner*.

The High Court heard that the alarm was raised when Blythe-Tinker failed to disembark at Barcelona.

Under-16s face phone sale ban

Children under 16 could be banned from buying mobile phones under proposals being considered by ministers.

Technology Secretary Michelle Donelan is looking at imposing the restriction in an attempt to protect young people from the harmful effects of social media.

It comes amid a government crackdown on children’s use of phones, with Gillian Keegan, the Education Secretary, issuing guidance earlier this year urging schools to ban mobile phones in the classroom, saying the move would reduce disruption and improve behaviour.

Catholics ‘outrage’ over crisps ad

A television advert in which Italian nuns are offered crisps instead of communion wafers has provoked the ire of conservative Catholics.

They are demanding that the advert for Amica Chips be withdrawn immediately because it is blasphemous.

In the 30-second ad, a group of young nuns are seen filing through a cloister into a chapel. When mother superior finds there are no communion wafers, she fills up a chalice with crisps – much to the delight of the nuns.

EU accused of pointing its cash at wrong kind of farming

Over 80 per cent of the EU’s farming subsidies support emissions-intensive animal products

The vast majority of the EU’s agricultural subsidies are supporting meat and dairy farming rather than sustainable plant alternatives. That’s the key finding of new research, published in *Nature Food*, in which for the first time we were able to fully account for crops and other plants grown to feed animals.

The subsidies operate through the EU’s common agricultural policy (known as the CAP). This plays a critical role in shaping farming across Europe, but has been the subject of intense criticism for years.

Critics say it supports big landowners over smaller farmers, that its environmental payments represent only a small portion of the budget, and that it is vulnerable to corruption.

While some EU policymakers want to make the CAP more sustainable by including more environmental provisions, they face opposition from lobby groups and protests by farmers. But our work shows these environmental improvements are sorely needed as more than 80% of CAP funds support animal-based products.

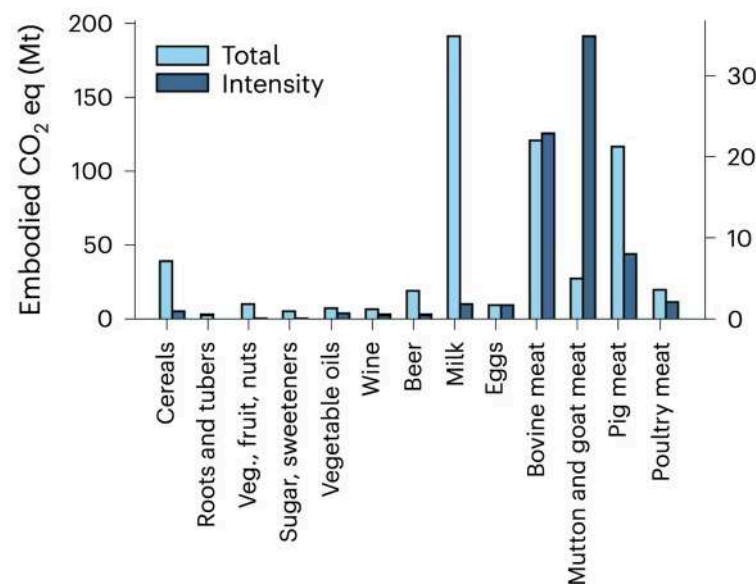
These products overwhelmingly drive the EU’s food-related greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss, water consumption, air pollution, water pollution and more.

Meat is cheaper than it would be in a fairer market

The CAP is the largest single EU expenditure, accounting for roughly 38 per cent of total spending. We found that of the €57 billion (£49 billion) annual CAP budget, €46 billion (£39 billion) was directed towards animal-based products, mostly foods like beef, pork, chicken, dairy and eggs.

These estimates are from 2013 – the most recent year for the food supply model we used – but the proportion of the subsidy has changed very little since then. Our estimates are higher than was previously thought because we now have a more complete picture of the subsidies that animal feed also receives.

For example, a French farmer growing wheat for pig or chicken feed will receive a subsidy for that wheat on top of the subsidy received by a livestock farmer in Denmark who imports that feed. On this basis, we show that CAP



Food produced in the EU in 2013: total embodied CO₂ equivalent (light blue, left axis) and per kilo (dark blue, right axis).

impacts, especially in high-income nations.

Such shifts may even release land to help meet climate targets and improve food security. Yet CAP subsidies are perpetuating the existing system, not helping in transitioning the system.

Subsidised food is being exported away

The use of public funds in the CAP aims to ensure healthy, safe and secure food production for the EU. But these subsidies are also influencing production and consumption in other countries that import food from the EU.

We find that 12 per cent of the CAP budget ends up subsidising the price of exports to non-EU countries. Perhaps surprisingly, much of these exports head towards higher-income nations. In fact, in 2013, the US effectively imported more CAP money via food imports from the EU than all the CAP money that went to Denmark.

It’s the same for China, importing more than the money going to the Netherlands. This ultimately makes the convergence on healthy and sustainable diets at the global level more difficult.

More broadly, farmers are under huge pressure from issues such as climate-driven extreme weather and increasing production costs due to inflation. But we know that without significant green reforms – including the reform of the CAP – the increasing costs of environmental damage will make things even worse in future.

To build a food system that is more sustainable, more resilient and better for public health, farming subsidies will have to be reformed.

The recent watering down of green EU policy is a step backwards, and can only be an act of self-harm over the longer term.

support roughly doubles for animal-based foods. For example, beef CAP subsidies increase from €0.71/kg to €1.42/kg once feed is included.

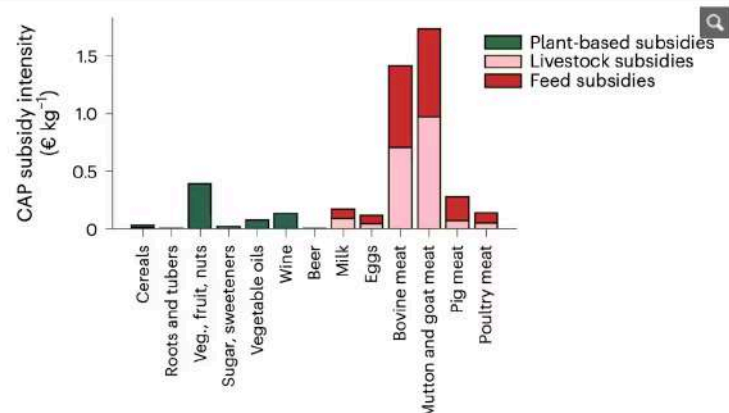
This does not directly translate into the price on the shelves, as there are many other distortions in the current food system. But it gives a sense of the relative difference between animal and plant products.

The result is an uneven playing field in which animal products are cheaper than they would be otherwise, thanks to the additional subsidies. It makes fruits, vegetables and nuts appear relatively more expensive than

meat or dairy, which flies in the face of efforts to reduce the environmental damage of the EU’s food system and to encourage healthier eating.

The global food system on its own is enough to blow past the climate targets of 1.5°C and even 2°C of warming. We’ll need drastic action to transition fast enough to not only reduce this environmental impact, but to be resilient to more extreme weather driven by climate change.

Scientific consensus now shows that a shift to mainly plant-based diets is the biggest single opportunity to reduce these food-related environmental



EU subsidies of different foods in euro per kilogram of retail weight in 2013. Kortleve et al / Nature Food, CC BY-SA

Restoration project hopes to bring Pugin's design back to cathedral

Cliveden Conservation has said the latest stage of a project to restore a Pugin-designed church has led to some exciting discoveries.

The Cathedral Church of St Barnabas is a Grade II* listed building in the heart of Nottingham. Its Lady chapel is currently being restored, and the diocese described its vision for the chapel. "Imagine this Chapel – with its grey-washed, dirty, dull, tired walls (and) ceiling – transformed with the reinstatement of Pugin's colourful, vibrant, intentional and intense decorative paint schemes over the next two years. That's what we are working towards as part of our Restoring Pugin Project," it said.

"Through paint conservation work and detailed research we hope to bring Pugin's original vision and design for our cathedral back to its former glory, with all its richness, colour, gothic splendour and detail."

Cliveden project manager Nicola Collins explained details of the discoveries. "Dedicated to the Virgin Mary in 1993 following restoration, the cathedral's central east chapel has been the focus of our continuing paint trials this month, with our team of conservators working to identify and record successive phas-



es of decoration," she said.

"Beneath the plainly decorated finish of the interior elevations, up to nine layers of earlier paint have now been recorded. Opening stratigraphic windows and meticulously removing each of these in turn has enabled us to reach the earliest phase of decoration, uncovering a beautiful array of stencils.

"The intensity of the decoration within the Chapel speaks of devotion to the Virgin Mary, with the lower sections of the interior walls

covered in a reoccurring monogram which incorporates a gilded 'M', star, crown, and concentric circle motif, set against a deep blue ground.

"The scheme of stars found on the Unity Chapel ceiling panels continues, but here, the decoration and effect are more pronounced, with every third panel painted with floral motifs. A central monogram on a red ground is placed within a five-petaled blush flower with gilded sunbursts.

"Decoration has also been found beneath the light scumble finish on the timbers of the Chapel's scissor-braced roof and on the arched openings to the adjoining Unity Chapel and Chapel of St. Hugh.

"Here, repeating patterns of foliage, flowers and fleur-de-lis embellish these surfaces.

"Interestingly, within the reredos, the current paint scheme of blue, white, and gold leaf mirrors the earliest decoration found here beneath seven later layers of paint, indicating that earlier exploration had uncovered and replicated this scheme."

Addressing the cathedral's current paint finish in a recent issue of *The Buildings of England, Nottinghamshire*, architectural historian Sir Nikolaus Pevsner wrote: "The whole effect could hardly be further from the richness of decoration and atmosphere that Pugin intended."

Nicola Collins added: "This project, which has been made possible thanks to a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, has enabled us to gain some fascinating insight into the captivating glory of the Lady Chapel and the exciting opportunities for future conservation work in continuing phases of the project."

Former priest jailed for 12 years

Michael Hobbs, a former priest of the diocese of Westminster, has been sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment following a conviction of non-recent sexual abuse.

The Dublin-born cleric was found guilty of indecently assaulting a 15-year-old boy who turned to him for advice in 2000.

In a statement, the diocese said: "The diocese of Westminster is deeply sorry for the hurt that he caused to his victims, their families and the wider community, and acknowledges the gravity of the abuse he inflicted.

"The diocese co-operated with the police throughout the investigation. Michael Hobbs was stood down from ministry in 2000, and laicised in 2002.

"The Diocese of Westminster is committed to the safeguarding of all children and vulnerable adults in its care. Over the past two decades, in conjunction with the Catholic Church in England and Wales, we have developed robust safeguarding policies and procedures for parishes, chaplaincies, schools and agencies to provide protection for children and vulnerable adults. We continue to strengthen our policies, procedures and practice.

"If anyone has any concerns of a safeguarding nature involving the diocese, help and information are available at our special website, rcdow.org.uk/safeguarding."

SPREAD THE WORD WITH CONVICTION

Faith tells us never to give up on people. Spiritual guidance is thin on the ground in prison, but we know copies of The Universe Catholic Weekly are well read when available.

Your sponsorship of just £162.50 allows us to send 5 copies of The Universe Catholic Weekly every week for 3 months into a prison. It could improve some lives. It might even change them.

To place your sponsorship please contact us:

07436 617 650

www.universecatholicweekly.co.uk

michelle.jones@universecatholicweekly.co.uk

We accept all major credit and debit cards.

UNIVERSE CATHOLIC WEEKLY

Keeping your faith in the news www.universecatholicweekly.co.uk



HCPT in Lourdes: ‘Let your light shine’

Ellen Teague

The HCPT (Hosanna House & Children’s Pilgrimage Trust) was in Lourdes last week for its annual Easter pilgrimage. Around 2,500 were involved, including more than 1,000 disabled and disadvantaged children, all organised into 104 groups.

Groups wore distinctive, colourful clothing so that they stand out in the Lourdes crowds and anyone wandering off can be spotted easily. My group – 144 from North and West London wore bright green – a nod to our Irish roots. Groups could be seen visiting the Grotto and leaving candles, collecting Lourdes water, gathering for Masses at many of the chapels around the town and participating in the Stations of the Cross.

Many visited the Cité Saint-Pierre in the hills above Lourdes, which takes in visitors who cannot afford the Lourdes hotels, and some had Mass in its beautiful Sheepfold Chapel. *Ave Maria* was sung regularly but also other HCPT favourites such as *Sing it in the valleys* and *Rise and Shine*.

HCPT Scotland co-ordinated liturgies this year and bagpipes were heard regularly around the town. Bishop Joseph Toal of Motherwell was lead celebrant in the main Trust Mass on the Thursday, alongside Archbishop Leo Cushley of St Andrews & Edinburgh and President of HCPT, seven other bishops, and around 60 priests. The Mass was followed by hundreds live on the internet.



HCPT also led a Blessed Sacrament procession and a Torchlight Procession during the week.

Bishop Toal said afterwards: “There is an openness about being in Lourdes itself and enjoying together the experience of celebrating our faith and asking God’s help for one another and those we pray for.

“The simplicity of St Bernadette and the motherly care of Our Lady add to the wholeness and homeliness of the experience and give us a sense of God’s presence and his invitation to ‘let our light shine.’”

At the end, Group 122 from York tweeted: ‘We have truly had the most wonderful week in Lourdes. Words can’t describe how proud we are of our beneficiaries – their growth since meeting them at the activity day is unimaginable. From

not knowing anybody and being very shy and reserved, to spending a whole week laughing, hugging, singing and caring for each other. The beneficiaries are always at the centre of everything we do, but they will never understand quite how much we, as helpers, gain and learn from them.’

It’s a youthful pilgrimage – more than half of the participants are under 30 – and young people clearly gained a great deal from the experience. St Thomas More Catholic High School and Sixth Form College in North Shields tweeted at the end: ‘Lourdes 2024 is complete! A huge thank you and well done to our inspirational students who have let their light shine this week.’

They added: ‘We couldn’t be prouder of their commitment, selflessness and great humour. We



came as friends, but we leave as family!’

Nicholas Breakspear School in Hertfordshire tweeted: ‘Our last night in Lourdes allowed us to pray for our loved ones and people who need our prayers. We lit candles opposite the grotto as a lasting intention. Thank you for bringing

us together for a brilliant pilgrimage.’

Above, HCPT Scotland co-ordinated liturgies this year and bagpipes were heard regularly around the town.



Pupils and staff at St Anthony’s Catholic Primary School in Fareham, supported CAFOD’s Big Lent Walk this year.

Headteacher Katrina Straker said the school took Monday, 11th March for their walk in the woods opposite the school. All classes from reception through to Year 6 took part, with an aim of walking as many 1km laps of a route

through the woods as possible.

The spirit of determination and collaboration was discernible, with older children buddying up to hold hands with and encourage younger children to keep going.

In one afternoon, the children walked an amazing 741km in total and raised over £900 for CAFOD through sponsorship from their families.

Children are continuing to walk additional kilometres in their own time after school and at weekends, so the school hopes to beat their target of 1,000km.

Ms Straker added: “The Big Lent Walk was a wonderful way for children to take up something extra during Lent in order to help others around the world who are not as lucky as them.

Birmingham duo receive Queen’s Maundy gift

Two Catholics from Birmingham received Maundy money from Queen Camilla on Maundy Thursday.

Sister Thérèse O’Brien, pastoral assistant at St Chad’s Cathedral, Birmingham, and Philip Jones from St George’s Catholic Church in Worcester were among the 75 men and 75 women receiving the gift. The number of men and women corresponds to the monarch’s age. During the service, the Queen personally presented each recipient with two purses: one red and one white.

The white purse contains a set of specially minted silver Maundy coins, the value corresponding to the age of the reigning Monarch.

The red purse contains two commemorative coins, symbolising the Sovereign’s historical gift of food and clothing.

At the service, Queen Camilla bestowed the Maundy gift upon the men and women, expressing gratitude for their Christian service and their contributions to local communities. This meaningful tradition dates back to 600 AD, and the special coins have retained a similar form since 1670.

Sister Thérèse said that the Maundy money is for the Sisters of St Paul, Selly Park, and would be kept at their Mother House. She said she felt overjoyed and that it was a wonderful day.



Queen Camilla at the service

Beautiful faith-filled Rosaries

from The Universe Catholic Weekly

To buy any of these products, just click on the Buy Me button by your choice

BUY ME



BUY ME

Black wood bead St Benedict Rosary Beads

Metal St. Benedict Centre piece
Made by hand in Italy. Strong Wire
St Benedict Crucifix
St Benedict Pater beads
Very tactile with smooth beads
Supplied in organza bag
Ref R5 RRP £28.95



BUY ME

Brown wood carved bead rosary

Traditional 'Trefoil' enamelled brown crucifix
Made by hand in Italy
Strong wire
Very tactile with smooth beads
Supplied in organza bag
Ref R9 RRP £29.95

Sapphire blue carved glass rosary beads

Made by hand with extra strong wire
Traditional crucifix
Colour Miraculous Medal on all Paters and centre piece
Supplied in organza bag
Ref R11 RRP £38.95



BUY ME

Brown wood bead St Benedict rosary beads

Metal St. Benedict centre piece
Made by hand in Italy. Strong wire
St Benedict crucifix
St Benedict Pater beads
Very tactile with smooth beads
Supplied in organza bag
Ref R13 RRP £28.95



BUY ME



BUY ME

Red carved glass rosary beads

Made by hand with extra strong wire
Traditional crucifix
Colour Divine Mercy medal on all Paters and centre piece
Supplied in organza bag
Ref R12 RRP £38.95

Maroon red rosary beads

Cream colour pater beads
Traditional crucifix
Made by hand in Italy. Strong wire
Very tactile with smooth beads
Supplied in organza bag
Ref R15 RRP £26.75



BUY ME

Sapphire blue rosary beads

Traditional crucifix
Made by hand in Italy. Strong wire
Very tactile with smooth beads
Supplied in organza bag
Ref R18 RRP £28.95



BUY ME

Universe subscribers get a 10% discount on all products!

Buy now – Contact Michelle Jones

t: 07436 617650

E: michelle.jones@universecatholicweekly.co.uk

or see universecatholicweekly.co.uk/shop/

More rosaries and other faith-filled products and gifts, including for Confirmation and Christenings, available at universecatholicweekly.co.uk/shop/

In Brief

Top archbishop resigns after abuse investigation

A Vatican investigation into the Peruvian Catholic organisation Sodalitium Christianae Vitae, launched in 2023 after spiritual and sexual abuse allegations were received dating back two decades, has resulted in the resignation of one of its most important members, Archbishop José Antonio Eguren of Piura.

Archbishop Eguren was accused of involvement in abuse cover-up operations waged by the religious group. He stepped down without giving an official reason. He is 67, eight years shy of the retirement age of any bishop.

“We can certainly say that last year’s visit of Malta Archbishop Charles Scicluna and Spanish Msgr. Jordi Bertomeu is connected to Eguren’s resignation,” journalist Paola Ugaz said. Ugaz and fellow journalist Pedro Salinas published the book *Half Monks, Half Soldiers* in 2015, which described numerous cases of abuse perpetrated over several years by the leaders of Sodalitium.

The reporters’ work provoked a scandal in the Peruvian Church by highlighting allegations made by former members of the group.

In July 2023, the official visit of Archbishop Scicluna and Msgr. Bertomeu to Peru to investigate Sodalitium was received with confidence by many of the group’s victims, who hoped it would be finally dissolved.

Priests must be ready to wipe all tears away

Priests are called to be “a true icon of Jesus,” drawing closer to God the Father by devoting their lives to the care of all God’s children, Pope Francis wrote.

The pope met with Latin American priests doing graduate studies in Rome and living at the Mexican, Brazilian and Latin American colleges in the city.

He handed them copies of his prepared text but did not read it.

Referring to the sixth station of the cross, Pope Francis wrote that priests must “become the ‘Veronica’ of every face, of every tear. How? By wiping them away with my priestly vestments.” The first way a priest does that, he said, is “by prayer, presenting each concrete situation to the presence of God: ‘Lord, the one you love is suffering.’”



Pope holds emotional meeting with Israeli hostages’ families

Eight Israelis united in their anguish have met the pope at the Vatican to discuss fate of their loved ones, who are believed to be held in captivity by Hamas.

The father, mother, aunt, uncle, cousin, brother or twin sister of various Israeli hostages met with Pope Francis for just under an hour on Monday, 8th April, six months after the 7th October attack on Israel by Hamas in which some 240 people were kidnapped and taken to Gaza.

Few details were released of the meeting, but Vatican News reported that among those who met with the

pope was Bezael Shnaider, the aunt of Shiri Bibas, an Israeli mother taken hostage along with her two sons, 4-year-old Ariel and 9-month-old Kfir, the youngest hostage taken in the attacks.

In a video of the meeting posted on X by *L’Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper, Pope Francis touched his hand to a poster with images of the children to bless them.

The video also showed Amit Nimrodi giving Pope Francis a necklace bearing the image of a house with a heart inside, a symbol of support for the hostages, and he told the pope

that he began growing out his now-lengthy white beard when his son was taken hostage since he believes his son, an Israeli soldier, is also growing out his beard in captivity.

Gal Gilboa-Dalal, another member of the delegation, survived the Hamas attack on a music festival in Re’im, Israel, but his brother, 22-year-old Guy, was taken prisoner by Hamas. Li-Yam Berger attended the audience in support of her twin sister, Agam, a 19-year-old Israeli soldier, who was kidnapped during an attack military base in Nahal Oz.

The delegation left the Vatican to

travel through Italy, meeting with government representatives and members of the Italian Jewish community.

In November Pope Francis had met at the Vatican with 12 relatives of 14 Israelis held hostage by Hamas and, separately, with 10 Palestinians whose family members were suffering under the Israeli siege of Gaza.

The Vatican press office insisted the meetings were “of an exclusively humanitarian nature.”

The whereabouts of the eight hostages could not be confirmed, but it is believed all of them are still alive.

Jesus’s love beats any joy man gets from pleasure and power

Pursuing the path of pleasure and power does not lead to happiness, Pope Francis said.

“It is a road that at first sight seems pleasurable, but which does not satiate the heart. It is not in this way that one ‘has life,’” the pope said before leading the recitation of the *Regina Coeli*.

Greeting some 15,000 visitors in St. Peter’s Square, the pope said, “We all want to have life, but there are various ways of having it.”

For example, he said, “there are those who reduce existence to a frenetic race to enjoy and possess many things: to eat and drink, to enjoy themselves, to accumulate money and objects, to feel strong and new emotions, and so on.”

At first, these pursuits seem to bring great pleasure, he said. However, “many aspects of existence re-

main unanswered, such as love (and) the inevitable experiences of pain, of limitations and of death. And then the dream we all have in common remains unfulfilled: the hope of living forever, of being loved without limit.”

The fullness of life, “to which every one of us is called, is realised in Jesus: it is he who gives us this fullness of life,” the pope said.

Pope Francis asked the faithful to ask themselves: “Do I believe in the power of the resurrection of Jesus; do I believe that Jesus is risen?” and “Do I let myself be prompted by him to love my brothers and sisters, and to hope every day?”

The way to “have life” every day, he said, is to “fix one’s eyes on the crucified and risen Jesus, encountering him in the sacraments and in prayer, and loving him.”

Papal appointments bring changes to Diocese of Rome

Pope Francis has made major changes to the diocese of Rome, giving new positions to both Cardinal Angelo De Donatis, his vicar for the diocese since 2017, and Auxiliary Bishop Daniele Libanori, a Jesuit who has served as auxiliary for the past six years.

Cardinal De Donatis is now major penitentiary or head of the Apostolic Penitentiary, a Church court dealing with matters of conscience.

He succeeds Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, who had held the position since 2013 and is 80 in September.

Pope Francis did not immediately name a new vicar for the Rome diocese.

The Vatican announcement said Bishop Libanori, who gained international attention for his strong defence of the women who accused former Jesuit Father Marko Rupnik

of abuse, will become the “assessor of the Holy Father for consecrated life,” though the Vatican did not explain what the assessor’s duties would be.

Bishop Libanori, whom Pope Francis named an auxiliary bishop of Rome in 2017, was appointed in 2019 to investigate the Loyola Community, a religious community of women founded in Slovenia with the help and encouragement of Father Rupnik.

In addition to defending the women who accused Fr Rupnik of abuse, Bishop Libanori’s investigation led to the Vatican ordering the disbanding of the Loyola Community.

In his new role at the Apostolic Penitentiary, Cardinal De Donatis will focus on the church’s ministries of reconciliation and forgiveness.

Church universal safeguarding framework puts zero tolerance and civil reporting at its heart

Cindy Wooden

The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors has reaffirmed the requirement that every diocese, Catholic religious order and institution in the world have clear safeguarding guidelines and procedures and that they are publicly accessible.

The commission's Universal Guidelines Framework insists that 'all reports of sexual abuse should be reported to the civil authorities' and that the local Church maintain evidence that they have co-operated with civil authorities in investigating and responding to all allegations.

The pontifical commission began drafting the framework in 2022, and approved it for distribution last March. Members of the lay community were encouraged to contribute through a special website.

"Given the vastly different cultural contexts in which safeguarding policies and procedures are required to operate, the Commission will en-

gage in a targeted series of pilot programmes to evaluate their effectiveness, especially in those parts of the Church that have little experience of safeguarding guidelines," the commission spokesman said.

While being sensitive to local cultural differences, "the zero-tolerance approach to abuse" must be maintained.

Much of the framework – such as child protection screening and training for all church workers – are standard in many countries that have dealt publicly with the clerical sexual abuse crisis, but they still are not universally followed.

Bishops and religious superiors should have 'professional support in screening candidates for seminary/formation programmes and before ordination/profession of vows.'

The guidelines says that Church leaders must ask if 'the applicant or candidate has previously withdrawn or been exited from another seminary or formation programme.'

Dioceses, seminaries and religious orders must have 'a system in place to assess the safeguarding credentials – good standing – and manage the movement of all seminarians, clergy, religious and lay ministers between different Church bodies – especially across international borders,' it said.

The framework also calls on dioceses and religious orders to assign mentors to all newly ordained clergy and newly professed religious for at least five years, and for clergy and religious arriving from other countries for at least two years, particularly to help familiarise them with aspects of the local culture.

Physical and online risks must be assessed and managed within the provision of ministry, the framework says, especially from: 'one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child; ministries such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction

and mentoring; potential physical contact where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated; (and) one-to-one interactions with vulnerable adults.'

When hiring personnel, each position should be assessed 'for the expected level of contact with children and/or vulnerable adults and appropriate safeguarding recruitment procedures implemented.'

As the Catholic Church continues to discuss the definition of "vulnerable adult" and to understand what constitutes abuse versus a consensual sexual relationship, the framework said the policies must acknowledge that when allegations are made, "power imbalances may exist between the complainant and respondent," and those policies should be sensitive to the imbalance.

The imbalance, it said, can be a result of the relationship, for example, between an "employer and employee, teacher and student, coach and athlete, clergy and parishioner."

Meeting marks 800 years of Francis stigmata

The wounds of Christ's passion and death and the stigmata given to some Christians over the centuries are reminders of "the pain Jesus suffered in his flesh out of love for us," Pope Francis said.

But the stigmata is a reminder that through baptism Christians participate in Christ's victory over suffering and death because "it is precisely through his wounds that the mercy of the Risen flows to us."

Pope Francis made his comments during celebrations of the 800th anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi receiving "the gift of the stigmata" after he had withdrawn to the hills of La Verna to pray and do penance in 1224.

He met Italian Franciscan friars from La Verna and from Tuscany, who brought the pope a reliquary containing blood from the stigmata of St. Francis.

The stigmata is a reminder that a Christian is part of "the body of Christ," not in name alone but in reality, the pope said.

In the "communion of love," which is the church, he said, "each of us rediscovers who he or she is: a beloved, blessed, reconciled son or daughter, sent to give witness to the wonders of his grace."

Cry with Mary at others' pain, order told

The Weeping Madonna of Syracuse is a sign that Mary not only cries because of people's pain, but she also cries to soften the hearts of other believers so that they will help, Pope Francis told members of the St. Angela Merici Foundation in Syracuse, Italy.

"The Lord wants to make our consciences sensitive, so that we let ourselves be touched by the pain of our brothers and sisters and to move us to compassion for them, lifting them up, lifting them up, accompanying them," the pope said.

The foundation runs a hospital, a home for the elderly and rehabilitation centres in Sicily, drawing inspiration from the Weeping Madonna of Syracuse, a plaster image of Mary that began weeping in 1953. The local church said there was no natural explanation for what happened, and tests on the liquid determined they had the same composition as human tears do.

Pope Francis encouraged foundation members to carry out their work with professionalism and a spirit of sacrifice, expressing "in concrete gestures the tears wept by the Virgin Mary."

"I ask for a grace for you: the grace to know how to be moved, the capacity to cry with those who cry," the pope told them.



Red letter day for volunteers

People of faith are called to defend human life and dignity regardless of religious, economic, political or social differences, Pope Francis said. "For the believer each person is sacred," he told volunteers from the Italian Red Cross. "Every human creation is loved by God and, because of this, the bearer of inalienable human rights."

The pope addressed some 6,000 volunteers wearing red uniforms for the 160th anniversary of the Italian Red Cross, which he said has performed acts of charity for people regardless of "nationality, social class, religion or political opinion" since its founding. He urged them to always uphold the "supreme value of life" and to defend society's most

vulnerable, noting children in particular. Pope Francis highlighted the plight of Ukrainian children who sought refuge in Italy due to war, lamenting, "These children do not smile, they have forgotten the ability to smile," he said. He also condemned today's "self-centered" society, more focused on the "I" than the "us," he said.



The USA was dazzled by a total lunar eclipse on Monday, with a swathe of the nation plunged into darkness. In New York, the eclipse saw the moon cover two-thirds of the sun (above).

Inset, Fr Spenser St. Louis and Fr David Violi in Bluffton, Indiana, use protective glasses to watch the solar eclipse outside St. Joseph Church, where the eclipse reached totality
Photo: Gretchen Crowe



Israel making a mistake in Gaza warns Biden

US President Joe Biden has issued his strongest criticism yet of Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, saying he has made a "mistake" in his handling of Gaza.

But he stopped short of withdrawing support for its ally, and confirmed that he would continue to allow weapons sales for now.

However, he told US Spanish language channel Univision that "what Netanyahu's doing is a mistake. I don't agree with his approach."

Gaza should have "total access to all food and medicine for the next six to eight weeks," stressing that ongoing US support for the war depended on Israel allowing in more food and medicine.

He added that the news of the deaths of seven aid workers – including three Britons and one US-Canadian – was "outrageous".

Mr Biden also turned up the pressure on Israel finding a diplomatic solution to the conflict: "The Israelis need to call for a ceasefire, allow for the next six, eight weeks, total access to all food and medicine going into the country."

Previously he has said Hamas must agree to a "pause" in the fighting and release the remaining hostages.

Israel said recently that it would open a crossing to northern Gaza

and a deep water port, to allow more aid to flow into the area. It has not yet detailed when or how these routes will operate.

Israel has faced mounting criticism over the amount of aid it has allowed into Gaza. The country's leaders have denied impeding the entry of aid or its distribution, and has accused the UN and aid agencies working in the territory of failing to get the aid that is allowed in to the people who need it.

Qatar is currently brokering peace talks over the conflict and said at the start of the week that it is "cautiously optimistic" that a ceasefire and hostage exchange can be agreed.

International pressure is growing on Israel to find a solution, with more and more allies, including the UK, changing the tone of their support, from full support to more ambiguous backing. The UK Foreign Secretary, Lord Cameron, has said the UK would still allow weapons sales to Israel but that support was conditional on Israel doing more to help Gazans trapped by the conflict.

The hour-long interview with President Biden was recorded two days after Israeli military strikes killed seven aid workers with World Central Kitchen – and aired on Tuesday night.

Mexico violence hits new high as 29 candidates killed

Bishop dragged from car and assaulted as gangs fight for power

David Agren

Church fears that Mexico's presidential campaign could be overshadowed by violence have come true, with a shocking 29 political candidates killed so far, as the 2nd June election day nears.

The latest attack saw Gisela Gaytán Gutiérrez, a mayoral candidate in a municipality where drug cartels control the stolen petrol trade, shot dead at a campaign event near the city of Celaya.

Gaytán's death shocked Mexico, where drug cartel violence has wracked the country for more than 15 years. It shocked Celaya, too, where more than 30 police officers have been murdered over the past three years and the bodies of five medical students were found stuffed into a car at the end of 2023.

"Not only did they kill a candidate, they killed a host of possibilities for good, which were taken from this city by criminals," Fr Padre

César Cadavieco said at Gaytán's emotional funeral Mass. "Hear it well, you cruel individuals. We people of good are far more than you, and Gisela's blood will fall upon your heads and your children for seven generations," the priest said.

The country is locked in an endless cycle of violence, from which the Church is not immune. Last week the Bishop of Orizaba, while travelling with a group of priests, was assaulted and robbed on a highway between Puebla and Veracruz.

In what is shaping up to be the deadliest election cycle in Mexico's history, Integralia Consultores, which is researching the election, has counted at least 300 incidents of violence against candidates, in addition to the 29 deaths.

Most of the attacks go unsolved and unpunished, and offer a rude reminder of the threats posed by drug cartels to Mexico's democracy as illegal actors push into the political process and attempt to put their own people into public office.

Church leaders have been sounding the alarm as politicians become beholden to the drug cartels.

"We have never seen an electoral period so full of murders. This is something that should move us and shake our hearts," retired Bishop José Raúl Vera López of Saltillo said in a homily. "They are fighting to obtain political power. What kind of rulers are we going to have if they win through assassinations?"

The Mexican bishops' conference has called on people to vote, backed pro-democracy protests by civil society groups and warned that criminal groups meddling in politics jeopardises the rule of law.

The bishops released a proposal for pacifying the country called Na-

tional Agenda for Peace and invited all the three presidential candidates to sign it – which they did – though Morena candidate Claudia Sheinbaum described the document's diagnosis as "pessimistic."

Sheinbaum leads all polls and has repeatedly insisted the country has become less violent under her political mentor, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

But the threat posed by the organised gangs remains real, say the bishops. "We believe that the worst scenario is one in which criminal gangs intervene in the electoral process," they said. "Electoral democra-

cy mixed with crime is a totally unacceptable combination; it is a sign of the most deplorable corruption."

Drug cartels target municipal governments in an attempt to control territory, giving them access to local funds, forcing police to ignore illegal activities and steer public works contracts to friendly firms.

"Elections are a golden opportunity for criminal groups to gain access to state contracts," Falko Ernst, senior Mexico analyst for the International Crisis Group, said. "(For) candidates this often means that they find themselves between a rock and a hard place. If you collaborate with one group, you the wrath of others; you also do when you dare to do things correctly. Either way, the result is threats and violence."

Retired Bishop Salvador Rangel of Chilpancingo-Chilapa claimed that the interference from drug cartels in elections was getting worse. "Drug traffickers are taking over political positions," he said. "I believe that the majority of political positions are now being held by drug traffickers or those in their power, and that's a big problem."



A police forensic specialist at the scene of the shooting of Gisela Gaytán Gutiérrez, a mayoral candidate

Caritas workers vow to remain in Gaza after aid colleagues killed in strike

Gina Christian

Catholic aid workers in Gaza are determined to continue their mission after a deadly strike killed colleagues from a fellow organisation.

As reported in last week's *Universe*, seven staff members of World Central Kitchen died last Monday when their three-vehicle convoy was hit in an Israeli air attack. The group of three Britons, an Australian, and Polish, Palestinian and a dual US-Canadian citizen had just dropped off more than 100 tons of food stocks to a warehouse in central Gaza.

Israel has admitted responsibility for the internationally condemned deaths, which Israel Defense Forces chief of general staff Herzi Halevi called a "grave mistake", though WCK founder José Andrés said his team was targeted "systematically, car by car."

The deadly attack has left the overall humanitarian community "reeling from the news," said Jason Knapp, country representative for Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza.

CRS, the official aid agency of the Catholic community in the US and a member of the Church's overall aid arm Caritas, has vowed to remain in the region, however.

The war between Israel and the Hamas group in Gaza has created a humanitarian crisis that has left the Middle East "on the verge of the abyss," said United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres.

That crisis was compounded as WCK and other aid agencies suspended operations. It is believed as many as 200 aid workers have died so far during the war in Gaza, the vast majority Palestinians.

Knapp said that none of CRS's



Catholic aid workers have vowed to stay in Gaza, where the devastation is said to be near complete (right)

45-member Gaza staff have been killed "to date, thankfully," but one female staffer, a Gaza native, remains injured having been wounded during an Israeli attack on the within the Holy Family Catholic Church complex in Gaza City.

Aid workers are protected under international humanitarian law, and Knapp explained that his team participates in a "humanitarian notification system" to advise the warring parties of Caritas movements.

"There is the ability to notify the Israeli authorities directly or to use a centralised system where basically all humanitarian notifications can go through to the IDF," Knapp said. "So as CRS, we do use the humanitarian notification system."

"And then at times, especially if we feel like there are increased risks, we also notify the Israeli Defense Forces directly to make sure that they're aware of our operations and take appropriate precautions around our staff."

Knapp added that he is "amazed every single day by the Caritas col-

leagues providing aid in Gaza.

"The vast majority of our team is Gazan themselves and they are displaced," he said. "Many of them have had family members lost. They have gone through really immense suffering and yet are finding quite significant hope in being able to serve those who are in need around them, even as they're in need themselves."

The CRS Gaza team has "reached about 750,000 people since the beginning of the war," providing "food, cash-based assistance or market-based assistance, blankets and



shelter and other types of items to families who need it," said Knapp.

Most of Caritas's operations have been forced out of the northern half of Gaza and shifted to the south.

At the same time, a looming invasion of Rafah in the south presents aid agencies with another set of challenges.

Along with the "huge, huge concern (of) the protection of civilians," A Caritas spokesman told the *Universe* that he is troubled by a lack of "plans on the table" about ensuring a steady flow of aid into the area, since the current "pipelines of goods into Gaza ... almost all go through areas that would be (within) active military operations."

Another issue is "the safe and pre-

dictable movement of humanitarian in and out of Gaza," he said. "A lot of NGOs, the UN and others are using the Rafah pedestrian crossing to rotate staff into Gaza and out of Gaza."

Sea and air routes are not viable alternatives for providing "significant amounts of aid," he said. "We need as many land routes as possible to be functioning at scale."

Food and emergency shelter are the top aid priorities – and above all, a cessation of hostilities, he said.

"Anytime I talk to a Gazan, they say, 'Please make the bombs stop. That is by far the most important thing that we need, so we can start building a new life and a future for ourselves,'" said the spokesman.



Why do we take Holy Communion?

ANSWERING QUESTIONS BY YOUNGSTERS ABOUT CATHOLICISM CAN BE DAUNTING...

If they asked, could you answer questions such as:

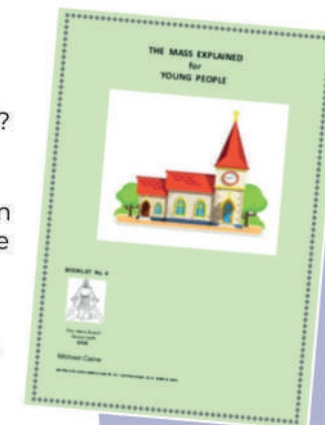
- Why do we bless ourselves?
- Why do we go to Confession – and Mass?
- Why do we say Amen?
- What's God's Grace?
- What's Communion about?

and many, many more...

Could you answer them in an easy, effective way that a child can understand? Our website provides the information for you to be able to do this with confidence. Find out more at www.catholicismrefreshernotes.co.uk

Once there you can print off a copy of this **FREE** booklet (right), *The Mass Explained for Young People*. It has clear, concise answers to all the questions above - and many more

Try it; it costs you nothing except a bit of your time.



CATHOLIC POLICE GUILD OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Est. 1914

Join police officers and staff living their faith in pursuit of peace, truth & justice

Help build strong relationships between Catholic communities and the Police

Membership open to all those serving within a recognised police force in England & Wales

Affiliates welcome



JOIN NOW



www.CatholicPoliceGuild.co.uk

Trump's 'state choice' over abortion leaves friends upset, enemies divided

Kate Scanlon

Former President Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, has upset many in the pro-life movement by stepping back from a commitment to back steep federal restrictions on abortion.

But his decision – to allow individual states to choose their own path on abortion – also leaves pro-abortionists angry, as they were hoping that growing popular support for abortion would force him to back some kind of national guarantee of the right to access abortion.

In a video posted to his social media platform Truth Social, Trump took credit for the Supreme Court's 2022 decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, which overturned its previous abortion precedent since the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision. But Trump said that "my view is now that we have abortion where everybody wanted it from a legal standpoint, the states will determine by vote or legislation or perhaps both, and whatever they decide must be the law of the land. In this case, the law of the state."

Throughout his third bid for the White House, Trump has been reluctant to take a firm position on abortion. He previously blamed the issue of abortion and pro-life voters for the Republican Party's underperformance in the 2022 midterm election cycle, prompting criticism from even some of his supporters. Analysts, by contrast, blamed in part quality issues with Republican campaigns in that cycle and Trump's repeated, unproven claims of a stolen 2020 election for the party's underperformance.

Trump's statement, in effect, dodges calls from pro-life groups who sought a pledge from the candidate to support federal restrictions, and repudiates reports that he would embrace a national abortion ban at 15 or 16 weeks of pregnancy.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, which works to elect pro-life candidates to public office, previously called on candidates for national office to support restrictions on elective abortion after 15 weeks. Dannenfelser said in a statement "We are deeply disappointed in President Trump's position."

"Unborn children and their mothers deserve national protections and national advocacy from the brutality of the abortion industry," Dannenfelser said. "The *Dobbs* decision clearly allows both states and Congress to act."

"Saying the issue is 'back to the



states' cedes the national debate to the Democrats who are working relentlessly to enact legislation mandating abortion throughout all nine months of pregnancy," she added. "If successful, they will wipe out states' rights."

But Dannenfelser said, "With lives on the line, SBA Pro-Life America and the pro-life grassroots will work tirelessly to defeat President Biden and extreme congressional Democrats."

Former Vice President Mike Pence, who was Trump's running mate in the 2016 and 2020 elections but broke with Trump in the aftermath of the 6th January 2021 riot at the US Capitol and by rejecting Trump's unfounded claims of a stolen election, wrote in a post on X, formerly Twitter, that Trump's "retreat on the Right to Life is a slap in the face to the millions of pro-life Americans who voted for him in 2016 and 2020."

"By nominating and standing by the confirmation of conservative justices, the Trump-Pence Administration helped send *Roe v. Wade* to the ash heap of history where it belongs and gave the

pro-life movement the opportunity to compassionately support women and unborn children," Pence said.

"In the landmark *Dobbs* decision, the Supreme Court returned the question of abortion to the states and the American people. The American people elect presidents, senators and congressmen, and a majority of Americans long to see minimum national protections for the unborn in federal law."

Pence added, "But today, too many Republican politicians are all too ready to wash their hands of the battle for life. Republicans win on life when we speak the truth boldly and stand on the principle that we all know to be true – human life begins at conception and should be defended from womb to tomb."

"However much our Republican nominee or other candidates seek to marginalise the cause of life, I

"My view is now that we have abortion where everybody wanted it from a legal standpoint, the states will determine by vote or legislation or perhaps both, and whatever they decide must be the law of the land. In this case, the law of the state."



know pro-life Americans will never relent until we see the sanctity of life restored to the centre of American law in every state in this country."

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Virginia, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Pro Life Activities, said that "with the Supreme Court's decision in the *Dobbs* case that returned the issue of abortion to the people and their elected officials, legislators have a responsibility to protect vulnerable preborn life not only at the state level, but also at the federal level."

"The federal effort must include undoing the current [Joe Biden] administration's aggressive abortion-promoting regulations, preventing taxpayers from subsidizing abortion, and pursuing nationwide standards," Bishop Burbidge said. "Life-affirming and moral alternatives to infertility are necessary but we oppose methods such as IVF, which, among other problems, results in the death or abandonment of more children than are created through it."

However, not all pro-lifers were as quick to criticise the former president as Marjorie Dannenfelser. Students for Life Action President Kristan Hawkins said that Trump's decision was one pro-lifers should support. "Unlike President Biden, President Trump begins his remarks on abortion celebrating 'the ultimate joy in life

– children and family."

"That kind of love and support for the bedrock of society, the family, will be a welcome change in the White House," Hawkins said.

"We clearly have some work to do to educate him to come on the many ways that abortion has been made federal," she added. "But with the mutual goals of supporting families and welcoming young children, we can work together to restore the culture of life stripped away by the national Democratic Party and their leadership."

Possibly one of the reasons why there was pro-life support was down to how individual states would respond. Terry O'Neill, an expert on the US constitution, said Trump's decision was "savvy and neatly done. Around half of the states have a Republican majority, or have Democrat leadership with strong fundamental Christian voters behind them. These are all likely to back abortion bans, or put in place strong restrictions, over the next couple of years, assuming Trump wins the presidential vote. By 2026-7 you could see a ban on abortion in 20-25 of the states, or very strong restrictions to access. The likes of Californian and New York will never go down the same path but slowly, abortion practitioners could see themselves marginalised. That would be a victory of sorts pro-lifers."

he pointed out that Trump was being "classically democratic" as far as the US is concerned. "We are the United States of America; power lies with the states. It is right that a decision like this is taken on a state-by-state level. It is probably what the Founding Fathers envisaged when they wrote the constitution."

In his video Trump also reaffirmed his support for IVF in every state after a ruling by Alabama's Supreme Court found that frozen embryos qualify as children under the state law's wrongful death law. The state subsequently enacted legislation granting legal protection to IVF clinics.

When some Republicans had applauded the decision, opinion polls showed it was widely unpopular with the voting public. Sensing a major vote loser, Trump was quick to offer his enthusiastic support for IVF.

The 1987 document from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith known as *Donum Vitae* or The Gift of Life, states the Church opposes IVF and related practices, including gestational surrogacy, in part because "the connection between in vitro fertilisation and the voluntary destruction of human embryos occurs too often."

Advertising: Andrea Black – advertising@universecatholicweekly.co.uk

WORLD SPOTLIGHT

Eduardo Campos Lima reports from Haiti, where ongoing violence between criminal gangs and a shattered state has left Church leaders concerned for the future

The April 1 attack on a Spiritan seminary in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, was the most recent one in a series of incidents involving Catholic Church targets, amid the worst violence in Haiti in years.

Armed criminals invaded the Petit Séminaire Collège Saint Martial, a minor seminary of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, and set fire to the cars in the yard. Four priests who were present managed to hide in a nearby cathedral, along with four staff.

The invaders vandalised several rooms, including the administrative offices and the residential area.

The Haitian Conference of Religious strongly denounced “the attacks on Church institutions, which are being looted and desecrated by individuals who attack humble people that do nothing else but serve the entire population, especially the poorest.”

The conference expressed “deep pain” upon the “dizzying situation of chaos in which our beautiful people live today,” adding that it is “with indignation that we note how sons and daughters of the country attack private and state property without scruple and endanger the lives of others who seem to have no value in their eyes.”

The growing chaos has seen criminal gangs take control of large portions of the capital city Port-au-Prince since the killing of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021. There is now a chronic lack of basic services and public security, leading to Haitians fleeing the country.

The crisis, in one of the poorest countries in the world, reached its apex on 11th March, when Prime Minister Ariel Henry resigned, after at least a week of co-ordinated attacks on governmental targets waged by criminal organisations.

Haitians have been migrating to Latin American countries and the United States in huge numbers since the earthquake that devastated the nation in 2010. The economic and social crisis that followed led many to look for work in Brazil, Chile, and the US.

Since 2021, the flux has only increased. At least 158,000 Haitian nationals have registered with the US Customs and Border Protection at the Mexican border since December 2022. Additional immigrants arrive by sea, via Puerto Rico and Florida.

President Biden expanded the Temporary Protection Status programme for Haitian immigrants, which was set up in 2010. In 2023, 121,000 Haitians were approved for TPS. But the demand is much higher and many immigrants try to enter the country informally. Activists have been demanding the government



Police officers take part in a confrontation with gangs near the National Palace in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, March 21, 2024. Photo: Ralph Tedy Erol, Reuters

Catholic leaders express anguish at Haiti's descent into 'dizzying chaos'

suspend deportations to Haiti during the current crisis.

“The level of suffering in Haiti is alarming. The way the situation has evolved can be described as the most terrible crisis in the entire American continent,” Scalabrinian Father Agler Cherizier said. He added that besides the insecurity crisis, “there is also a humanitarian crisis that reaches a scale similar to that we usually see in armed conflicts, with more than three million Haitians suffering deep humanitarian needs.”

Although the neighbouring Dominican Republic has been taking several actions to curtail the Haitian immigration, including the building of a 250-mile wall on the border, the influx of immigrants continues.

“Many Haitian nationals face various types of problems in the Dominican Republic because they are without papers and sometimes, even if they have them, they’re discriminated against, abused, mistreated, stolen and even raped,” Fr Cherizier described.

Thirty-one-year old Ashley Pierre arrived in the Dominican Republic before Easter. She’s working on the paperwork and waiting for permission to go to the US as part of the TPS programme for Haitians.

“I cannot find peace in Port-au-Prince. There are so many problems: violence, poverty, unemployment,

“The people from Haiti have been suffering greatly... we need to establish policies to help migrants to integrate and to break down legal, physical, and symbolic walls of injustice and lack of solidarity...”



A father escorts his son to safety as a gun battle erupts in Port-au-Prince

natural catastrophes,” she said.

In 2023, her mother was shot in the arm by criminals, an event that traumatised both of them. “We cannot work and live our lives normally,” she added.

Pierre has a cousin who lives in Miami, where most of the Haitian immigrant community in the US is concentrated.

“I don’t know what kind of work I’ll be able to find there. I just want an opportunity to start again,” she said.

Many Haitians have been following other routes. Thousands have been working in South

American nations over the past few years, with some having the goal of saving money and heading to North America.

“The Haitian population suffers discrimination and racism in all countries. Their experiences of rejection have been profound in Chile, for example. And along the route (to the US) they are victims of exploitation,” Roy Arias, the coordinator of borders at the Jesuit Migrants Service in Costa Rica, said.

Arias accompanies many immigrants who have just crossed the highly dangerous Darién Gap, a rainforest zone between Colombia and Panama, where people have to deal with the challenges of nature and with criminals. Many of them end up dying during the journey. Others come by boat through Trinidad and Tobago, facing the risks of the sea.

As soon as they arrive in Panama, they are put into buses and taken to

the Costa Rican border.

“Haitians are invisible to the immigration authorities, which means that their particular needs, such as their language, customs and cultural roots, are not attended to,” Arias added.

The Latin American Church has been calling attention to the Haitian crisis and asking the international community to intervene. The region’s bishops conference and the Latin American Caritas issued a letter called All for Haiti last month.

The document urged that there are 362,000 displaced in Haiti and three million children needing humanitarian help.

“The people from Haiti have been suffering greatly for some time. In recent weeks, the social and humanitarian situation has worsened enormously,” the letter read.

Bishops of bordering areas in Colombia, Panama, and Costa Rica released a statement after visiting the Darién Vicariate and addressed the growing immigrant crisis, mentioning Haitians among the most significant nationalities crossing the region.

The bishops called the authorities to establish policies to help migrants to integrate and to “break down legal, physical, and symbolic walls of injustice and lack of solidarity.”

Arias pointed out that the Church must recognise the Haitians in their specific needs and “open solidarity spaces to welcome them with cultural belonging.”

“And we have to denounce the exploitation they suffer along the route, boosting policies of human rights’ protection,” he concluded.

Vatican says abortion, surrogacy, war, poverty are attacks on human dignity

Cindy Wooden examines *Dignitas Infinita*, the new Vatican declaration that in many ways embodies all of Pope Francis's teachings over his papacy

Being a Christian means defending human dignity and that includes opposing abortion, the death penalty, gender transition surgery, war, sexual abuse and human trafficking, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith said in a new document.

"We cannot separate faith from the defence of human dignity, evangelisation from the promotion of a dignified life and spirituality from a commitment to the dignity of every human being," Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, dicastery prefect, wrote in the document's opening section.

The declaration, *Dignitas Infinita (Infinite Dignity)*, was released at the Vatican on 8th April.

In the opening section, Cardinal Fernández confirmed reports that a declaration on human dignity and bioethical issues – like abortion, euthanasia and surrogacy – was approved by members of the dicastery in mid-2023 but Pope Francis asked the dicastery to make additions to "highlight topics



Photo: Pablo Esparza

Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, second from left, is joined by Mgr Armando Matteo, secretary of the dicastery's doctrinal section, Dr. Paola Scarcella and Matteo Bruni, Vatican press office to present '*Dignitas Infinita*'

closely connected to the theme of dignity, such as poverty, the situation of migrants, violence against women, human trafficking, war and other themes."

In February the cardinals and bishops who are members of the dicastery approved the updated draft of the document, and in late March Pope Francis gave his approval and ordered its publication, Cardinal Fernández said.

With its five years of preparation, he wrote, 'the document before us reflects the gravity and centrality of the theme of dignity in Christian thought.'

The title of the document is taken from an Angelus address St. John Paul II gave in Germany in 1980 during a meeting with people with disabilities. He told them, "With Jesus Christ, God has shown us in an unsurpassed way how he loves each human being and

thereby bestows upon him infinite dignity."

The document is dated, 2nd April 2024 – the 19th anniversary of the death of Pope St. John Paul II.

Cardinal Fernández said initially the dicastery was going to call the document *Beyond all Circumstances*, which is an affirmation by Pope Francis of how human dignity is not lessened by one's state of development or where he or she is born or the resources or talents one

has or what one has done.

Instead, he said, they chose the comment St. John Paul had made.

The declaration noted that the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World also listed attacks on human dignity as ranging from abortion and euthanasia to 'subhuman living conditions' and 'degrading working conditions.'

The death penalty is included among violations of 'the inalienable

Everyone has the same human dignity, cardinal says

Carol Glatz talks to Cardinal Fernandez about the driving force behind the new document, and what its goals are for the Church and the wider global community

The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith's document on human dignity highlights Pope Francis' decade-long insistence that every human being – independent of their circumstances, stage of development or state of sin – possesses infinite and inalienable dignity that must be respected and protected, said the dicastery's prefect.

Dignitas Infinita (Infinite Dignity), gathers what recent popes have said about this "fundamental pillar of Christian teaching" and summarises the novel approach offered by Pope Francis, said Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, dicastery prefect.

In fact, the nearly 25-page document was named a 'declaration' in order to emphasise the doctrinal importance of the subject and the pope's unique thinking, attitude and behaviour toward "the sick, those who do wrong, the forgotten," the cardinal said.

Unfortunately, not everyone is born with or has access to the same possibilities in life "and, therefore, it is not true that everyone is

accorded the same dignity" in today's market-based or individualist "model of the success of the strong," the cardinal said.

This is why Pope Francis has repeatedly reinforced "the conviction of inalienable dignity" as being independent of anyone's circumstance or situation, he said.

For example, those who are "slow, less gifted and weaker have infinite value," and a child who has been born and one who has just been conceived have the same exact dignity, he said. "Their dignity does not depend on development, otherwise there will be no universally valid reasons to unapologetically defend human rights."

The document draws attention to about a dozen "grave violations of human dignity that are particularly relevant". It is not an exhaustive list and each problem is only briefly addressed as "each of these themes would require its own entire paper," Cardinal Fernández said.

The idea is to show that no matter the threat – war, poverty, violence against women, abortion, forced migration – the dignity of the human being remains the same, he said.

"All the topics chosen are important to understand the topic in a harmonious way.

For example, it is true that there are at least two reasons not to accept gender ideologies," reasons which are developed in the document, he said.

"Instead of helping recognise dignity," he said, the ideologies "impoverish" the beauty and reciprocity of sexual difference and they reflect the temptation to be "omnipotent" and "create everything ... as if there was no reality that was given."

When asked what the pastoral response to those who have undergone a sex change or who are experiencing gender dysphoria should be, Cardinal Fernández said that Pope Francis has made it clear that everyone must be welcomed and accompanied, even those whose thinking and choices are "different from what the church says in its doctrine."

"There are groups who look for a select minority that fully accepts everything the church says and that is a pastoral option that some people make. It is not the option that Pope Francis proposes to us, which is to welcome everyone even if they think differently on these issues of sexuality, marriage, etc." he said.

The cardinal was also asked why, since the Church sees sex change treatment as a

violation of human dignity, the dicastery did not specifically mention the practice of medical interventions for children.

"Very few words are said about sex change" in the document, the cardinal said. But it is especially serious when it comes to children because it is a decision that "changes your whole life."

On surrogacy, the Church understands that some couples are desperate for a child, but seeing turning a child into a "mere object," to be traded is unacceptable.

"There is always the possibility of adoption for so many who need to have a family that not only receives them, but receives them with love," he added.

The document reaffirmed that "every person, regardless of sexual orientation, ought to be respected in his or her dignity and treated with consideration, while 'every sign of unjust discrimination' is to be carefully avoided, particularly any form of aggression and violence."

But when the acts of violence or discrimination are explicitly called for by law, then "we are facing a big problem. It's certain that we don't agree with criminalisation," he said.



Cardinal Víctor
Manuel Fernández
with the declaration

Dignity needs protection in digital space

The protection of human dignity must extend into the digital realm, the Vatican said.

While the advancement of digital technologies “may offer many possibilities for promoting human dignity, it also increasingly tends toward the creation of a world in which exploitation, exclusion, and violence grow, extending even to the point of harming the dignity of the human person,” read a section devoted to digital issues in the Pope’s declaration, which was published by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.

“If technology is to serve human dignity and not harm it, and if it is to promote peace rather than violence, then the human community must be proactive in addressing these trends,” it read.

Dignitas Infinita reflected on Catholic teaching and addresses “some grave violations of human dignity” today, among them “digital violence.”

Discussing digital communications, the declaration encouraged readers to consider “how easy it is through these means to endanger a person’s good name with fake news and slander.”

It also quoted Pope Francis’ 2019 post-synodal apostolic exhortation to young people, warning of the “new forms of violence” spreading through the internet and social media such as cyberbullying, the diffusion of pornography and a rise in sexual exploitation.

The dicastery’s declaration stated that, “paradoxically, the more that opportunities for making connections grow in this realm, the more people find themselves isolated and impoverished in interpersonal relationships.”

Threats to the accessibility of real-world connection and the propagation of digital violence “represent a dark side of digital progress,” it said.

But citing Pope Francis’ encyclical Fratelli Tutti, on Fraternity and Social Friendship, it added that the opportunities for encounter provided by communications media are “a gift from God” so long as they pursue the truth and promote the common good.

Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández wrote that “although not comprehensive,” the contemporary issues touched upon in the document were selected to “illuminate different facets of human dignity that might be obscured in many people’s consciousness.”

dignity of every person, regardless of the circumstances’ and called for the respect of the dignity of people who are incarcerated.

The declaration denounced discrimination against LGBTQ+ people and particularly situations in which people are ‘imprisoned, tortured and even deprived of the good of life solely because of their sexual orientation.’

But it also condemned ‘gender theory’ as ‘extremely dangerous since it cancels differences in its claim to make everyone equal.’

Gender theory, it said, tries ‘to deny the greatest possible difference that exists between living beings: sexual difference.’

The Church, the declaration said, teaches that ‘human life in all its dimensions, both physical and spiritual, is a gift from God. This gift is to be accepted with gratitude and placed at the service of good.’

Quoting Pope Francis’ *Amoris Laetitia*, the declaration said gender ideology ‘envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family.’

Dicastery members said it is true that there is a difference between biological sex and the roles and behaviors that a given society or culture assigns to a male or female, but the fact that some of those notions of what it means to be a woman or a man are culturally influenced, does not mean there are no differences between biological males and biological females.

‘Therefore, all attempts to obscure reference to the sexual difference between man and woman are to be rejected.’

Again quoting Pope Francis, the declaration said, ‘We cannot separate the masculine and the

feminine from God’s work of creation, which is prior to all our decisions and experiences, and where biological elements exist which are impossible to ignore.’

‘Any sex-change intervention, as a rule, risks threatening the unique dignity the person has received from the moment of conception,’ it said. However, ‘this does not exclude a person with genital abnormalities that are already evident at birth or that develop later, receive help from healthcare professionals to resolve these abnormalities.’

Members of the dicastery also warned about the implications of changing language about human dignity, citing for example those who propose ‘personal dignity’ or ‘the rights of the person’ instead of ‘human dignity.’

In many cases, they said, the proposal understands ‘a “person” to be only one who is capable of reasoning.’ They then argue that dignity and rights are deduced from the individual’s capacity for knowledge and freedom, which not all humans possess. Thus,

‘according to them, the unborn child would not have personal dignity, nor would the older person who is dependent upon others, nor

“On refugees, too many migration policies and attitudes toward migrants ‘show that we consider them less worthy, less important, and less human.”

would an individual with mental disabilities.’

The Church ‘insists that the dignity of every human person, precisely because it is intrinsic, remains in all circumstances.’

The acceptance of abortion, it said, ‘is a telling sign of an extremely dangerous crisis of the moral sense, which is becoming more and more incapable of distinguishing between good and evil, even when the fundamental right to life is at stake.’

‘Procured abortion is the

deliberate and direct killing, by whatever means it is carried out, of a human being in the initial phase of his or her existence, extending from conception to birth,’ it said.

The document also repeated Pope Francis’ call for a global ban on surrogacy, which, he said, is ‘a grave violation of the dignity of the woman and the child, based on the exploitation of situations of the mother’s material needs.’

Surrogacy, it said, transforms a couple’s legitimate desire to have a child into ‘a “right” to one, that fails to respect the dignity of that child as the recipient of the gift of life.’

Extreme poverty, the marginalisation of people with disabilities, violent online attacks and war also violate human dignity, the document said.

While recognising the right of nations to defend themselves against aggression, armed conflicts ‘will not solve problems but only increase them.’

On refugees, too many migration policies and attitudes toward migrants ‘show that we consider them less worthy, less important, less human.’

The promotion of euthanasia and assisted suicide, it said, ‘utilises a mistaken understanding of human dignity to turn the concept of dignity against life itself.’

The declaration said, ‘Certainly, the dignity of those who are critically or terminally ill calls for all suitable and necessary efforts to alleviate their suffering through appropriate palliative care and by avoiding aggressive treatments or disproportionate medical procedures,’ but it also insisted, ‘suffering does not cause the sick to lose their dignity, which is intrinsically and inalienably their own.’



New research highlights Church converts are hungry for meaning in their lives

With a background of an increasingly secular society, why do some adults still decide to join the Catholic Church? A new report by the Diocese of East Anglia Commission for the New Evangelisation throws some light on the matter. Lead researcher, Philip Kemp, reports.

Most people will be aware of declining attendance at regular religious services and increasing numbers of those who do not identify with any religious faith in an increasingly secular society. Yet there are many adults who do choose to join the Catholic Church.

The Diocese of East Anglia Commission for the New Evangelisation recently carried out a research study to explore why adults decided to become Catholics and whether there are any lessons for evangelisation. Ten individuals (five male and five female) from across a broad range of parishes were interviewed in depth and the interviews were then systematically analysed to identify common themes which appeared to inform participants' journeys into the Catholic Church.

There were six key inter-related themes identified. Interviewees experienced a spiritual restlessness, including already committed Christians in another denomination. It was accompanied by a deliberate quest for this to be resolved and was often a very protracted process over a number of years.

Their quest was intellectually driven. Participants were highly proactive in their quest to find a spiritual home and in the process acquired impressive knowledge about Catholicism. They drew heavily on YouTube channel speakers for their spiritual formation.

Intellectual rationales were



Bishop Peter Collins baptises a new Catholic at the Easter Vigil at St John's Cathedral in Norwich.

insufficient on their own. Intellectual drivers interacted with affective experiences. At various points in the process to become a Catholic, participants experienced particular moments of being profoundly moved in a deep spiritual sense, for example, through Holy Mass or Adoration services, which acted as catalysts.

Participants' gravitation towards the Catholic Church followed an incremental process whereby serial illuminations provided heightened appreciation of Catholic beliefs and practices. This often involved de-mystification of pre-existing prejudices or misunderstandings.

The discovery of reverence in Catholic practices was a central

illuminating experience which had a profound impact, including among those who had previously been committed Christians from a non-Catholic denomination.

The journey to the Catholic Church was largely a self-initiated process. However, having eventually decided to become a Catholic, key end-stage facilitators,

often but not exclusively a parish priest, played a crucial role in drawing individuals in and facilitating the sacramental steps for formal entry to the Church.

One interviewee said: "Everything I was hearing made sense. I was listening to lots of testimonies.... It was just beginning to build up and I just, I still had, lots of questions.

"I still was not sure about Mary, purgatory, or praying to the saints, things like that. But I was growing but I couldn't stop, I just couldn't stop listening and reading and at the same time I felt drawn to the Catholic Church."

Analysis of the interviews in this study suggests that the process for an adult deciding to become a Catholic is a largely self-initiated, protracted, complex and multi-dimensional. There were no sudden conversions.

Similarly, there was no single decision nor single event that provided overwhelming grounds for joining the Catholic Church. Rather there appears to be an incremental process of increasing understanding and insights, a series of spiritually rich experiences, and timely significant relationship encounters. All of these factors have a cumulative effect over an extended period of time. These findings indicate a number of areas of consideration and challenge which might help inform evangelisation strategies and practices.

No, Richard Dawkins, cultural Christianity is not enough

Fr Patrick Briscoe

In a striking turn of events, renowned atheist and evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins recently declared himself a 'cultural Christian' during an interview with Rachel S. Johnson of LBC. Dawkins' declaration was sparked by his reaction to the Mayor of London's decision to celebrate Ramadan with 30,000 lights on Oxford Street rather than Easter.

Well known for his critical stance on religion, Dawkins expressed dismay at promoting Ramadan over Easter. Surprisingly, he defended the cultural trappings of Christianity in England, which he perceives as a fundamentally Christian nation.

Dawkins' comments underscore a significant but often overlooked conversation in the West. While Dawkins does not embrace

Christianity's spiritual tenets, his appreciation for its cultural and moral contributions to society raises an intriguing paradox: Can the values and achievements attributed to Christianity in the West be preserved without genuine belief?

This question is particularly relevant for Catholics and the broader Christian community. It compels us to reflect on the depth of our commitment to our faith and its role in shaping our civilisation. Cultural Christianity, such as Dawkins identifies with, appreciates the aesthetic and moral fruits of the faith without embracing its heart – the belief that Jesus Christ is Lord and that a personal relationship with him matters. However, preserving Western values and achievements that Christianity has influenced – such as human dignity, moral responsibility,

and the pursuit of the common good – requires more than a superficial attachment to its traditions and moral outlook.

Christianity is a radical thing. The Gospel demands transformation, calling for personal conversion and a lived relationship with God. This transformation extends beyond individual lives, influencing societies through acts of charity, the pursuit of justice and the cultivation of peace. Historical evidence abounds of the pivotal role Christianity has played in the development of Western institutions, including the concept of human rights, the foundation of hospitals and universities, and significant contributions to art, science and philosophy. These contributions were not merely the result of a cultural identity but flowed directly from belief in the

Christian understanding of the world and our place in it.

Dawkins' reflections on the importance of Christianity, even as a cultural marker, illustrate the void that would be left should genuine belief continue to wane. The cultural and ethical framework Christianity provides cannot be sustained in perpetuity without the nourishment of faith. A culture detached from its spiritual roots gradually loses its vitality, becoming unable to defend the very values it cherishes against the erosive forces of nihilism and moral relativism.

The challenge for Christians, then, is not merely to uphold a cultural identity but to live authentically according to the teachings of Christ. This requires a fundamental commitment to evangelisation. We must continually enrich our understanding of the

faith and reach out to others to invite conversions.

Cultural Christianity is insufficient for the preservation of the West's greatest values and achievements. Pope Benedict XVI once said, "The conviction that there is a Creator God is what gave rise to the idea of human rights, the idea of the equality of all people before the law, the recognition of the inviolability of human dignity in every single person and the awareness of people's responsibility for their actions." Believing in God, or not, has consequences.

As Dawkins inadvertently highlights, the beauty, ethics and institutions shaped by Christianity are not merely historical artifacts to be admired but are manifestations of faith that will only continue to offer meaning and direction if people believe it to be true.

A VIEW FROM THE PEWS

MICHAEL CAINE

ST WINEFRIDE'S PARISH, LYMM, CHESHIRE



Heaven is not a place like anywhere on Earth

Heaven, sometimes called Paradise, is the fantastic place where our immortal spiritual souls can live with God after we die, but only if we obey the covenant that He provided.

I was once asked by some eight-year-old children what it is like. As I thought about it, I realised I was truly stumped. I got out of it by asking them what they thought it was like. The type of answers they gave were:

- It's Christmas all the time.
- No more school.
- Living with people you like.
- Always playing the games you like.
- Always having money to spend.
- It never rains.

And many others.

I couldn't help smiling at these innocent replies until I realised that these were their honest ideas on Heaven and were better than any I had. I then remembered that story about St Paul (1 Cor 2:9) saying:

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

This answer still does not tell us what Heaven is like, but it does tell us that we haven't a clue.

I tried to determine why Heaven is so special because, from a human point of view, it would have to provide for every pleasure and comfort known to us and do so for all eternity without us getting bored or fed up.

As I thought about all this, it became clear that of all the billions of people who have ever lived, with their likes and dislikes, how could Heaven satisfy them all? It all became a more puzzling problem. Then I realised that what we do not know are the likes and dislikes of an eternal spirit, which is what we become when we die.

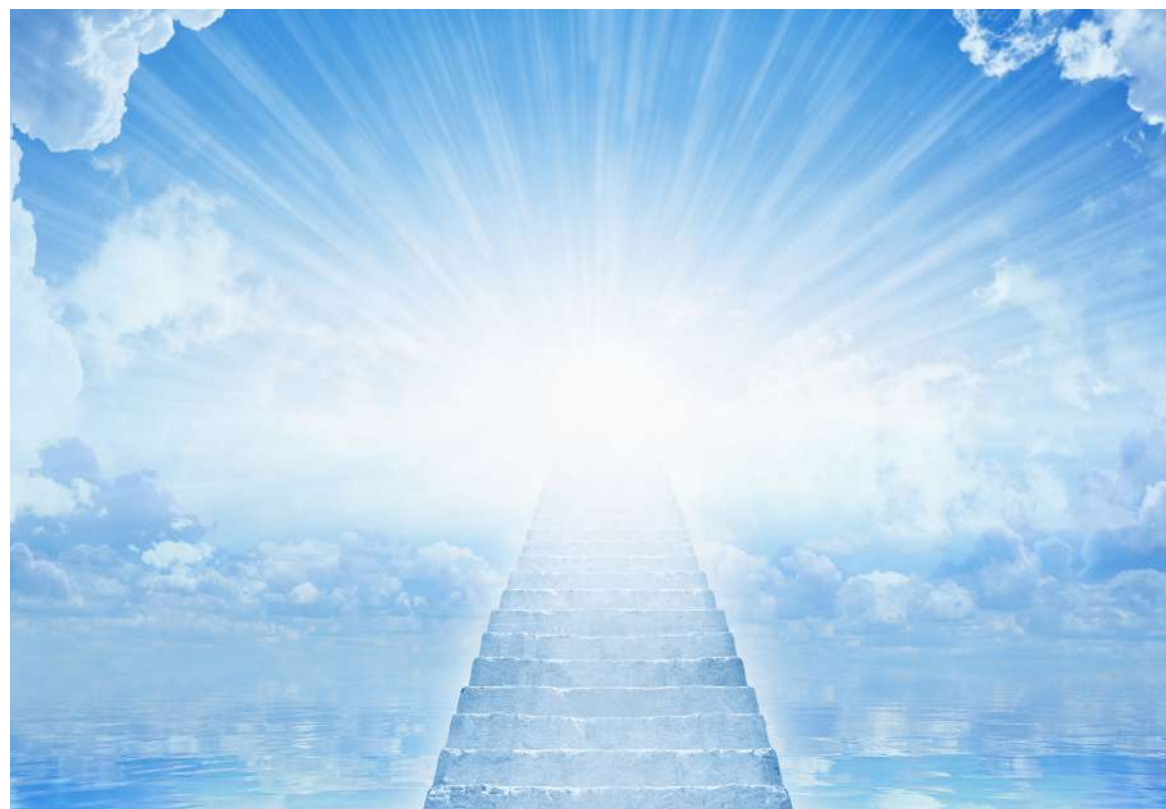
I thought about the teachings of love by Jesus Christ. Would this provide an answer? If people loved God and their neighbour as Jesus told them, there would be no wars, no jealousies, and no sinful desires. We would all live in a great peaceful and prosperous existence. Was this getting near to my thoughts on Heaven?

I also asked myself, what about all those special places in fictional writings such as Atlantis, Utopia and Avalon; places where everyone lived in peace and harmony? Were these imaginary places, ideas of what Heaven is?

Eventually, I came to realise that none of these things could even attempt to describe Heaven, and for one very simple reason:

Heaven was created by God.

Why is it that people have always tried to work out or know what God's intentions are? We're told by Jesus Christ, that God does not think or do things in the same way as human beings. He has ultimate knowledge and wisdom when compared with us, so we cannot know his reasons for any actions or



decisions he makes unless he decides to let us know.

This then explained to me what Heaven is. In simple terms, it must provide unending happiness for any being, human or spiritual soul that exists there. God created them all, so he knows what happiness is to them. He can and has created an eternal wonderful Heaven, the promise he intended for those who earned it.

Since God can create anything, we extremely limited mortals have no chance of even guessing what existence in Heaven is like. The only thing that we do know is that it is where God himself exists, along with the spiritual souls of all who have died with their souls in his favour, and those who were so special, such as Jesus and his mother Mary and a few others, that they were allowed to ascend there

as human beings. This is what makes St. Paul's definition, mentioned above so true.

I believe it's pointless for us to even try to know what heaven is like. It must be a wonder which is way beyond our human knowledge and understanding, and I thank God that he's given us the chance to exist there for all eternity. What a great, wonderful, and compassionate God we have.

JOURNEY IN FAITH

The passage of time

We are ever anxious to measure the passage of time. Einstein's famous energy equation, $E=mc^2$, has the speed of light integral to its structure, the constant c that is 186,000 miles per second. That is some speed.

It makes our own time measurement of life span look ridiculously brief.

Maybe that is why we pay so much attention to celebrating our birthday, measuring the passing of time against our Earth's rotation round our star, the Sun. Our infant days are so expansive, involving so much change, a time when we learn to crawl, stand and walk, a time when crying is the precursor to speech and the company of other children aids our developing



socialisation.

Much is achieved through

playtimes. In fact, it could be rightly said that play is a child's

work, their experience of playing is their way of exploring their world and coming to terms with its hazards and joys, pains and laughter.

We mark anniversaries in special ways, with meals and presents and cards, making the day important for someone or some group.

The liturgical calendar brings to our attention significant dates or memories of people who have walked the Christian path in earlier times and who have often paid a high price for their courage.

So, the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus the Nazarene has been followed again in our Christian communities around the world. Eucharistic meal, death on a cross, light of resurrection, all have

been remembered in recent days as now we experience the period leading to the Ascension with its accounts of Jesus being present in the company of the Apostles.

A time of mystery and fear, apprehension and doubt, a time of preparation.

As each year we listen again to the Gospel narrative we do so in gratitude for our faith sustained by the Lord and entrusted to our safe keeping.

And talking of anniversaries, April 13th would have been Seamus Heaney's 85th birthday. Let's conclude with a few words from that great Irish poet.

"The way we are living, timorous or bold, will have been our life."

CHRIS MCDONNELL



The business of the Christian is to follow Christ

In the call of Christ to follow him, there lies a profound simplicity and depth. It is not merely an invitation to admire his example but to embody it in our daily lives.

The early Christians, aptly named 'The People of the Way,' understood this deeply. They followed a path illuminated by Christ's example of love, not through complex theological constructs but through simple, powerful actions: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, welcoming the stranger, visiting the sick and those in prison, and burying the dead.

These acts of love, by which we help our neighbours with their everyday material and physical needs, gain us entry into Jesus's kingdom on the last day (Matthew 25: 34-40). Thus, the call to follow him extends our circle of care beyond family and friends to encompass all humanity, as exemplified in the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

At the heart of Christ's kingdom within us are the Beatitudes, the interior conditions for a life of loving service. What happens to us inwardly affects what we do outwardly.

These interior attitudes backtrack to the condition of the human heart and showcase the way we should live: with humility, meekness, mercy, justice, purity of heart, compassion, peacefulness, and persistence in face of opposition. These blessings ensure that whatever we do, is done with the right spirit. Do we not all cringe when someone does the right thing, but in the wrong way? Not with a glad heart but reluctantly, perhaps? But when someone comes to our aid in a spirit of humility and respect, what a relief and what a difference that makes.

Christ's Kingdom, as he taught, is an inward realm of spiritual



richness, manifesting outwardly in societal actions. This kingdom is not about accruing wealth or status but about serving and uplifting others.

In describing his kingdom, Christ paints a picture where acts of kindness and service, conducted in the spirit of the beatitudes, are the true measures of allegiance to him.

This fundamental aspect of Christianity, however, often gets overshadowed by an overemphasis on doctrine separated from Christian practice. Cardinal

Newman insightfully differentiated between mere doctrinal assent and a "real assent," which involves living by Christ's example. It's about active faith issuing forth in acts of love, not passive agreement.

Christ posed a vital question about those who truly follow him in Matthew 7: 21-23. Are those his followers who offer lip service to His teachings or are those his followers who actively live by his example? The answer is unequivocal. The essence of being a Christian is not found in the mere

appreciation or elucidation of doctrines but in the practical application of Christ's teachings.

This practical application is encapsulated in the Golden Rule illustrated in Matthew 25:40, which reminds us that our actions towards the least in society are actions towards Christ himself. ("Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.")

Today, the Christian journey is at a crossroads. Many are entangled in doctrinal disputes, losing sight of

Francis is a pastoral Pope who exemplifies Christ-like service, directing resources to the poor and personally ministering to the needy.

the essence of Christ's message — to live a life of love and service. The Church risks becoming mired in abstract, intellectual debates rather than engaging in transformative action.

This predicament echoes the warning in James 1:23-24, where faith without action is likened to a person who forgets his own reflection. ("Anyone who listens to the Word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.")

Pope Francis has been vocal about this divide. He emphasises that ideology should never eclipse a real, practicing faith. His approach to faith is not static but evolves with a deep understanding of the times. His critique of backward-looking practices, like insistence on the use of the Latin Mass, underscores this point.

He is a pastoral Pope who exemplifies Christ-like service, directing resources to the poor and personally ministering to the needy.

The true business of a Christian is to follow in the footsteps of Christ. It is a calling to be conformed to Christ who stands with and serves the poor, learning from them and embracing poverty in spirit. It is a call to live out Christ's teachings in tangible, loving ways by following his example.

'My sheep hear my voice; and they follow me'

John 10:27

Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd and those who follow him he calls, the flock. A good shepherd knows each of his sheep, individually and he treasures them all, equally.

If one of the sheep strays from the flock, a good shepherd will go to extremes to find that stray and unite it with his flock.

This image of the Good Shepherd and his sheep represents the intimate relationship Christ wants to have with each of us, who are his flock.

In the Gospel of John, chapter 10, Jesus says that his sheep (his followers) "hear his

voice" and "follow" him. How do we hear his voice? We 'hear his voice' when we meditate on the scriptures; the word of God, the voice of the Good Shepherd.

And, we 'follow' him when we put his word into practice.

St Francis of Assisi is reputed to have been the most Christ-like of men. He was not always like that. In his early life, he was a playboy, a lover of fine clothes and loose living. Then one day he heard the call of Christ and he followed him.

He abandoned his old ways; and embraced a life of simplicity so that he would no longer be a prisoner to wealth and

riches and fleeting attractions.

He discovered the pure joy of living a life unencumbered by worldly possessions; the joy of following the Good Shepherd.

What is true of the call of St Francis is also true of everyone who wishes to follow Christ, the Good Shepherd.

You don't have to give up your profession, or your car, on your house, or your savings account. But, you have to be detached from all these material things if you want to follow the Good Shepherd.

"What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul?" says Christ, the Good Shepherd.

"St Francis of Assisi is reputed to have been the most Christ-like of men. He was not always like that. In his early life, he was a playboy, a lover of fine clothes and loose living. Then one day he heard the call of Christ and he followed him..."

SUNDAY WORSHIP

ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC PRIESTS



‘Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?’

14th April 2024 – 3rd Sunday of Easter (B)

1st Reading: Acts 3:13-15

Peter blames his Jewish listeners for the death of Jesus, then calls them to repentance

The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.

Responsorial: from Psalm 4

R./: Lord, let your face shine on us

*When I call, answer me, O my just God,
you who relieve me when I am in distress;
have pity on me, and hear my prayer! (R./)*

*Know that the Lord does wonders for his faithful one;
the Lord will hear me when I call upon him.*

*O Lord, let the light of your countenance shine upon us!
You put gladness into my heart. (R./)*

*As soon as I lie down, I fall peacefully asleep,
for you alone, O Lord,
bring security to my dwelling. (R./)*

2nd Reading: 1 John 2:1-5

Even Christians are prone to sin. But if we sin, forgiveness is available to us

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Now by this we may be sure that we know him, if we obey his commandments.

Whoever says, “I have come to know him,” but does not obey his commandments, is a liar, and in such a person the truth does not exist; but whoever obeys his word, truly in this person the love of God has reached perfection.

By this we may be sure that we are in him.



Caption: “Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when he had said this, he showed them his hands...

used this expression several dozen times throughout the gospels. When the apostles cried out to him in the storm, he replied, “Why did you fear, Oh you of little faith?” Today’s gospel speaks of the apostles being terribly frightened. This seems strange, as the reason for the fear is the one person who had always been their best friend. This fear certainly shows up the limitations of our humanity. It was always a put-down, when I was a child, to be told that I was afraid of my shadow.

Imagine Jesus pleading with them to believe him. He invites them to touch him, to give him something to eat, to examine his hands and his feet. Human nature is so fragile, and so fickle. I’m not blaming anyone here. Obviously, this is the first time the apostles ever came across a situation like this. We might think that seeing Lazarus, or the daughter of Jairus, or the young man in Naim, getting up and walking after seeming to be dead, should have prepared them for this moment. They had known Jesus on a personal basis, and had felt at home in his company. This time things were different. He had broken free of the constraints of the human body, and there was a unique presence in him that they had never seen before.

We cannot grasp the utter transformation they felt, when someone they knew and loved was so utterly transformed, and now has an unearthly aura about him. While they still doubted, they were filled with joy and wonder as Jesus spoke to them about the promises of scripture, and how he had fulfilled them. Then he sent them to continue what he had begun.

In the following line, that is not included in today’s gospel, he promises that he will send them the Spirit and they will have a whole new power, when they will share in the new power into which he has now entered.

Published by kind permission of the Association of Catholic Priests.

See www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie

Gospel: Luke 24:35-48
The risen Jesus appears to his apostles, for he is real and not a ghost

Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.”

Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be

proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

Repent and be forgiven

“You see how it is written that the Christ would suffer, and on the third day rise from the dead, and that, in his name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nations.” This prediction or mandate of the risen Christ is echoed by Peter in the first reading, “Now you must repent and turn to God, that your sins may be wiped out.”

In John’s epistle too, we are urged to stop sinning, and if we have sinned the sacrifice of Christ can take our sins away. People who live without thought of God or of his will, may silence their consciences with the promise of repenting some future day. But is it possible that a change of heart can happen in a single day? Can we our character and habits possibly improve by an act of our will?

Some may be inclined to wonder, “Why all the fuss if everyone is a sinner, and if forgiveness is easily got?” To this, St. John has a sober warning, “We can be sure that we know God only by keeping his commandments.” Knowing God has a moral dimension and has almost nothing to do with intellectual understanding. To know God means to have a close and personal relationship with our Maker and Father. This happens

most surely if we live in imitation of Christ, or put on Christ, as St Paul says. Being Christians gives us the great privilege of a relationship with Jesus; but it also makes great demands on us, for we cannot be like Christ unless we aim to become pure in heart. ,

There was a poor and simple man who regularly visited a certain church, and there pray on his knees before a large crucifix. When he was asked why his lips never moved while praying before the cross he said, “I just look at him, and he looks at me.” Words had given way to contemplation. Those who look long enough at Christ, will finally become like Christ, seeing him as he really is.

Empowered with trust

This is one of the many post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, except that here more than elsewhere, he is at pains to convince them that he is real, that all has happened as foretold in scripture, and was part of a divine plan.

It’s an extraordinary fact that one of our basic attitudes towards God is one of fear. The first time fear is mentioned in the Bible is when Adam and Eve sinned. We are told that they hid, because they were afraid. From then on, most contacts with God begin with the words Fear not; be not afraid. This was even said to Mary, as it was to the shepherds. It is reckoned that Jesus

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS...

JENNA MARIE COOPER



Those beautiful bees deserve to make a comeback on our religious objects

Q: In my parish, we have an antique candle holder for the paschal candle. The design on the candle stand looks like it has some sort of insect on it, and so my 6-year-old asked me why there were “bugs on the Paschal candle.”

Any thoughts?

A: My guess is that the ‘bugs on the paschal candle’ were probably meant to be bees. The liturgy for the Mass of the Easter Vigil contains a number of striking elements, such as the blessing of the Easter fire and the lighting of the new paschal candle. One of the most notable prayers unique to the Easter Vigil is an ancient hymn called the *‘Exsultet.’*

Ordinarily sung by the deacon – or, in the absence of a deacon, a priest or if necessary a lay cantor – on the surface the Exsultet is a song of thanksgiving and praise for the newly lit paschal candle. But of course, this prayer actually goes much deeper, as the joy found in the paschal candle is actually a sign of the joy we find in the resurrected Christ, who brings light out of darkness.

In our current version of the prayer, there are two lines which reference the bees that produced the wax for the candle: ‘On this, your night of grace, O holy Father, accept this candle, a solemn offering, the work of bees and of your servants’ hands, an evening sacrifice of praise, this gift from your most holy Church.’

And: ‘But now we know the praises of this pillar, which glowing fire ignites for God’s honour, a fire into many flames divided, yet never dimmed by sharing of its light, for it is fed by melting wax, drawn out by mother bees to build a torch so precious.’

Prior to the new translation of the Mass in 2012, the bees were left out of the English-language translation of the Exsultet, which is why they might not be an obvious Easter motif for those of us Catholics who grew up after the liturgical changes of the Second Vatican Council but prior to the new translation. However, there seems to have been a more lively popular appreciation for “mother bee” prior to Vatican II. So it makes sense that a paschal candle stand from that era would be decorated with a bee design.

Because of their mention in our liturgy, I personally think that bees are a beautiful symbol of Easter. And my own hope is that bees on

Easter decorations make more of a comeback!

Q: I have a question about Lent, which recently ended. As a child, I thought Lent ended on Palm Sunday. Later in life, I was told Lent ended on Good Friday. A priest recently said in a homily that Lent actually and officially ends on Holy Thursday. Could you clarify?

A: Your priest is correct: Lent technically ends with the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday evening.

The Mass of the Lord’s Supper on the night of Holy Thursday begins the Easter *Triduum*, a word which roughly translated means ‘three days.’ The Triduum is essentially its own mini liturgical season, being neither Lent nor the Easter season, but a time when we as a church are laser-focused on the events of Christ’s passion, death and resurrection. The Triduum begins with the Mass of the Lord’s Supper, and continues through the liturgical services of Good Friday, the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday and morning Mass on Easter Sunday. The Triduum officially concludes with Evening Prayer (Vespers) for Easter Sunday in the Liturgy of the Hours.

There are a number of clues in the Triduum liturgies that tell us we are no longer in Lent. For example, at Mass on Holy Thursday evening, the priest wears white vestments instead of the Lenten purple; and the Mass of the Lord’s Supper includes the singing of the “Gloria,” and otherwise takes on a joyful tone rather than a penitential one.

Q: A Protestant minister (formerly a Catholic) said that the Church’s authority to grant absolution in confession expired upon Christ’s death. What authority does the Catholic Church rely on that requires confession to a priest?

A: God is all-powerful and can extend his grace even beyond what

he has promised. But when we confess our sins to a priest in the sacrament of penance, we can know with confidence that our sins are forgiven, because of Jesus’ own words.

In the Gospels, Jesus tells us that he intends to share his authority to forgive sins with the Twelve Apostles. This is perhaps stated most directly toward the end of John’s Gospel, when Jesus tells the Apostles: “Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained” (Jn. 20:23). With respect to the minister’s assertion, one interesting thing about this passage is that the promise comes from Jesus ‘after’ he had already died.

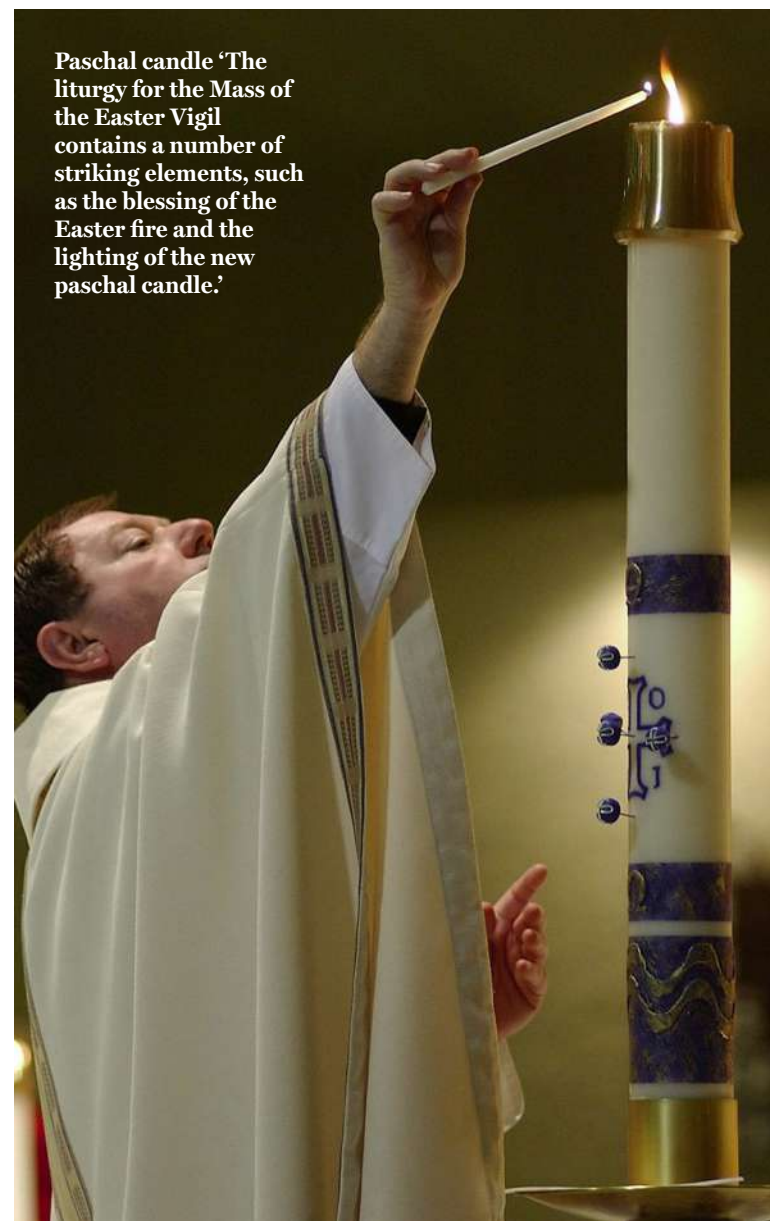
John 20 recounts some of Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances, one of which was his sudden apparition to many of the Apostles (notably minus Thomas, whose absence sets the stage for his later confession) as they were gathered in hiding behind locked doors. This is the first instance when the risen Jesus sends the Apostles on mission, telling them: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (Jn 20:21). Clearly, part of this mission was the forgiveness of sins.

Catholics believe in the ‘apostolic succession,’ meaning that the power and authority Jesus gave to his original apostles – including the sacramental power and authority to forgive sins – were in turn handed down by the apostles to their successors through the centuries, right up to our modern-day bishops and the priests who assist them in their ministry.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, alluding to the above-mentioned passages from the Gospel of John, describes the succession like this: ‘Thus the risen Christ, by giving the Holy Spirit to the apostles, entrusted to them his power of sanctifying; they became sacramental signs of Christ. By the power of the same Holy Spirit they entrusted this power to their successors. This apostolic succession structures the whole

“Traditionally, we call the feast of Pentecost ‘the birthday of the Church.’ But there is also a beautiful theme of how the Church was born from Christ’s wounded side. As the catechism puts it: “As Eve was formed from the sleeping Adam’s side, so the Church was born from the pierced heart of Christ hanging dead on the cross.”

Paschal candle ‘The liturgy for the Mass of the Easter Vigil contains a number of striking elements, such as the blessing of the Easter fire and the lighting of the new paschal candle.’



liturgical life of the church and is itself sacramental, handed on by the sacrament of Holy Orders.’ (ccc 1087)

So far from this authority expiring with Jesus’ death, it might be more accurate to say that the Church’s authority to forgive sins only ‘began’ after Jesus died and rose from the dead.

This might prompt the question of when exactly the Church first came into being. Jesus does refer to his Church – albeit in a future tense – during his time of active ministry, when he says to the Apostle Simon Peter: “...you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it”. He follows by mentioning again the authority to loosen or to bind when he notes the role Peter would hold as the earthly leader of the Church: “I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you

bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Mt. 16:18-19).

Traditionally, we call the feast of Pentecost ‘the birthday of the Church.’ But there is also a beautiful theme running throughout the theological writings of an early Father of how the Church was born from Christ’s wounded side.

As the catechism puts it, referencing St. Ambrose: “As Eve was formed from the sleeping Adam’s side, so the Church was born from the pierced heart of Christ hanging dead on the cross.” (ccc 766)

Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.

THE YEAR OF PRAYER

CHRISTIAN HERITAGE CENTRE, STONYHURST

Collects and liturgical prayer are the way we best communicate with God

The Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst continues to explore Christian prayer by looking at the structure of many prayers – including grace before meals.

The four parts of prayer can be seen not only in the Lord's Prayer, as we saw in the previous reflection, but also throughout the Church's liturgy.

Indeed, Saint Thomas Aquinas himself noted how “we may notice these four things in many of the Church's collects.”

The ‘collect’ of the Mass, often called the ‘Opening Prayer’, is considered the principal prayer for the Mass of the day and is even repeated throughout the Divine Office or Liturgy of the Hours of the same day. The Prayer Over the Gifts and the post communion are also prayers which are moulded on the collect. The collects of the Roman Rite, many of which are of ancient origin, follow a certain polished structural and rhetorical pattern that is characteristic of Christian Latin, and this structure manifests the four parts of prayer.

To illustrate, Saint Thomas uses the example of the Collect for Trinity Sunday:



Almighty sempiternal God, you who in the confession of the true faith granted to your servants to know the glory of the eternal Trinity, grant, we pray, that in the same firmness of faith, we may always be protected from our enemies. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns, etc.

Let's break this down according to the four parts of prayer.

Oration: “*Almighty sempiternal God...*” Here, the priest cries out to God the Father.

Thanksgiving: “*...you who in the confession of the true faith granted to your servants to know the glory of the eternal Trinity...*” The past deeds of God are recalled.

Petition: “*...grant, we pray, that...*

we may always be protected...” A specific request is made to the Father.

Intercession: “*Through our Lord Jesus Christ...*” Our prayer is both Trinitarian and Christological, invoking all three persons, but principally addressing the Father through the intercession of the eternal Son.

This same structure is seen in so

many prayers which use the basic structure of the Roman collect. See, for example, the prayer before meals:

Bless us [petition], O Lord [oration], and these thy gifts which we are about to receive from thy bounty [thanksgiving]. Through Christ our Lord [intercession].

Let's use another example: the post communion prayer of the fourth Sunday of Advent, which is also used on the Feast of the Annunciation and at the end of the Angelus:

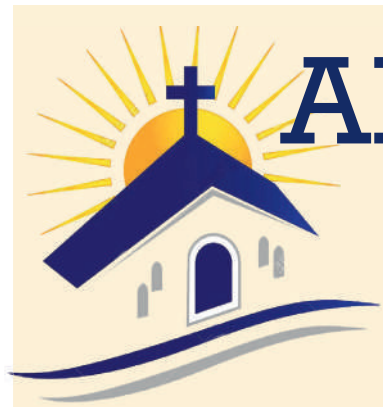
Pour forth, we beseech thee [petition] O Lord [oration], thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ thy Son was made known by the message of an angel [thanksgiving], may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of the resurrection [specific petition].

Through Christ our Lord [intercession].

Whenever the priest prays the collects on our behalf at Mass, let us listen with attention, uniting ourselves with the priest's words as he ‘collects’ or ‘gathers’ our oration, thanksgiving, petition, and intercession at the altar of God.

• **In the next reflection, Stonyhurst's Christian Heritage Centre will look at another form of the liturgy: the Divine Office or Liturgy of the Hours.**





AROUND THE PARISHES & EDUCATION

The Universe Catholic Weekly's guide
to Catholic life in your neighbourhood



Portsmouth diocese symposium offers key insights into medical ethics and care

Emma Hind

Over 100 people from around the country packed into the auditorium of Winchester Arc Centre in March for the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth's 'What does it mean to be Human?' event, a one-day Symposium attempting to tackle long-standing and controversial questions in modern medical ethics and social care.

Over the course of the day, the legal, medical, moral and religious aspects of holistic patient care from conception to end of life were discussed and debated in a series of thought-provoking keynote addresses, workshops and panel discussions.

In his introduction, Bishop of Portsmouth Philip Egan said: "The point of today's symposium is to help turn moral strangers into 'moral friends'. We hope to get everyone – irrespective of their religious beliefs – talking to each other with respect and appreciation. We hope to grow in understanding of one another, where people are coming from, and even to learn from one another.

"Like learning a foreign language, how can we express what we believe in another language? Can we learn from it? Can we even be changed by it?"

There were two keynote presentations: Mgr. Michael Nazir Ali, former member of the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority and Chair of its Ethics and Law Committee, led on What does it mean to be a Human



Being?, while Ryan Christopher, policy officer and director of ADF UK and co-founder of Humanum Institute, discussed 'How significant is the Sexual Revolution?' Following these addresses delegates had an opportunity to join a number of workshops on a wide range of themes, including: The Human Person: United or Divided? (Dr. Catherine Knowles); Abortion: The Unseen Grief (Rachel MacKenzie); Mental Health and Spirituality (Dr. Gerard Fieldhouse-Byrne); The End of Life: Fact and Fiction in the novel *The Beast of Bethulia Park* (Simon Caldwell); Should Religion

and Spirituality have a role in Healthcare Provision? (Dr Maria Lynch); and *Dysphoria v. Ideology: Walking the Gender Tightrope*.

David Wells, the popular and internationally acclaimed author and motivational speaker, was host for the day.

Speaking about the ambition of the Symposium, he said: "It is one thing to live out our faith on a Sunday morning in the shadow of our steeples and within earshot of our peeling bells.

"What I really admire about the intention behind this Symposium is the Diocese's commitment to blur the boundaries between what we

profess together in our faith and the world around us.

"Our faith is often challenged, not by the reaction of others as to whether we go to Church or not, but how we live it out beyond the pews and pulpit in the board room, building site or, in this case, within the context of a challenged and overstretched NHS. How is what we believe good news for a health service in crisis? How can those working in the health service call us to be authentic in our faith?"

"Today has been all about meeting and hearing from some extraordinary people and discovering that faith and medicine

can indeed learn a great deal from one another."

'What does it mean to be Human?' is the third in a series of similar events staged by the diocese of Portsmouth. Previously, in 2018, the diocese held a highly successful symposium on the topic of science and religion with some high-profile speakers, including Professor Brian Cox.

Then, over the period of national lockdown in 2021, it went online to host a virtual symposium on politics and religion, featuring speakers including senior politicians Jacob Rees-Mogg and Ruth Kelly.

Lent appeal sees six charities benefit from Year 6 fundraising

Altruistic youngsters at a Newcastle Catholic primary school raised more than £400 for six charities as part of their activities for Lent.

Year 6 pupils at St Catherine's Catholic Primary School held a Lenten Charity Day with stalls selling hand-made jewellery and baked goods, along with a raffle, an obstacle course, a 'Mini Great North Run', and a chocolate Easter egg competition.

Children and staff at the school, part of the Bishop Bewick Catholic

Education Trust, voted for which charities to support this year.

"This is all planned and facilitated by the Year 6 children," said their teacher, Nathan Seville. "All I do is aid with the logistics with the fundraising day. Children and their families source all the items for the stalls."

The cause chosen to benefit from the largest portion of donations was Mosaic Family Support, which works to help families suffering bereavement, and received £180

from St Catherine's fundraising day.

"Mosaic is a remarkable charity, dedicated to providing vital support to bereaved children and their families," said Mr Seville.

Other charities to benefit were the Teenage Cancer Trust, Tiny Lives, which supports premature babies and their families, the Team Evie charity for sick children and their families, Tony's Chocolonely, which works to improve the lives of cocoa industry workers, and mental health charity Anxious Minds.



Joyful Mass celebrates Jesuits' legacy in Glasgow

Brian Swanson

“With solemn step they process, while behind them in this most magnificent of churches, walk the honoured spirits of those who came before them to bring the Society of Jesus to Glasgow.”

It is the legacy of the honoured saints that was celebrated in a Mass of thanksgiving in St Aloysius' Church, Garnethill, to mark the arrival, 165 years ago, of the first two members of the Jesuit order in Glasgow. The Mass was officially described as solemn but, in truth, it was a most joyful occasion.

For context, it must be remembered that when the duo arrived from England in 1859, the Catholic Church in Glasgow was in its restoration infancy, and outsiders such as the Jesuits were viewed with widespread suspicion by the largely Protestant population. Yet many more followed and the legacy, left by these humble but cultured men of God, has been considerable.

They provided education, created parishes, founded St Aloysius' College, surely a story for another day, and gave Glasgow St Aloysius' Church which houses the National Shrine of Saint John Ogilvie, their fellow priest and brother Jesuit, martyred at Glasgow Cross on 10th March 1615, making him Scotland's only post-Reformation saint.

And all this they did, as the Latin translation of their motto reminds us, ‘For the greater glory of God’.

But as a congregation we were also invited not just to remember

the past but to celebrate what has been achieved by generations of Jesuits in the intervening years.

Listed in the order of service they were: Celebrating the shared mission and life of the Jesuit community in Glasgow, St Aloysius' College, the Ignatian Spirituality Centre, St Aloysius' Church and St Aloysius' Refugee Language School.

The latter was founded eight years ago, during which time volunteers have taught thousands of refugees and asylum seekers – one of whom, Valentyn Chos from Ukraine, delivered the second reading.

Today St Aloysius' is the only Jesuit church in Glasgow. It is routinely described as one the most beautiful in the UK but the early Jesuits were more concerned with practicality than beauty, as those attending a reception in St Aloysius' College after the Mass were to learn.

We discovered that, in the early days, two energetic Jesuits, Frs Kay and Parkinson, were sent north to form a new mission, and soon built the forerunner of today's church which stood on the site of what is now St Aloysius' College Hall.

And what would Fr Kay and the other Jesuits think of the many achievements that have occurred in the past 165 years?

Fr Roger Dawson SJ, Superior of the Jesuits in Scotland, does not hesitate with his answer.

“Quite simply, they would be absolutely astounded,” he said. Few, you feel, would argue with that.



Eggs-cellent effort

Pupils at St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, part of the Romero Catholic Academy, marked Easter by delivering over 90 chocolate eggs to the children's ward at University Hospital Coventry. Parents, staff and the community pitched in with donations, inundating the school reception before Easter with colourful boxes in the last week of term.

Children in Year 5 led the campaign after choosing it as their Lent project.

The school in Stoke Hill ran the same campaign in 2023, beating its previous total of 84, with 92 eggs packed up and delivered to the hospital to be enjoyed over Easter.

Gemma Tate, teacher at St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, said “We are over the moon with

the enthusiasm families and the wider community have shown in supporting our Easter egg project.”

She added: “It's been lovely to see the children wanting to make a difference to others on their doorstep.

“Our goal is to collect more than 100 eggs next year, and I know our pupils will relish the challenge and smash it.”

Plymouth CAST, one of the largest Catholic Multi Academy Trusts in the country, is seeking to appoint an experienced headteacher as its new

Executive Headteacher



Salary: L17-24 and appropriate pension scheme
Based: St Nicholas Catholic Primary School, Exeter
& St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Exmouth
Start date: 1st September 2024



Plymouth CAST is a Multi-Academy Trust comprising 34 schools plus a nursery situated within the Catholic Diocese of Plymouth with whom there is a close working relationship.

This is an exciting time to join a forward thinking and committed team, to both embed as well as shape working practices for the future. As headteacher you will need diplomacy, openness, approachability, and a personable style of leadership, as well as the ability to converse confidently with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.

Essential requirements

- Practising Catholic with a strong understanding of the structures and values of the Church
- Qualified to degree level relevant to the post and/or equivalent through professional experience. PGCE (or equivalent) – Qualified to Teach in the UK
- Recent, substantive and successful headship experience
- The ability to manage change through bringing innovative ideas to traditional approaches to teaching and learning
- Understanding and/or experience of managing finances and ensuring financial sustainability
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills – an attentive listener and team builder.

PLUS A wide knowledge of current and proposed education policy and the legal framework within which schools must operate, particularly in relation to safeguarding, when part of a Multi Academy Trust.

If you feel that you have the necessary skills and competencies, and the passion to make a difference to our children and young people, we would love to hear from you!

Download the application form at https://www.plymouthcast.org.uk/web/current_vacancies/485131



Precious takes the title at Catenians' Province 15 event

The recent Catenians Public Speaking Contest in Province 15, which covers Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire, saw 11 contestants from Catholic secondary schools compete in a new environment, the amazing auditorium at English Martyrs' Catholic School in Leicester.

Bishop Ralph Heskett of Hallam Diocese, who is also Bishop for Youth, opened the proceedings with a reflection and a prayer. Also in attendance was Bishop Patrick McKinney.

The contestants were drawn from a wide range of backgrounds, and, for a change, there were more 16-year-olds than in the past. This year's crop was a very talented bunch, with several having previous experience of performance in school productions and public speaking with the English-Speaking Union.

Chosen topics were diverse, too, from a wide range of issues, with most of them drawing on the Christian Catholic life and social teachings in some way.

Provincial President Phil Yeomans announced the winners. The winner was Precious Mbah from English Martyrs in Leicester. Precious and her teacher, Ms Fones, received the schools' trophy.

Second place went to Bella Mann from St Martin's in Stoke Golding, with Saoirse Murphy from St Benedict's in Derby third.

All contestants received certificates and prizes to remember the occasion.

Bishop Patrick McKinney of Nottingham praised the bravery of all contestants; it was not easy, he said, to stand in front of an adult



audience and speak. He stressed the importance of communicating with such a gathering and how public speaking was an art worth mastering.

He was also impressed with how the young people held strong opinions and were able to express them clearly in their speeches. Finally, he paid tribute to the work done by The Catenians across his diocese, particularly stressing the ways in which the Bursary Fund enables so many young people to participate in the annual Lourdes pilgrimages.

Precious will now represent Province 15 at the National Public Speaking Contest in Manchester on 1 September.

A final, edited, version of the



afternoon's proceedings can be viewed on the Province 15's YouTube channel. <https://youtu.be/ZNy2RUMvuj5>

Top, all the finalists, and above, Provincial President Phil Yeomans congratulates the winner, Precious Mbah



Fr Barry McAllister: Liverpool mourns death of kindly and dedicated pastor

The Archdiocese of Liverpool was saddened to learn of the death of Fr Barry McAllister. He was 64, and in his 38th year of priesthood.

Fr Barry, as he was known, was born Patrick Barry McAllister to Patrick and Catherine McAllister, in Wigan on 21st March 1960.

He was educated at St Mary's School, Wigan, and St John Rigby Grammar School (and later Sixth Form College), Orrell, before entering Ushaw College, where he began his seminary formation.

He was ordained to the priesthood at St Mary's, Wigan, by Archbishop Derek Worlock on 6th December 1986.

Following ordination, Fr McAllister served as assistant priest in several parishes across the archdiocese: St Cuthbert, Pemberton (1986-88); Sacred Heart and St Alban, Warrington (1988-95); and briefly at St Mary, Chorley, in early 1995.

In September 1995, he took up his first appointment as parish priest, moving to St Elizabeth, Litherland.

Like many priests, he was asked to take on additional responsibility for another parish. Thus, in September 2011, he became parish priest of St Robert Bellarmine, Bootle, as well.

He proved to be a dedicated and kindly pastor, devoting the remainder of his priestly ministry to the people of these parishes. His parishioners were blessed with someone genuinely interested in their lives, possessed of a good memory and a ready wit, and with a great gift for listening.

His brother priests, too, held him in very high regard, so that he served successive terms as the local dean between 2006 and 2021.

His strong faith sustained him as he faced treatment for cancer, and the eventual terminal diagnosis, with immense courage and patience.

He died at Wigan and Leigh Hospice in the evening of Friday 22nd March 2024, the day after his 64th birthday.

He was in the 38th year of the priesthood.

Rest in peace, Fr Barry

Small steps make big difference says Coventry school

A Coventry Catholic school has dramatically reduced the number of single-use plastics it sends to landfill after partnering with a local sustainable packaging business.

The Romero Catholic Academy

has teamed up with Coventry-based Purple Planet Packaging to supply Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School with compostable or recyclable responsible cups, trays and cutlery.

It is the first academy in

Coventry to be supplied by the company based on Seven Stars Industrial Estate, saving thousands of pieces of plastic every week from going to landfill.

The link builds on the academy's

decision in 2020 to bring its entire catering operation in house to reduce food miles and provide fresher, more sustainable meals.

Marcus Chilvers, catering manager at the Romero Catholic Academy, said: "We have taken huge steps in recent years to reduce the impact our catering operation has on the environment across all of our schools, including taking all food production in house.

"Taking all possible measures to be more sustainable is crucial not just for the planet, but in making our young people aware of the impact everyday items can have and why it's important to think about the products we use on a daily basis."

Mark Farr, CEO and co-founder of Purple Planet Packaging, said: "One of our objectives is to work with more local organisations so we are really pleased to be supplying the Romero Catholic Academy."



Marcus Chilvers (left) and academy chef James Roberts with Dave Smith and Mark Farr of Purple Planet Packaging

St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London



Enrol for Postgraduate Study at the St Mary's School of Theology

MA Theology

MA Catholic Social Teaching

MA Christian Spirituality

MA Bioethics and Medical Law

Professional Doctorate in Ministry DMin

BA (Hons) Theology, Religion, and Ethics

BA (Hons) Theological Studies

'Preparing for life in a changing world'

Flexible teaching and learning, including online options for many courses, at the UK's biggest Catholic University. For more details visit stmarys.ac.uk/postgraduate



SCAN ME

Now taking
applications for
2024 entry



The Universe Catholic Weekly's guide to the more leisurely side of life

GARDENING

Save the plants while saving the earth

Improvements in eco-friendly pest control measures mean you can protect your plants without damaging the earth

Organic pest control methods are generally less environmentally damaging, and less toxic to non-targeted insects, mammals and aquatic life. Unfortunately, in our time-starved world, many people simply want the most potent, one application product—no matter what the consequences.

Pest control strategies in the eco-friendly garden seek to use the least toxic method first. There are some very effective natural control treatments available. The good news is, with the proper preparation, and cultural practices, rarely if ever will you need to get beyond these measures.

The first step in controlling pests, before even applying the most benign treatment is to create the most hospitable growing environment for your plants. A healthy garden is the single best natural pest control there is. Healthy plants are less attractive to pests in the first place, and when they are attacked, the plants are better equipped to defend themselves and recover.

An advantage to the “no-spray” method of control is that beneficial insects have the best opportunity to establish populations in your garden and do the work for you. You may need to exercise a little patience and put up with some cosmetic damage initially. But, they are incredibly effective at natural pest control.

With any pest control treatment, the first step should be to identify the offending pest and target a control method that only affects that pest. Don't apply a non-selective chemical that kills beneficial insects as well! There are a good number of organic options available, and some are more specific to certain pests than others.

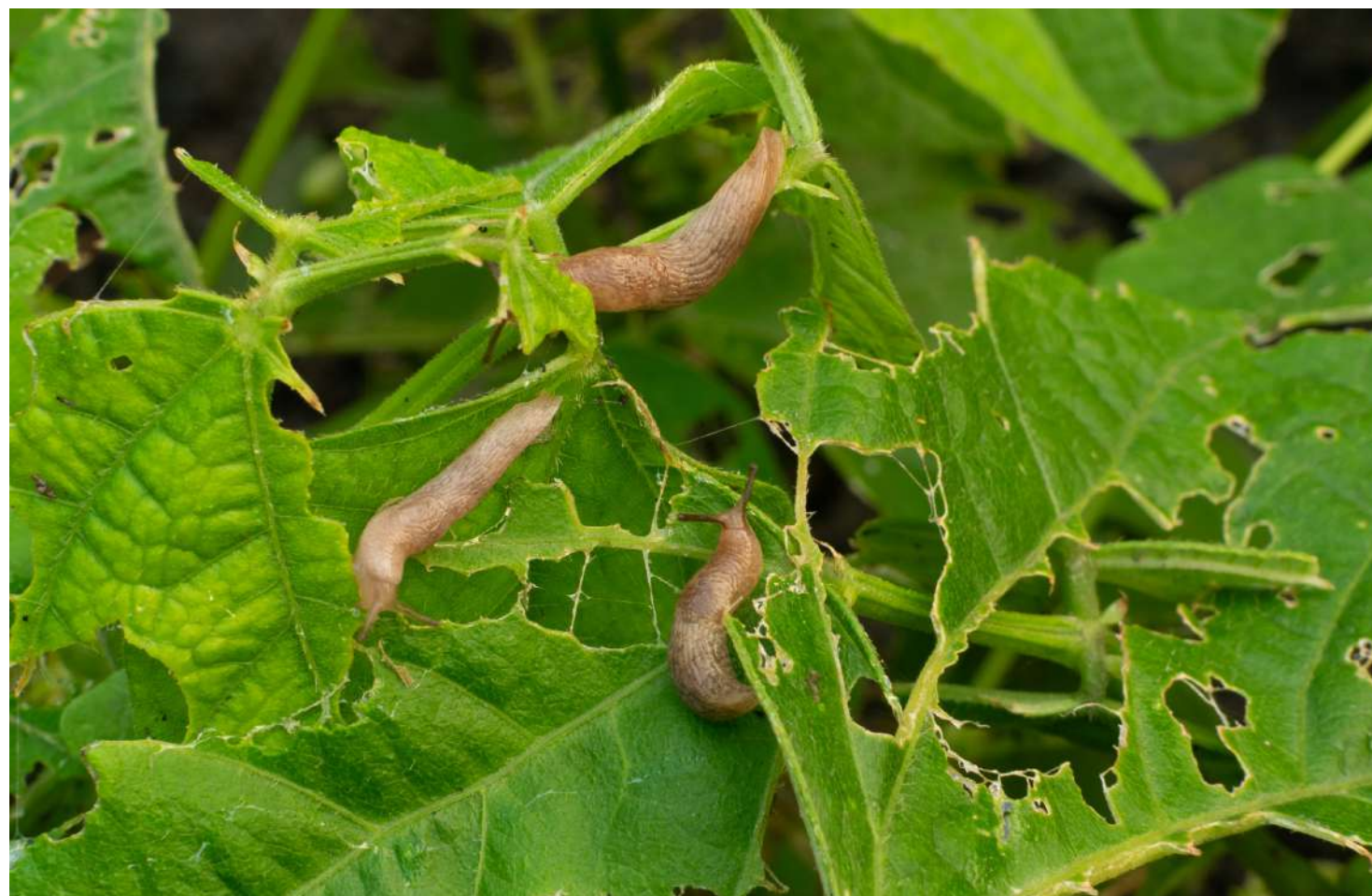
If there's a downside to natural pest control methods, most people would say they are not as fast acting, and yet can be every bit as effective as synthetic controls over time. To me, that's an acceptable trade-off!

Although there are many, here are some of the most common options:

Microbial insecticides

These insecticides cause pests to get sick, are very specific to the target pest, and do not harm beneficial insects, nor are they toxic to mammals.

One of the most popular choices is Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). I use this whenever necessary to treat a number of worm larvae



from hornworms to cabbage loopers, and cutworms. The bacteria in Bt paralyzes the digestive system of the larvae. They stop eating and within a couple of days, the pests are dead.

Insecticidal soaps

These soaps utilise the salts and fatty acids within them to target many soft-bodied pests including aphids, whiteflies, mealy bugs, earwigs, thrips, and the early stages of scale. The soaps penetrate the soft outer shell of these and other pest, causing damage to the cell membranes. They then begin to breakdown, resulting ultimately in dehydration, and starvation.

Insecticidal soaps can be phytotoxic to certain plants, so be sure to test a small area, before applying on a larger scale. The other downside is that soaps are non-selective so they can be toxic to beneficial insects as well. Use them sparingly, as with any pesticide. Insecticidal soaps have not shown to be toxic to humans and other mammals.

You can make your own by adding a teaspoon of dish soap (not detergent) and a teaspoon of cooking oil to a one quart spray bottle. Insecticidal soaps are also readily available for purchase at nurseries or in garden centres.

Insecticidal oils

These oils work by suffocating the pest. The oil coats them with a petroleum-based,

horticultural grade liquid, cutting off their oxygen supply. This control method has been around for a long time. It is primarily used to kill the eggs and immature stages of insects.

These products are very effective because they spread so well, and break down quickly. However, these oils can and do affect beneficial insects, but are less toxic to them.

Oils are often used to control aphids, scales, spider mites, mealy bugs, psylla, and some other insects.

These oils can harm your plants and trees; primarily leaf damage, so be sure to read the directions that come with the packaging.

Diatomaceous earth

This product is the fossilised silica shells of algae. Although these shells are microscopic in size, they're covered with sharp projections that cut and penetrate the cuticle of an insect. This causes the pest to leak vital body fluids. The result is dehydration and death. The unique aspect of diatomaceous earth is that it is not a poison that causes the damage, but the physical abrasiveness of the dust.

DE is effective against soft-bodied pests including aphids, trips, whiteflies, caterpillars, root maggots, slugs, and snails. However, DE is non-selective, and will potentially kill beneficial insects as well.

Apply DE to the soil for ground dwelling pests, and to the foliage for other pests. DE adheres best to moist foliage, so application is best early

in the morning, when leaves are wet from dew, or after a rain. Be sure to use “natural-grade” vs. “pool-grade” DE which contains additional chemicals that can be harmful to humans and mammals if inhaled. In either case, it's a good idea to wear a dust mask whenever working with any dusting agent.

Neem oil

Neem is a broad-spectrum insecticide, acting as a poison, repellent, and deterrent to feeding. It also sterilizes certain insect species, and slows or stops the growth cycle of others. Neem oil is derived from the Neem tree, which is native to India. Neem is applied as a foliar spray, or soil drench. It is used to kill a wide range of pests, including aphids, thrips, loopers, whiteflies, and mealy bugs.

One unique aspect to this biological agent is its systemic properties. Plants take up the Neem extracts through plant foliage and roots, where it is present in the plant tissue. As a result, Neem is also effective against leaf minors, which are usually not affected by other non-systemic foliar sprays.

Generally, Neem must be ingested to be toxic, and is nearly nontoxic to mammals. Although it breaks down quickly, you should spray Neem only when necessary, and only on plants known to be affected by the pest you are targeting. In this way, you will minimize the damage to beneficial insects.

HEALTH

Here's the good news: a little bit of chocolate really is good for you

In this post-Easter phase, everyone comes round to the same question: was eating all that chocolate really bad for me? Dan Baumgardt tries to find out whether there is any truth in the claims chocolate is good for your health

Although it always makes me scoff slightly to see Easter eggs making their first appearance in supermarkets at the end of December, there are few people who aren't delighted to receive a bit of chocolate every year.

It makes sense that too much chocolate would be bad for you because of the high fat and sugar content in most products. But what should we make of common claims that eating some chocolate is actually good for you?

Happily, there is a fair amount of evidence that shows, in the right circumstances, chocolate may be both beneficial for your heart and good for your mental state.

In fact, chocolate – or more specifically cacao, the raw, unrefined bean – is a medicinal wonder. It contains many different active compounds which can evoke pharmacological effects within the body, like medicines or drugs.

Compounds that lead to neurological effects in the brain have to be able to cross the blood-brain barrier, the protective shield which prevents harmful substances – like toxins and bacteria – entering the delicate nervous tissue.

One of these is the compound theobromine, which is also found in tea and contributes towards its bitter taste. Tea and chocolate also contain caffeine, which theobromine is related to as part of the purine family of chemicals.

These chemicals, among others, contribute to chocolate's addictive nature. They have the ability to cross the blood-brain barrier, where they can influence the nervous system. They are therefore known as psychoactive chemicals.

What effects can chocolate have on mood?

Well, a systematic review looked at a group of studies which examined the feelings and emotions associated with consuming chocolate. Most demonstrated improvements in mood, anxiety, energy and states of arousal.

Some noted the feeling of guilt, which is perhaps something we've all felt after one too many Dairy Milks.

Health benefits of cocoa

There are other organs, aside from the brain, that might benefit from the medicinal effects of cocoa. For centuries, chocolate has been used as a medicine to treat a long list of diseases including anaemia, tuberculosis, gout and even low libido.

These might be spurious claims but there is evidence to suggest that eating cacao has a positive effect on the cardiovascular system.

So what is the truth? Well, first, it can prevent endothelial dysfunction.

This is the process through which arteries harden and get laden down with fatty plaques, which can in turn lead to heart attacks and strokes.

Eating dark chocolate may also reduce blood pressure, which is another risk factor for developing arterial disease, and prevent formation of clots which block up blood vessels.

Some studies have suggested that dark



chocolate might be useful in adjusting ratios of high-density lipoprotein cholesterol, which can help protect the heart.

Others have examined insulin resistance, the phenomenon associated with Type 2 diabetes and weight gain. They suggest that the polyphenols – chemical compounds present in plants – found in foodstuffs like chocolate may also lead to improved control of blood sugars.

Chocolate toxicity

As much as chocolate might be considered a medicine for some, it can be a poison for others.

It's well documented that the ingestion of caffeine and theobromine is highly toxic for domestic animals. Dogs are particularly affected because of their often voracious appetites and generally unfussy natures.

The culprit is often dark chocolate, which can provoke symptoms of agitation, rigid muscles and even seizures. In certain cases, if ingested in high enough quantities, it can lead to comas and abnormal, even fatal heart rhythms.

Some of the compounds found in chocolate have also been found to have potentially

"A daily dose of 20g–30g of plain or dark chocolate with cocoa solids above 70 per cent – rather than milk chocolate – could lead to a greater health benefit, as well as a greater high."

negative effects in humans. Chocolate is a source of oxalate which, along with calcium, is one of the main components of kidney stones.

Some clinical groups have advised against consuming oxalate rich foods, such as spinach and rhubarb – and chocolate, for those who suffer from recurrent kidney stones.

So, what should all this mean for our chocolate consumption habits? Science points in the direction of chocolate that has as high a cocoa solid content as possible, and the minimum of extras. The potentially harmful effects of chocolate are more related to fat and sugar, and may counteract any possible benefits.

A daily dose of 20g–30g of plain or dark chocolate with cocoa solids above 70 per cent



– rather than milk chocolate, which contains fewer solids and white chocolate, which contains none – could lead to a greater health benefit, as well as a greater high.

But whatever chocolate you go for, please don't share it with the dog.

Dan Baumgardt is a Senior Lecturer, School of Physiology, Pharmacology and Neuroscience, University of Bristol

HOME AND LIFESTYLE

How to create an Insta-worthy outdoor living space you'll love to post about

Social media has changed the ways people engage with content and seek inspiration. Thanks to ever-evolving technology and algorithms, you have the ability to find new ideas instantly.

Need a new recipe? Find and follow a chef or home cook on Tik Tok or Instagram. In a reading rut? Explore reviewers who can share book recommendations for your next read. You can even discover new ways to transform your outdoor living space this spring on your social media feeds. It may seem odd to consider that people use the digital landscape to help them revamp their outdoor living space, but according to a new survey by TruGreen, 40 per cent of us do just that.

Are you ready to create an Insta-worthy outdoor space? Check out these three tips to inspire your renovation.

1. Return to timeless appeal

Trends may come and go, but you can't beat the timeless appeal of a healthy landscape. According to the survey, 89 per cent emphasise the pivotal role of a healthy lawn in that landscape. Without this foundation, you can't build an attractive outdoor space.

Focusing on the basics is the key to outdoor charm. Over half say flowers are the quintessential element for creating a visually pleasing outdoor space, closely followed by healthy plants and shrubbery.

2. Talk to the pros when challenges arise

While more people are interested in creating beautiful, healthy outdoor spaces, many are not versed in the challenges of landscape upkeep. For example, people are most stumped by how to get rid of weeds, followed by a quest for the perfect plant and the proper lawn care schedule.

If you find yourself overwhelmed, it's best to consult with a company like TruGreen to help you beautify your outdoor spaces without guesswork.

3. Spend more time outdoors

Longing for beautiful, maintained outdoor

spaces, over half are willing to invest more time outdoors. Not sure what you're looking for? TruGreen recommends that you:

- Take stock of your yard. Scan your greenery and consider incorporating plants and trees that complement your home's size. For two-storey houses, trees and tall bushes are a good choice, while one-storey houses can focus on keeping plants trimmed and compact for a positive visual appeal.

- Imagine where you'd like to add furniture. Incorporating elements like chairs, small outdoor bed swings or teak wood outdoor sectionals can create a refreshing and relaxing feel.

- Assess your lawn. As the canvas of your outdoor space, a dreamy, green lawn demands meticulous care. Neglecting lawn maintenance can lead to unsightly issues, including brown patches, rampant weeds and insect damage. To ensure your lawn remains a dreamy oasis,

engaging with a professional service like TruGreen can be invaluable in maintaining its health and saving valuable time.

With expert counsel and a proper maintenance routine, homeowners can achieve an outdoor space they love that's worthy of showing off on their social media feeds.

To learn more and find pros that can help maintain your outdoor living space, visit TruGreen.com



Spring cleaning made easy

The sun is shining, and the weather is warming up, so you know what that means: it's spring cleaning season! When it's time to deep clean your kitchen and bathroom, you probably wish there were ways to make the job quicker and easier.

To help maintain a sparkling clean home, Delta Faucet has thoughtful kitchen and bathroom products that can help you maintain your hard work this spring (and beyond!)

Make kitchen clean-up easier

The kitchen is the heart of your home, so it's important to keep it looking and feeling clean. However, heavy usage throughout the day makes this especially challenging. When spring cleaning, start at the top of the room, wiping down kitchen cabinets first, then cleaning the counters, sink and stovetop, saving the floors

for last. After you, try to establish the habit of wiping spills between food prep tasks and right after cooking; this helps prevent caked-on food that becomes harder to remove. Keep a damp cloth handy to make this easier.

Ensure that everything you need for cleaning is in an easily accessible place. An under-sink bin can hold essential kitchen cleaning products, but make sure they're meant for kitchen use only. Avoid making this a catch-all for other items, to make it easier for anyone to find kitchen cleanup tools. Stay away from abrasive products or "all-purpose bathroom cleaners," as they can damage some kitchen or bathroom finishes.

Upgrading your taps

One of the most common kitchen pain points is keeping your taps looking clean and free from streaky fingerprints, debris and water spots.

Thankfully, you can prevent build-up and keep grimy hands off with the new Trinsic® Touch20® Kitchen Faucet with Touchless™ Technology from Delta®. This technology eliminates the need for daily interactions that make your kitchen look dirty and you get to choose a function that is easiest for your family. Like using the back of your hand to gently touch anywhere on the faucet to start and stop the water? No problem, there are tech taps that will do that. Want to avoid using hands altogether? Just place your hands anywhere near the tap to turn it on or off, helping you cut down on cleaning time.

To prevent mineral build-up and hard water stains on your faucets, Delta® also offers Lumicoat® finishes on select collections, which repels liquids, resists water spots and keeps your accessories looking cleaner longer. Simply

wipe it clean with a soft cloth: no cleaners or chemicals necessary.

Battling bathroom cleanup

Keeping bathrooms clean can seem like an endless challenge. Again, having all your cleaning supplies close at hand in an easy-to-carry caddy or bin is essential to making this task easier. Start with the dirtiest jobs first – including the toilet – and make sure brushes or sponges you use for that job are kept separate from supplies for your tub and sink.

To tackle hard water stains and soap scum, a 50/50 solution of white vinegar and water is extremely effective. You can use this combination in a spray bottle to easily clean surfaces like shower glass. Spray the affected area and let it sit 20 minutes before wiping gently and rinsing.

FILMS

Road House is the remake no one was asking for

John Mulderig

Back in 1989, Patrick Swayze found an action vehicle in the tale of a brawling bouncer hired to keep the loutish patrons of an Indiana bar in line.

Switch venues from the American Midwest to the southeast, and substitute Jake Gyllenhaal's biceps for Swayze's, and you have the wholly unnecessary remake *Road House* (Amazon MGM).

His glory days as a mixed martial arts fighter behind him, and strapped for cash, Gyllenhaal's haunted loner, Dalton, reluctantly accepts a job offer from Frankie (Jessica Williams), the owner of a rowdy beachside tavern in the Florida Keys.

Dalton hasn't been off the Greyhound long before he falls for Ellie (Daniela Melchior), a doctor who offers to stitch him up after a fight. But romance takes a back seat to Dalton's ongoing crusade against a small band of motorcycle goons relentlessly determined to pillage his workplace.

What Dalton doesn't initially realise is that these Hells Angels wannabes are, in fact, the minions of local crime lord Ben Brandt (Billy Magnussen). At his imprisoned (and unseen) father's bidding, spoilt rich boy Brandt is out to force the closure of Frankie's tavern as part of a real estate scheme.

When young Brandt's stooges fail to deliver, thanks to Dalton's superior smackdown skills,

Brandt senior sends in brutish hulk Knox (played by real-life MMA fighter and boxer Conor McGregor) to get the job done. With his arrival, the proceedings approach a crescendo of sweaty, grunting mayhem.

As scripted by Anthony Bagarozzi and Charles Mondry, director Doug Liman's love song to meatheads at first registers as merely vulgar and tiresome. But *Road House* degenerates into outright immorality as Dalton eventually seeks vengeance on the bad guys for endangering Charlie (Hannah Lanier), a young lady who he befriended on his arrival in the Sunshine State.

While it might not excite the judges next time the awards season comes along, being involved was certainly exciting for Conor McGregor.

He spoke of enjoying "every second" of his acting debut. "I was just in awe of it all, to be honest with you, the whole process," he told gamesradar.com. "I didn't know how I was going to take to it. I didn't know whether I was going to like it, to be honest. I'm a fighting man – that's my bread and butter. It's where I come from... I'm not an actor, but I'm showbusiness. That was my vibe to it. I felt that. I enjoyed every second of it."

Universe view...

Glad you liked it Conor. As for the rest of us, well, the original *Road House* wasn't exactly what you'd call a classic but it looks like *Citizen*



Kane compared with this version. Immoral, violent and with few saving graces, it really feels like the Hollywood scriptwriters' strike might well be still ongoing.

Have we run out of original plots?

Above, Jake Gyllenhaal stars in a scene from *Road House*. Photo: Laura Redford, Amazon

HEALTH

Six ways to make sure you smell fresher

Ever struggled with body odour – or know someone in your family that does? It's no joke if it's happened to you, and can be both very embarrassing and make your life a misery. Here's some advice from body odour specialists Secret...

There's a funny thing about body odour. It's not confined to your underarms. It can affect your whole body, from your pits to your bits – and beyond.

Ever get a whiff of your feet after a long day in sandals? How about your bra when you whip it off after you get home after work? Let's be honest, ladies.

We might want to smell like a delicate spring rain, but by the end of the day? Sometimes, the struggle is real.

Secret gets it. It's an industry leader that has been helping women get their good smell on for nearly 70 years. It recently found women often face unspoken concerns about whole body odour.

"Some people think body odour means you're 'dirty' when body odour is completely normal

and natural," says Dr. Wendy Goodall McDonald of Secret. "We all have bacteria that naturally exists on our bodies. If that bacteria is able to mix with sweat in tight spaces, it will emit an odour.

Also many think body odour is only normal under the arms, when it can come from many more parts of the body."

But, McDonald explains, the tactics they have been using to combat body odour have been less than effective – taking multiple showers a day, layering clothes, applying powder, using sprays or perfumes to mask the odour, even avoiding being close to or intimate with others.

Women have enough stress. Do we really need to worry about this, too? There's got to be a better solution. The good news? There is. Here are some tips that really work.

Watch what you eat

Far be it from anyone to suggest you give up garlic bread, hummus or a Caesar salad, but foods with garlic, onions and other more aromatic spices can actually affect how your body smells. The aroma can be carried in your sweat. Try a fruit salad instead on a hot summer day.

...and drink

Alcohol and caffeine can make you perspire more than usual and overall hydration can really affect your scent. So drink those eight glasses of water each day. Bonus tip: It can help with bad breath, too.

Use a whole body deodorant

Didn't know that was a thing? It's new! Secret developed an innovation in deodorants, Secret Whole Body, that you can use from pits to bits. Groin, feet, thighs, the whole nine yards.

It goes on clear and smells delicious, featuring Peach + Vanilla Blossom and Fresh Lilac + Waterlily scents that don't simply mask your scent; they also fight odour-causing bacteria at the source.

It comes in three forms: a nitrogen-powered spray, a stick with coconut oil and shea butter, and a water-based cream, all of which give 72-hour clinically proven protection against odours.

All three forms are free of aluminium, baking soda and dyes.

And, four out of five gynaecologists and dermatologists would recommend it, including Dr. Goodall McDonald. It's a serious new

breakthrough that gives women an easy way to smell fresh all day. Look for it at online retailers.

Exfoliate showering

Exfoliate showering every day is a given to get rid of the bacteria on your skin, but don't forget to exfoliate, too. It can help remove the dead skin cells that can trap bacteria and cause odours.

Another tip for your daily showering routine: towel off well, especially in areas where you tend to sweat later in the day. When you get dry right away, it's harder for that bacteria to breed.

Wear loose, lightweight clothes

You may want to do the opposite and cover up more heavily if you're concerned about whole body odour. But dressing in outfits that will keep you cool may help minimise body odour.

Replace your insoles

To help combat foot odour, replace those insoles often. New insoles won't stop your feet from sweating, but old, stinky insoles certainly aren't helping.

With these tips, you can ditch the stress about body odour, put on those tank tops and shorts and enjoy summer.

Medieval astronomers were serious when it came to the impact of celestial events

HISTORY

Brian Tanner & Giles Gasper

How medieval chroniclers interpreted solar eclipses and other celestial events

Over 800 years ago, around 1195, Gervase, a monk based at Canterbury Cathedral, included in his chronicles a series of reflections on natural, mostly celestial, phenomena.

In this he was far from unusual. Medieval monastic thinkers often recorded celestial events such as eclipses.

Most medieval observation of the heavens was by eye. Chroniclers, if not observing the event themselves, would rely on an eyewitness or other written records for the details.

Technologies such as the astrolabe – an early instrument for mapping the stars – were common in medieval Europe from the 12th century, and known much earlier in the Islamicate regions (influenced by Islamic civilisation). While Europe's early celestial chroniclers also used astronomical models translated into Latin from Greek and Arabic, they had no telescopes and none of the other technology people have access to today.

Gervase lived in a world where nature was believed to be closely connected to human activity. The ancient and medieval universe placed the Earth at the centre of the universe, with a series of spheres surrounding it, split into two zones.

Below the Moon, these spheres were of the elements: earth and water, air, fire. Above the Moon came the spheres of the planets: Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and then the stars, fixed into their constellations.

In the context of a universe of spheres, ancient and medieval thinkers all worked on the principle that what is above affects that which is below. It is important to appreciate that this explains the serious attention paid to astrology in ancient and medieval thought. Planets, they believed, had effects on the human world. Natural phenomena, in this way, were connected and integral to understanding that world.

Astronomy, and its associated discipline of astrology, had direct practical application in human



activity at the time, from religious study of the calendar and events to medicine and agriculture. Astronomy's broad usefulness in working out timings for medical procedures or the weather was widely acknowledged.

Philosopher and scientist Robert Grosseteste (c.1170-1253) explained this in his treatise *On the Liberal Arts* (c.1200): According to Gervase, the purpose of writing a chronicle was to record the deeds of kings and princes, and the record of miracles and portents. Direct correlations were made then by chroniclers of the period between celestial phenomena and political change – bearing in mind that most, if not all, chronicles were written after the fact. The Melrose Chronicle, compiled in the 13th century, notes that: 'A comet is a star which is not always visible, but which appears most frequently upon the death of a king, or on the destruction of a kingdom. When it appears with a crown of shining rays, it portends the decease of a

king; but if it has streaming hair and throws it off, as it were, then it betokens the ruin of the country.'

A famous example is the appearance of Halley's comet in 1066, which was associated by contemporaries with the change of regime in England: from Harald Godwinson to William the Conqueror, who took control after the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

One of the striking things about Gervase is how precise his descriptions of natural phenomena were, especially those that seemed to him to pass understanding. One example is his account of what can now be identified as ball lightning.

Another example, from September 13 1178, concerns the

observation of the 'horns' of the partially eclipsed Sun rotating to point towards the Earth. Gervase states he was an eyewitness of this eclipse.

Viewers of the eclipse in parts of the northern hemisphere this week were able to see something very similar to the observation Gervase described, with the Sun's horns rotating and pointing vertically downwards. Modelling helps us to predict that the view of the moon is going to be very close to that seen by Gervase, because of the precise position and timing. Elsewhere in the world, the view of the eclipse will be slightly different.

Also in 1178, Gervase records in similar detail how the Moon's

"One of the striking things about Gervase is how precise his descriptions of natural phenomena were, especially those that seemed to him to pass understanding. One example is his account of what can now be identified as ball lightning."

Medieval scholars linked celestial occurrences, such as Halley's comet, to events at home, such as the arrival of William the Conqueror in England.

image was seen to split in two by witnesses who reported this to him. Our analysis suggests that this probably resulted from it being seen through a column of hot air. And Gervase was not alone in detailing this. English Benedictine monk Matthew Paris described a spectacular display of halos around the Sun in 1233: 'These suns formed a wonderful spectacle, and were seen by more than a thousand creditable persons; and some of them, in commemoration of this extraordinary phenomenon, painted suns and rings of various colours on parchment, that such an unusual phenomenon might not escape from the memory of man.'

This was followed in the same year by a cruel war and terrible bloodshed in those counties, and general disturbances happened throughout England, Wales and Ireland.

Today's celestial spectacles

These days, celestial spectacles are seen as simply manifestations of the richness of a natural world that is explicable, at least in principle.

Nevertheless, despite the predictive success of, for example, the theory of gravity and classical dynamics, there are still problems that remain unpredictable. Some can be deceptively simple – for example, the double pendulum or Rott's pendulum (a pair of pendulums which form a "chaotic" system, whose motion cannot be mathematically predicted).

Others include meteorological phenomena and weather forecasting – and here, in many ways, we find ourselves in a similar position to medieval chroniclers.

In long-term weather forecasting, for instance, we can observe, but we are still unable to predict precise future outcomes such as extreme weather with accuracy. The medieval chroniclers saw wonders in the heavens as portents. It might serve us well to re-learn why, and to draw our own perspectives on the inter-connections of things.

Brian Tanner is an Emeritus Professor of Physics at Durham University, Durham University

Giles Gasper is a Professor in High Medieval History, Durham University

Faith can help society defuse the world's fertility timebomb

WORLD SOCIETY

Maria Wiering

For plummeting worldwide fertility rates to change course, people must find courage to “do the hard thing” of raising large families, and that courage comes from faith, said Catherine Ruth Pakaluk, a senior economist in the USA.

“We live in a society that it’s just so easy not to have children,” said Pakaluk, author of *Hannah’s Children: The Women Quietly Defying the Birth Dearth*.

Her research – based on open conversations with college-educated women who have five or more children – indicates that religious faith is a major motivator for having children. She said this shows an importance to change people’s hearts about the value of children – something Christians have historically done as they converted pagan cultures.

Pakaluk’s book coincides with a recently published report by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation showing nearly all countries worldwide will fall below replacement fertility levels within the next 75 years.

By 2100, the fertility rate in 97% of countries is forecasted at below replacement levels, with more 155 of 204 countries and territories (76%) projected to hit that mark by 2050. Fertility rates in the West have generally been below replacement level since the 1970s.

The total fertility rate (TFR) – a population’s average number of children born to a woman over a lifetime – has fallen globally from 4.84 in 1950 to 2.23 in 2021. About 54% of countries are already below 2.1, the accepted replacement level, with no projected rebound, according to the IHME report.

The leading UK medical journal *The Lancet* published the IHME report last month, pointing out that the data “warn that national governments must plan for emerging threats to economies, food security, health, the environment, and geopolitical security brought on by these demographic changes that are set to transform the way we live.”

The IHME report was based on data from the institute’s Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries and Risk Factors Study 2021, which is described as “the single largest and most detailed scientific effort ever conducted to quantify levels and trends in health” with thousands of collaborating researchers globally. The research was funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.



It confirms previously identified trends but with greater precision, based on “innovative, more accurate forecasting methods grounded in real-world evidence,” according to the IHME. The United Nations Population Fund, for example, titled its 2023 report *The Problem With ‘Too Few’*, noting that populations continue to rise in all regions of the world with the exception of Europe. However, populations in Central, South and Southeast Asia; Latin America and the Caribbean; and North America are projected to reach their “peak sizes” by 2100.

Economists warn that falling fertility rates are expected to weaken national economies and innovation, push people to stay in the workforce longer, foster fierce competition for immigration and thin family networks, resulting in widespread isolation and loneliness.

In the UK, the TFR decreased to 1.49 children per woman in 2022 from 1.55 in 2021. In the EU, 2022 saw 3.88 million babies born in a slight decrease from 4.09 million in 2021. The number of children born in the EU has been declining since 2008, when 4.68 million children were born.

The total fertility rate in 2022 was 1.46 live births per woman in the EU, which is another decline,

“Economists warn that falling fertility rates are expected to weaken national economies and innovation, push people to stay in the workforce longer, foster fierce competition for immigration and thin family networks, resulting in widespread isolation and loneliness..”

after the small increase recorded in 2021 (the total fertility rate was 1.53 in 2021 and 1.51 in 2020).

The United States currently has a total fertility rate around 1.64. It is projected to decrease to 1.52 by 2050 and 1.45 in 2100. In 1950, the US rate was 3.08. By 2050, South Korea, Puerto Rico and Taiwan are projected to have the world’s lowest fertility rates, all under 1%; Bhutan, Maldives and Puerto Rico are projected to have the world’s lowest rates in 2100.

Meanwhile, the total fertility rates in “low-income regions” such as sub-Saharan Africa are expected to continue to fall, with many dipping below replacement rate, but still remain higher than the global average. By 2100, the share of the world’s births are predicted to double in low-income regions from 18% in 2021 to 35%.

Forecasts for 2100 see half of the world’s children being born in sub-Saharan Africa.

“We are facing staggering social change through the 21st century,” said the IHME’s Stein Emil Vollset, the report’s senior author. “The world will be simultaneously tackling a ‘baby boom’ in some countries and a ‘baby bust’ in the others. As most of the world contends with the serious challenges to the economic growth of a shrinking workforce and how

to care for and pay for aging populations, many of the most resource-limited countries in sub-Saharan Africa will be grappling with how to support the youngest, fastest-growing population on the planet in some of the most politically and economically unstable, heat-stressed, and health system-strained places on earth.”

A 2023 story in the Economist said the fertility rate’s trajectory may lead to the first time the world’s population (currently around 8.1 billion) has declined since the Black Death, the 14th-century plague that killed 30% to 50% of Europe’s population.

While some positive trends may be associated with lowering birth rates, such as an increase in women’s education or lower impact on human land use, “overall the effects will be very challenging to deal with,” said economist Lyman Stone, a research fellow at the Institute for Family Studies and chief information officer of the population research firm Demographic Intelligence.

Data show public policy changes alone are unlikely to reverse the direction of what has been termed a looming fertility “collapse,” but they may help couples who want to have several children achieve it, Stone said.

In the United States, studies indicate a growing gap between the at least two children most women say they want, and the fewer than two children they actually have, he said.

“This isn’t a product of a long-span expansion in human freedom,” he said. “The reality is that in almost every country

Forecasts for 2100 see half of the world’s children being born in sub-Saharan Africa.

around the world, people continue to say that they want two or more children. So if we’re headed to a society, a world where everybody’s having 1.6 (children) on average, which is what they forecast for the long run, that’s a society where globally a huge share of people are not having families they want to have.”

Meanwhile, people with a “more pessimistic” outlook express lower fertility desires than those who are more optimistic, and they are less likely to have fewer children than they said they wanted, Stone said.

“So, negative outlook on life is definitely one factor shaping falling fertility and undershooting fertility desires,” he said. “There’s also some evidence – although it’s more limited – that undershooting fertility desires is associated with less happiness in life. ... People tend to be happiest when they get what they want.”

Pope Francis has repeatedly expressed concern about declining fertility rates, including at an annual conference in May 2023 addressing Italy’s declining birth rate, in which he connected low rates with lack of hope.

“The birth of children, in fact, is the main indicator for measuring the hope of a people,” Pope Francis said. “If few are born it means there is little hope. And this not only has repercussions from an economic and social point of view but also undermines confidence in the future.”

“A change in mentality is needed; the family is not part of the problem, but part of its solution,” the pope added.

The director of social research and associate professor at CUA’s Busch School of Business, Pakaluk said that it is easy for Christians to take for granted the cultural value of children, but the historical practices of exposure and child sacrifice, and current cultural attitudes supporting abortion, contradict that narrative. To counter that view, she encourages people of faith to speak about the value of their children, “reclaiming a sense of truth about the child.”

“I don’t think that birth rates will recover anywhere without this. It’s really pivotal,” said Pakaluk, a Catholic with eight children and six stepchildren.

Christians are “actually holding the thing that can most move the needle, but it requires us to have the creativity to see past the normal levers of cultural power,” she said. “I think about it as a kind of gospel of life.”

SPORT

Dr Colm Hickey

The big football news this week has been the docking of two points from Everton by the Premier League, for a second breach of its financial rules.

The league's Profit and Sustainability rules (PSR) permit clubs to lose £105m over three years, and an independent commission found Everton breached that by £16.6m for the three-year period to 2022-23.

The club had an initial 10-point deduction reduced to six on appeal in February for the three-year period to 2021-22. The commission decided that any breach of PSR justifies a three-point deduction, with an additional two points because Everton's breach of £16.6m – 15.8% above the £105m threshold – is deemed significant.

However, the commission accepted Everton's arguments for mitigation in relation to the fact the club had already been deducted points this season; suffered a loss of revenue because of the suspension of a sponsorship deal with the Russian company USM, and, significantly, made an early admission of guilt. For these reasons, the commission concluded that this merited a two-point reduction in punishment, with a further point for the loss of sponsorship revenue and early admission of guilt.

Everton is, as they say, 'banged to rights.' Why? For the simple reason it admitted its guilt. Do you believe that the club was wrong? Are you outraged? Do you think Everton tried to deceive, that it was untruthful? Do you believe that it brought shame upon itself? Do you agree with the Bible in Proverbs 13:5: 'The righteous hates falsehood, but the wicked brings shame and disgrace', or do you think it was an innocent breach of financial regulations and not a big thing at all, certainly not deserving of a points deduction?

In essence: did Everton cheat? It all comes down to your own idea of morality.

Cheating in sport

Calling someone a cheat is a way of morally condemning their actions, but like many moral terms it is a difficult word to define. Cheating involves more than violating a rule or in football (a law). Fouling a player is against the laws of football, but it is not cheating. Even a deliberate foul may not necessarily be cheating, although it is against the law, and could result in a penalty or a sending off, which would be the accepted consequence of the action.

So, does cheating have to involve secrecy and deception? For example, taking performance enhancing drugs to improve performance or by submitting



Everton, penalty points and the Book of Proverbs

'clean blood' to the authorities at the Tour De France? Robert Simon in his book, *The Ethics of Sport*, defines cheating as 'a violation of public rules central to a practice in order to gain a competitive advantage that would or could not reasonably be allowed as a general basis for making exceptions.' That is, it is something you do to gain an unfair advantage over others.

So, taking performance enhancing drugs in the Enhanced Games is okay as anyone is allowed to do it, whereas in the Olympics it is considered cheating as no one is allowed to do it.

Cheaters will use spurious arguments to defend their position. 'Everyone knows that others are doing it', they might say or, 'It's not that bad; it's a minor breach of the rules' or 'It's a mistake, an administrative error' or 'It's someone else's fault, it's not mine.'

Let me pose an issue for you to consider. What if a club deliberately heavily waters the pitch before a match against a fleet-footed, quick ball passing team? By watering the pitch, it will slow the opposition down. Is that cheating?

Absolutely not. Both teams will

"Calling someone a cheat is a way of morally condemning their actions, but like many moral terms it is a difficult word to define. Cheating involves more than violating a rule or in football (a law). Fouling a player is against the laws of football, but it is not cheating..."

have to play on the same pitch. It is equal for both. Is it ethical? Absolutely not, because the club seeks to gain an advantage through the manipulation of a situation that otherwise would not have happened.

The issue of cheating in sport, therefore, is that sports cheats deliberately and intentionally exempt themselves from the public standards such as rules and principles that any other reasonable or impartial person would want applied deliberately to gain a competitive advantage without any justification for their action.

Off the field issues

Cheating can occur as much if not more off the pitch than on it. Drug taking is one obvious issue directly related to players, as is the offering or taking a bribe to affect the match. Off the field issues could include corruption in awarding stadia to major games or indeed the awarding of World Cup or UEFA tournaments. Yet whether it happens on or off the pitch, the issue of cheating remains the same and its ramifications are significant.

To return to Everton. A club statement said: "While the club's

position has been that no further sanction was appropriate, the club is pleased to see that the commission has given credit to the majority of the issues raised by the club, including the concept of double punishment, the significant mitigating circumstances facing the club due to the war in Ukraine, and the high level of co-operation and early admission of the club's breach."

Yet are we looking at only one club? Sadly, and predictably, 'No'. Elsewhere Nottingham Forest has been deducted four points and has submitted an appeal, and Leicester City, the current leaders of the Championship, has also been charged by the Premier League for allegedly breaking spending rules during their last three seasons in the top flight. In February, Manchester City was charged with breaching Financial Fair Play regulations by the Premier League, having reportedly broken the regulations 'around 100 times.' The club failed to provide 'accurate financial information' for at least nine seasons over a four-year period and failed to comply with UEFA's financial fair play rules over a five-year period. It was also found not to have co-operated with the investigation which started in December 2018.

'Whoever is greedy for unjust gain troubles his own household, but he who hates bribes will live.'

Under Premier League rules, the club will not be able to appeal the sanctions in the Court of

Arbitration for Sport so the chances of the decision being brushed off as it was last time seem less likely. In a statement, Manchester City said it was 'surprised' by the charges 'given the extensive engagement and vast amount of detailed materials that the EPL has been provided with.' It said it had a 'comprehensive body of irrefutable evidence that exists in support of its position' and 'look forward to this matter being put to rest once and for all.'

The news also comes just a couple of weeks after boasting of earning the most revenue of any club in world football. The process of prosecution 'will be expensive and it will drag on' for some time as the club will continue to deny the allegations. The charge sheet itself includes five years in which City are accused of refusing to assist with their inquiry, despite refuting the claim.

Since 2008, just a year before the offences are said to have begun, the club has enjoyed the most successful spell in its history, winning six Premier League titles, six League Cups, and two FA Cups.

This takes us back to our beginning, the docking of points from Everton for a breach of financial fair play. Did Everton cheat? Did it seek to violate public rules in order to gain a competitive advantage? Everton unsurprisingly says no. Nottingham Forest admitted the same offence but denied any cheating, Manchester City denies any wrong doing, as does Leicester City.

Yet is it plausible that they are all truthful? Is it conceivable that they are somehow injured parties? You will no doubt have reached a conclusion. I know I have. To return to the Bible, in Proverbs, 15:27: 'Whoever is greedy for unjust gain troubles his own household, but he who hates bribes will live.' What do you think?

UNIVERSE OFFERS: WOOD FUELS

£20 OFF WITH THIS ADVERT
USE CODE UNIV001

ORDERS TAKEN ONLINE OR BY TELEPHONE

ALL MAJOR DEBIT & CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED
VISA Mastercard

WAYMARK WOODFUELS LTD

Sustainably sourced Kiln Dried Birch Split Firewood delivered direct to your home

- Ready to burn certified
- Dried to an 18% (2% +/-) moisture content
- 23-25cm log length
- UK compliant for your wood/multi-fuel stove



READY TO BURN

Visit our website: www.waymarkwoodfuels.co.uk
T: 0161 526 4626 E: sales@waymarkwoodfuels.co.uk

*Refer to website for Delivery Terms *Prices inclusive VAT & Delivery

RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Our Lady of Fidelity

The Church needs religious sisters **URGENTLY** to bring Christ to others by a life of prayer and service lived in the community of Ignatian spirituality. Daily Mass is the centre of community life. By wearing the religious habit we are witnesses of the consecrated way of life.

If you are willing to risk a little love and would like to find out how, contact Sister Bernadette.
Mature vocations considered.

Convent of Our Lady of Fidelity
1 Our Lady's Close, Upper Norwood, London SE19 3FA
Telephone 07760 297001

SPECIAL OFFER!
This is an opportunity too good to miss. We are not offering a job, career or even a way of life. Instead we offer an invitation to explore if you have been invited by the Lord to follow him in a special way as a priest or religious as an Augustinian Recollect friar. We offer you the fellowship of our communities... the opportunity to share your prayers and spiritual growth... the challenge to know yourself and your purpose in life... an opportunity to serve God as a missionary in remote parts of the world – or in an inner city parish in London, New York or other major cities around the world. The need is always there – and so is the invitation.

INTERESTED?
For more information contact:
The Augustinian Friars, St Rita's Centre, Ottery Moor Lane, Honiton, Devon EX1 1AP.
Alternatively, call us on **01404 42601**

PRAYERS/THANKSGIVING

Grateful thanks to St Jude for favours granted

MCLBEW




IN MEMORIAM



Vivien Kloszek
Died 18 April 2018
Six years since she passed away. It still seems like yesterday she was with us. Everyday is filled with memories, all from a happier time. A life well lived.
Anthony and Ernie

With Grateful Thanks to Our Lady, St Joseph and St Michael.

(CD)



Advertising in the Universe is simple, affordable and effective. Reach a devout Catholic audience with a single advert in our Classified section. Contact Andrea Black for details, on 07918 560608 or via andrea.black@universecatholicweekly.co.uk

LITURGICAL CALENDARS

Ordinary Form

Ordinary Form Liturgical Calendar
Sunday Year B, Weekday Cycle II
Sunday, April 14: Third Sunday of Easter Acts 3:13-15, 17-19; Ps. 4:2, 4, 7, 9 r. 7; 1 Jn. 2:1-5; Lk. 24:35-48

Monday, April 15: Acts 6:8-15; Ps. 119:23-24, 26-27, 29-30; Jn. 6:22-29

Tuesday, April 16: Acts 7:51-8:1; Ps. 31:3-4, 6, 8, 17, 21; Jn. 6:30-35

Wednesday, April 17: Acts 8:1-8; Ps. 66:1-7; Jn. 6:35-40

Thursday, April 18: Acts 8:26-40; Ps. 66:8-9, 16-17, 20; Jn. 6:44-51

Friday, April 19: Acts 9:1-20; Ps. 117; Jn. 6:52-59

Saturday, April 20: Acts 9:31-42; Ps. 116:12-17; Jn. 6: 60-69

UNIVERSE CATHOLIC WEEKLY

Classifieds
Linking you to the Catholic community

Booking a Classified advertisement in the Universe Catholic Weekly is as easy as 1, 2, 3 ...

- 1 Choose your style – A, B or C below...
- 2 Compose your wording, obtain photos, etc
- 3 Call us to book your advertisement

CALL Andrea Black on 07918 560608 or email andrea.black@universecatholicweekly.co.uk
We will need your wording, any images, special instructions and dates ad is to run. Payment will be taken over the phone at the time of booking

STYLE A

The best way to remember your loved ones... with personalised memoriam cards, bookmarks and acknowledgements, notelets and other stationery. All styles. Also bespoke funeral Mass cards and Orders of Service, personally designed to reflect your loved one. Contact Kendall Print, on 01234 567890 for free advice on the best style and a free no-obligation quote. Alternatively, call in person for an informal chat at 22 Haig Road, Bolton, Lancs

STYLE B

Remembering your loved ones... Personalised memoriam cards, bookmarks and acknowledgements, notelets. All styles. Delivered in just 48 hours **guaranteed!**
Kendall Print, 22 Haig Rd, Bolton Call us on 01243 624356

STYLE C

Remember your loved ones in style...
• Personalised memoriam cards
• Bookmarks
• Acknowledgements and notelets.
• Orders of Service
• Funeral Mass cards

Kendall Print, 22 Haig Rd, Bolton. Call us on 01243 624356

Best Value, Biggest Impact

- Up to 70 words
- Heading of your choice
- From just £30 per week
- More words can be added, prices on application
- Fully styled classified advert
- Free design service
- Heading of your choice
- Include photos, logos
- From just £45 per week
- Two columns wide.
- Free design service
- Heading of your choice
- £80 per week. Discounts for multiple week bookings

Delivered in just 48 hours guaranteed!

Universe Classifieds | Universe Classifieds | Universe Classifieds |





**Saint Martin I, Pope
and Martyr**

**Optional Memorial
Feast Day 13th April
C.595–655**

**Invoked by those persecuted
by the state
Pre-Congregation
canonisation**

**Statue of Pope St Martin I in
Santa Maria della Consolazione
church, Todi, Italy**