



Issue no 37
December 2025

Wreccsam Clarion

The newsletter of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Wrexham –
serving the parishes of North and Mid Wales



To make clearly known
To declare
To clarify
To call to prayer



Advent – 'Coming' - A time of preparation and hope. Therefore the pink of Gaudete Sunday provides our theme colour. White suggests the purity and light of the single candle in our Advent wreath - the light of Christ in our midst.

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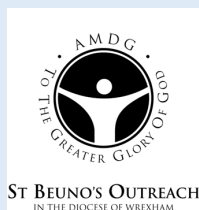
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Humour, and a Quiz!
Theme: Patience

Former Headteacher

Bill Evans RIP

Please remember in your prayers the former Headteacher of **Ysgol Santes Helen**, Caernarfon, who died on 25th November.

Bill Evans served from 1988 until retirement in 2004, and will be remembered fondly.

Preparing the crib

A family tradition, bringing everyone together.

First week: Choose the space.. a flat surface, perhaps

Daily: add hay or straw with a simple prayer:

"Come, Lord Jesus, Come

Week Two: Add the animals. Perhaps draw some of your own.

Week Three: Add the shepherds.

Place stars around -they were in the fields at night!

for Christmas

Week Four: Mary and Joseph came into Bethlehem.

They were given space in the stable.

Christmas Day: Place Jesus in the crib.

If using light, switch it on. It represents Jesus as the Light of the World in our midst.

Remember, St Francis of Assisi used this imagery to explain the Christmas story.

Retelling it in your own home is the best lesson possible, for all the family

Visit the Diocesan website: rcdwsm.org.uk

We might not immediately think of the beginning of December as the time to make new year resolutions, but of course it is the beginning of a new year in the liturgical life of the Church as well.

It is, too, a time when we begin to look to the winter solstice, the return of the sun and longer daylight, as well as the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Saviour who brings new life. It is therefore a moment for us all to reflect upon life issues in our own world and personhood and to resolve what commitment might be made to protect and sustain life - not least our own.

As I have previously written, there are the respective bills before Parliament regarding the extension of the legality for aborting life in the womb right up to the time of birth in the 'Up to Birth Clause (191)' in the *Crime and Policing Bill*, and also the *Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill* currently before the House of Lords and the adjunct debate in the Senedd.

On these life issues we have a voice and that voice should be heard clearly in the wilderness of the world in which we live, where legislators are prepared to vote through badly couched legislation and legislation which does not respect or uphold principled rights and duties.

If you have not yet done so, I would encourage you to write to your Member of Parliament, Peers and Members of Senedd, respectively, on each of these issues. How to write, and contact details, are given on the Bishops' Conference communications website which is updated weekly with developments on these and other issues that are determined in the secular world but affect us all. Click here to [View in your browser](#)

The other life issue which is going to be with us throughout the year is that of climate change and the environment. I read recently of new research from University College London (UCL) reporting and analysing the most up to date data which reveals that huge tracts of Europe's water reserves are drying up.

Across southern and central Europe, particularly, freshwater storage is shrinking and this does not exclude

the UK. Even within the same countries weather patterns are dramatically changing and thereby affecting the total underground water storage.

Trends in the UK are varied, the west is generally getting wetter while the east is becoming drier although total rainfall is broadly stable, or even slightly increasing, - we are experiencing heavier downpours and longer dry spells, especially in summer. While groundwater is seen as more climate-resilient than surface water, heavy summer downpours often mean more water is lost to runoff and flash flooding, while the winter recharge period of underground aquifers may be shortening.

Globally, drying hotspots are occurring in many parts of the world across each of the continents, and governments are beginning their planning to ration water where in the past its supply has been plentiful or at least adequate. Pollution and overuse exacerbate the water shortage problem. This is a life issue that each of us has the ability in some small part to address, not just for ourselves but for the generation(s) to come.

The words of Philipp Nicolai's (1556-1608) hymn never seemed quite so apt:

'Wake, O wake, and sleep no longer,

For he who calls you is no stranger:

Awake, God's own Jerusalem!

hear, the midnight bells are chiming

The signal for his royal coming;

Let voice to voice announce his name!

.....if the God given life of creation and in the gift of Jesus as Saviour are to have their bountiful fulfilment in our lives and the life of the world.

With every good wish and the assurance of my prayers, for you and your families and may Advent be for you a time of blessing, joyous expectation and holiness,

† Peter.

MAKE A DATE WITH THE GOSPEL

Throughout the coming months we will hear much of St. Matthew's Gospel in the liturgy (Lectionary: 55.5% on Sundays year A and a further 30% in the Weekday Cycle), but there is also the remaining 15% to discover. Matthew's Gospel is the largest book of the New Testament with 28 chapters comprising 1071 verses. 'Matthew's Gospel is an exciting read.

It sets forth Christ's vision of the Kingdom of heaven and establishes Jesus as the prophesied Messiah. Matthew paints a picture of Jesus as a bold, decisive man and as the undisputed Son of God. He leaves the reader with no doubt that God's love for us is beyond measure and that God's desire is for us to worship him with our whole hearts.' (*Matthew's Gospel. Catholic Bible School*).

Why not give it a go and read the whole of St. Matthews Gospel at home, alone or with your family, or with fellow parishioners in the coming months? Reading the Gospel in that continuous way enables you to make connections and gain understanding that cannot be made with even the most attentive listening at Mass. Further notes and information on St. Matthew's Gospel will be given through the year.

More scripture resources can be found on the God Who Speaks website godwhospeaks.uk

Praying with St Beuno's Outreach: 'As one friend to another ...'

In this monthly reflection, St Beuno's Outreach invites you to pray with an image and a verse of Scripture or other material.



Image © John Stushie stushieart.com, by kind permission

December brings the season of Advent, a time of expectation and longing as we wait for the coming of Jesus: Emmanuel, God made man. We prepare, too, for the coming of Christ in our hearts, as well as for his second coming at the end of time. Although this is a penitential season (as the purple vestments at Mass remind us), the third Sunday of Advent, known as Gaudete ('rejoice!') Sunday is always a joyful one.

The title comes from the first word of the entrance antiphon at Mass, 'Rejoice ...!' (Philippians 4: 4-5). Today the vestments and hangings are rose pink, like the third candle on the Advent wreath, symbolising joy in the coming of Christ.

As you read and re-read the passage, pause often to ponder. Perhaps you share in its sense of joyful expectation, or you find yourself longing for any wastelands in and around you to bloom.

If you find it hard to pray these words, ask the Lord to help you wait with patience, simply trusting that he is coming. Maybe you are one of those with 'weak hands and feeble knees'?

Trust that the Lord knows how you feel. Hear him say to you, 'Be strong; fear not!'

There may be areas of your life where you recognise green growth, or blossoming flowers.

Give thanks to the Lord for these.

Maybe there is someone around you who needs to be comforted?

Pray that they might take heart that even 'the desert shall rejoice and blossom'.

In what practical ways might you help them see the good things the Lord has given them?

As you end your time of prayer, you may like to repeat again the short phrase '**Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice**', and take it with you throughout the day.

More from St Beuno's Outreach

A Date for your diary:

Please do join us on **Sunday 14th December at 7pm** for our St Beuno's Outreach Advent Journey by Zoom (email us at stbeunosoutreach@beunos.com for the link). You can download our Advent and Christmastide resources as well as the weekly Prego at <https://stbeunosoutreach.wordpress.com/>.

In his homily for Gaudete Sunday in 2014, Pope Francis spoke of this 'Sunday of joy', urging us not to worry about all the things we still haven't done to prepare for Christmas, but rather to think of all the good things that life has given us.

Our Scripture passage comes from the first reading at Mass on *Gaudete* Sunday, from Isaiah.

It is a beautiful song of hope for the demoralised people of Israel, expressing their joy at returning home from exile.

Before you read it, you may like to spend a few moments focusing on the joy of the Lord's coming, perhaps repeating slowly the opening words of the entrance antiphon,

'Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice.'

**The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;
it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and singing.**

**The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.**

**They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.**

**Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.**

Say to those who have an anxious heart,

'Be strong; fear not!

**Behold, your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.**

He will come and save you.'

Isaiah 35: 1-6

'ALL ABOUT THE SEASON OF ADVENT' QUIZ

Answers Quiz, see back page.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Coming (of Christ) | 13. Nazareth |
| 2. Usually purple or violet | 14. A census (or taxing) |
| 3. St Nicholas' Day | 15. The Magnificat |
| 4. Nearest Sunday to 30th Nov
(4 Sundays before Christmas) | 16. Hope, love, joy and peace |
| 5. 21st or 22nd Dec | 17. John the Baptist |
| 6. " <u>Ransom</u> " | 18. O come, all ye faithful |
| 7. St Pancras Station | 19. Angel Gabriel |
| 8. Oval or rectangular | 20. Midnight on 24th Dec |
| 9. 13th Dec | 21. Henry Cole |
| 10. Eight | 22. Cornwall |
| 11. Germany | 23. Handel - Halle,
Germany |
| 12. Prince Albert | |

Advent, a time of waiting, requires Patience

Patience is the companion of wisdom *St Augustine of Hippo*

All commend patience, but few are willing to practise it

Thomas à Kempis

Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*

Angler: "You have been watching me for three hours. Why don't you try fishing yourself?"

Onlooker: "I don't have the patience"

The advantage of having lived 65 years. You don't feel the need to be impatient any longer. *Thornton Wilder*



Gospel Year of Matthew

SIGNS OF JESUS' COMING AND THE CLOSE OF THE AGE & THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" And Jesus answered them, "Take heed that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nations will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places; all this is but the beginning of the sufferings." ...

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and he will send out his angels with loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Matthew 24:3-8, 29-31 ESV-CE

Reflection Prayer:

They watch for Christ
who are sensitive, eager, apprehensive in mind,
who are awake, alive, quick-sighted,
zealous in honouring him,
who look for him in all that happens, and
who would not be surprised,
who would not be over-agitated or overwhelmed,
if they found that he was coming at once ...

This then is to watch:

to be detached from what is present, and
to live in what is unseen;
to live in the thought of Christ as he came once,
and as he will come again;
to desire his second coming, from our affectionate
and grateful remembrance of his first.

St. John Henry Newman Parochial and Plain Sermons.vol.4

THE POPE'S PRAYER INTENTION – December

For Christians in areas of conflict.

Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation and hope.

Commentary:

"... sign of your coming ..." (Matthew 24:3 and 24:29) 'Coming' is the translation of the Greek word *Parousia* which literally means 'presence' but can denote 'appearing' or 'visitation'. Matthew uses the word four times in this chapter and it is to be found on 20 occasions in the rest of the NT.

In Greek literature it is sometimes used to describe the visitation of a king or high official to a city that has previously been conquered. In this sense it presumes a prior absence before the king's arrival or return.

The Bible uses it in a similar way for the arrival of important people; the coming of the captured Judith to Holofernes (*Judith 10:18*); the coming of the invading gentiles under Nicanor as warned by Judas Maccabeus (*2Maccabees 8:12*); and the joy of Paul on knowing of the repentance and new zeal of the Corinthians when Titus returns to him (*2 Corinthians 7:6*).

More importantly it denotes the coming of Jesus Christ, who brings judgement on his enemies (*Matt.24:37, 39; "Thessalonians 3:13 ; 1John2:28*). The word can refer both to Christ's "visitation" of destruction upon Jerusalem in A.D.70 as well as his Second Advent at the end of time as Judge of the living and the dead (*cf. Acts 1:11; 2Timothy 4:1*)

'Sun ... moon ... stars' These images of cosmic catastrophe underscore the magnitude of Jerusalem's coming doom. The OT prophets use these images of heavenly chaos to predict the downfall of pagan kingdoms (*cf. Isaiah 13:9-10; Ezekiel 32:7-8; Joel 2:10; Amos 8:9*).

Jesus redirects the language towards Jerusalem: the kingdom of the Old Covenant (Israel) will be devastated for corrupting itself like the pagans and rejecting Jesus.

THE CYCLE OF PRAYER:

During Advent and Christmastide, we are invited to pray for

Migrants and Refugees

Expectant Mothers



JUBILEE YEAR 2025

On Sunday 28th December, the Feast of the Holy Family, the jubilee Year will close with hundreds of ceremonies and Masses in cathedrals across the world.

For us, the closure will take place at the Cathedral Church of Our Lady of Sorrows, Wrexham at 10.30 am and to which all are welcome, indeed encouraged by the Holy Father to attend.

An extensive range of articles and resources are available on the Bishops' Conference website:

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/jubilee-2025/>

EPISCOPAL NEWS

Bishop Emeritus Thomas McMahon

The Right Reverend Thomas McMahon, Bishop Emeritus of Brentwood Diocese, died peacefully at his home in Stock, Essex, at 10am on Monday, 24 November 2025.

For his obituary please go to [Requiescat in pace: Bishop Emeritus Thomas McMahon](#)

May he rest in peace.

Bishop Nicholas Hudson installed as the new Bishop of Plymouth

On the Patronal Feast Day of St Cuthbert Mayne, Saturday 29 November 2025 the Right Reverend Nicholas Hudson was installed as the Bishop of Plymouth at the Cathedral Church of St Mary & St Boniface, Plymouth. [Bishop Nicholas Hudson installed as the new Bishop of Plymouth](#)

WORLD DAY FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

The Church has been celebrating the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (WDMR) since 1914. It is always an occasion to express concern for different vulnerable people on the move; to pray for them as they face many challenges; and to increase awareness about the opportunities that migration offers.

In this Jubilee year the day was celebrated in October but in the UK it is observed on the 3rd December each year

The theme of Pope Leo XIV's message for the 111th World Day of Migrants and Refugees was: ***Migrants, missionaries of hope***. In this message, the Holy Father emphasises the important witness that Catholic migrants and refugees can offer in a world affected by conflict and inequality in hoping and searching for a better and more peaceful future. In his message, Pope Leo highlights how migrants and refugees in a special way can become witnesses of hope and tenacity amidst adversity and calls for a future of peace and respect for human dignity.

For the full text of the Holy father's message: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/wdmr25-pope-leo-xiv/>

THE MOTHER OF THE FAITHFUL PEOPLE OF GOD

This Doctrinal Note *Mater Populi Fidelis* on Mary's Co-operation in the Work of Salvation from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith was approved and promulgated by Pope Leo on 4th November. The document offers clarifications on titles applied to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and calls for special attention to the use of the expression, "Mediatrice of all graces."

A summary can be seen on Vatican News website:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2025-11/doctrinal-note-mother-of-the-faithful-not-co-redemptrix.html> where you will also find the link to the Document in full.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Bishop John Arnold, Bishop of Salford and Lead Bishop for the Environment for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, has issued a statement following the conclusion of the COP30 UN climate change conference, which took place in Belém, Brazil, from 10-21 November 2025.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the United Nations' annual meeting held to assess progress in dealing with climate change. COP30 offers an important opportunity for countries to recommit to the multilateral promise made through the Paris Agreement: to limit the rise of average global temperature to well below 2°C, commit to net zero and to assist poorer countries to reach climate targets.

The full statement can be read: [Bishop Arnold: Statement on the closing of COP30](#)

OPPOSED ASSISTED SUICIDE IN WALES

Members of the Senedd, the Welsh Parliament, will be asked to decide whether Wales should give its consent to Westminster's Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill — a law that would legalise assisted suicide. This would be a profound change for Wales and would mean that, for the first time, doctors could be asked to assist a patient in ending their life intentionally.

If enacted, this bill would put the most vulnerable in our society at risk of coercion. The conscientious objection clause for doctors is inadequate. Furthermore, Parliament has explicitly rejected an amendment whereby care homes and hospices could opt out of facilitating assisted suicide on their premises and yet many care homes and hospices will want no involvement. Even with stricter rules, experience from other countries shows that once assisted suicide is introduced, the safeguards soon loosen and those who are elderly, disabled, or feel they are a burden begin to feel subtle pressure to choose death.

Write to your member of Senedd: [Oppose Assisted Suicide in Wales - Catholic Bishops' Conference](#)

WORLD AIDS DAY

On 1 December the World Health Organisation joined partners and communities to commemorate World AIDS Day 2025, under the theme "**Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response**". The WHO called for sustained political leadership, international cooperation, and human-rights-centred approaches to end AIDS by 2030.

After decades of progress, the HIV response stands at a crossroads. Life-saving services are being disrupted, and many communities face heightened risks and vulnerabilities. Yet amid these challenges, hope endures in the determination, resilience, and innovation of communities who strive to end AIDS. Please remember to pray for all who are affected by AIDS.



**A Joyful Beginning
to Advent in
Our Lady of the Rosary
Buckley
on 30th November**



Marriage and Family Life Commission



Thank you to all who joined us, and made this Advent Family Day a memorable and grace-filled celebration for everyone.

To begin Advent, families from across the Diocese gathered at Our Lady of the Rosary Church in Buckley for a joyful and faith-filled Family Day. Children, parents, grandparents and parishioners from many communities came together, united in a shared spirit of anticipation and hope as we prepared our hearts for the coming of Christ.

The warm, lively atmosphere was filled with laughter as everyone moved between the activities. A highlight was the creation of Advent wreaths. Each family worked together reflecting not only on Advent, but also the unity and creativity present among us. As families arranged candles and greenery reminded us of how faith is handed on, shared, and celebrated across generations.

There was a wonderful variety of craft activities. The biscuit-decorating station was a favourite with the children, who enthusiastically added sprinkles, marshmallows, tiny stars and plenty of imagination to their creations. Other activity tables invited families to make their own Advent calendars, cheerful donkeys, and thoughtful angel crafts, each one a gentle reminder of the journey that leads us to Bethlehem.

After the crafts the bishop led a short service in church with the blessing of the Advent wreaths we had made. This moment of prayer brought a beautiful stillness to the day, reflecting on Advent as a time of preparation, hope, and spiritual renewal. Many felt how heartfelt and uplifting this time in church was, drawing us together.

Back in the hall, the Knights of St Columba served hot dogs, offering a chance to rest, chat, and enjoy a simple meal together. And to great excitement, Father Christmas made a surprise appearance bringing gifts to all girls and boys! His joyful visit brought laughter, wonder and wide smiles; a perfect addition to a day already filled with warmth.

The sense of togetherness stood out: families working side-by-side, children helping each other, and people from different parishes chatting and sharing stories, all spoke beautifully of a people growing in unity, faith, and love. It was truly heartening to see people bringing their gifts, time, and enthusiasm to make the day such a memorable experience.

We are grateful for the joy we shared, the blessings we received, and the reminder that preparing for Christmas is not only about what we do, but who we do it with. May the spirit of this wonderful day inspire us to continue growing together in prayer, service and hope throughout Advent and beyond.

Around and About in the Diocese

BISHOP PETER'S ENGAGEMENTS

December

04	7.00pm	Armed Forces Carol Service	St Giles' Ch, Wxm
09		Diocesan board of Trustees Meeting	Bp's House
11		Advent Reflection	Carmel, Dolgellau
	2.00pm	Jubilee Pilgrimage Mass	Parish Ch, Dolgellau
14	2.30pm	Carol Service	HMP Berwyn
16	11.30am	Finance Secretariat meeting	Bp's House
24	am	Christmas Masses	HMP Berwyn
		Midnight The Nativity of the Lord	Cathedral
25	10.30am	Christmas Day Mass	Cathedral
27	11.00am	Altar Servers Mass	Cathedral
28	2.30pm	Mass in Syro-Malabar Rite Holy Trinity,	Rhostyllen

IN UNITATE FIDEI

'In the Unity of Faith' is the title of the Apostolic Letter Pope Leo gave to the Church on 23rd November in celebration of the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea in which he seeks to 'encourage the whole church to renew her enthusiasm for the profession of faith.'

Broken down to twelve points Pope Leo's Letter is first and foremost, a call to unity and usefully sets the context and meaning of those words by which we profess of faith on Sundays and other occasions. The Letter is short and concludes with this prayer:

Holy Spirit of God, you guide believers along the path of history. We thank you for inspiring the Symbols of Faith and for stirring in our hearts the joy of professing our salvation in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, consubstantial with the Father. Without him, we can do nothing.

Eternal Spirit of God, rejuvenate the faith of the Church from age to age. Help us to deepen it and to return always to the essentials in order to proclaim it.

So that our witness in the world may not be futile, come, Holy Spirit, with your fire of grace, to revive our faith, to enkindle us with hope, to inflame us with charity.

Come, divine Comforter, source of harmony, unite the hearts and minds of believers. Come and grant us to taste the beauty of communion.

Come, Love of the Father and the Son, gather us into the one flock of Christ.

Show us the ways to follow, so that with your wisdom, we become once again what we are in Christ: one, so that the world may believe. Amen.

https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/apost_letters/documents/20251123-in-unitate-fidei.html

To keep up to date with the interface between religious life and faith, and public life and politics the weekly briefing from Catholic Union of Great Britain this weekly briefing is an invaluable source of news and items currently in the public forum and about which we need be informed and prepared to act:

info@catholicunion.org.uk



LOOKING AHEAD - EVENTS AND INVITATIONS

DECEMBER

Wed 3 rd	Day of Prayer for Migrants and refugees
Sun 14 th	3 rd Sunday of Advent (<i>Gaudete Sunday</i>)
Thur 25 th	Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ
Sat 27 th	Guild of St. Stephen Annual Mass for Altar Servers (after Feast of St. Stephen)
Sun 28 th	Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
10.30 am	Formal Closing of the Holy Year —St. Mary's Cathedral

2026 JANUARY

Thur 1 st	Solemnity of Mary the Holy Mother of God.
Tue 6 th	The Epiphany of the Lord
Sun 19 th	Santo Ninio Blessing Peace Day
18 th – 25 th	Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity. The theme is: " <i>Do you believe this?</i> " (John 11:26)
Sun 25 th	Sunday of the Word of God
Tue 27 th	Holocaust Memorial Day

FEBRUARY

Mon 2 nd	Feast of the Presentation of the Lord
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ALTAR SERVERS' MASS

Bishop Peter invites the Diocese's Altar Servers to join him for the celebration Mass for the Guild of St. Stephen and to renew their commitment to serving at the Altar on Saturday 27th December at 11.00am in St. Mary's Cathedral.

If there are servers to be enrolled into the Guild of St. Stephen that day, please let the Cathedral Office (office@wrexhamcathedral.org.uk) know ASAP in order that medals and membership cards can be prepared. Following the Mass there will be a 'Pizza Lunch' for all servers in the Cathedral Hall. To help defray the costs a small cover charge will be made for the lunch.

CRIB OFFERINGS

In contemporary terms, Mary and Joseph could be an archetypal couple, young- Mary at least, homeless and with a baby, made refugees by circumstance firstly internal and then across borders, for which reasons Bishop Peter has chosen as the recipients of your Christmas Crib Offerings; 'Depaul UK' whose work is grounded in the teachings of 17th-century Catholic reformer St Vincent de Paul. His vision – rooted in compassion, dignity, and putting words into action – inspires them to help young people move out of homelessness and towards a brighter, more secure future. <https://www.depaul.org.uk/winterappeal> Registered Charity Number: 802384. And with an awareness of the ever increased suffering piled upon the people of the Palestinian West Bank, the Bethlehem Care and Hospice Trust's Hospice at Home, a unique Sheffield-based licensed palliative care provider in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) www.bethlehemcareandhospicetrust.org Registered Charity Number 1158406

AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

ARTICLE 18 Petition HAVE YOU SIGNED YET?

Religious freedom: a human right, not a privilege.

As Christians and other religious minorities face growing violence, kidnappings, and discrimination, we must work harder than ever to defend their rights and ensure they're fully protected under Article 18.

Some 5.4 billion people — almost two-thirds of humanity — live in 62 countries where persecution, oppression, and discrimination are perpetrated by their own government or extremist groups, according to our *Religious Freedom in the World Report*.

Will you join us in our worldwide call for fresh action by the United Nations as well as the UK Government and urge them to uphold Article 18 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Read the full petition [here](#).

Christmas cards Again this year, we would like to offer you a 25% discount on (not for sale) trading products including our beautiful Christmas Cards as a thank you for your help and support throughout 2025. You can access this by calling to place your order on 0345 241 6068 or e-mailing Scott and Kerry at shop@acnuk.org for a website discount code.



At CAFOD we would like to thank you for your continued support throughout 2025 and we wish you a happy and peaceful Christmas. Don't forget to visit worldgifts.cafod.org.uk to purchase some special World Gifts for your loved ones! And if you're looking for somewhere to go to brush off the Christmas cobwebs, please do join us in Liverpool for our annual Christmas Fun Run on Saturday 27 December! Festive attire is encouraged!

ST. JOHN ROBERTS 1577 – 1610

1st Abbot of Downside Martyred at Tyburn aged 33

A poem and contribution by Bernadette Riley

St. John Roberts, a true Saint from Wales,
he was born in Trawsfynydd. And Hedd
Wyn with his tales.
Both men had hearts that knew the truth,
they died with conviction after their
youth.

Hedd Wyn was a poet from Trawsfynydd
as well,
he believed in God and he wanted to tell -
his deepest thoughts, his purpose in life,
the war for him was a terrible strife.

Hedd Wyn could see through the eyes of
his soul,
to pass it on that was his goal.
The beauty of creation that is so true,
it was created by God for me and you.

St. John Roberts, your heart was on fire,
your courage and strength, we will always
admire.
You gave your life with such joy to the
Lord,
the Angles were singing in one accord.

Times were hard but you could see,
that Jesus was present in His entirety.
You chose to convert to the Catholic faith,
you wanted more and you needed to
trace.
You gave your heart completely free,
with the poor and the sick you wanted to
be.

You tended with faith you wouldn't give
in,
you helped many people to repent of their
sins.

You were never afraid to challenge and
say,
"I will live for my faith come what may!"
You ducked and dived, you knew you
were free,
in Jesus' heart you wanted to be.
The authorities eventually caught up with
you,
the night before you ate your stew.

You prepared your soul to meet the Lord,
around your neck they placed the cord.
The poor, they came to make sure you
had died,
before they slayed you with the knife.

The tradition back then was to hang, draw
and quarter alive,
the poor people you loved and helped to
survive,
would not allow such a torture to endure;
a Saint you'd become, of that they were
sure.

Can you imagine a person like that,
in his home with his family and round the
table they sat.

HEDD WYN – POET 1883 -1917 (born Ellis Evans)

Killed at Passchendaele in 1917 Aged 30

A poem and contribution by Bernadette Riley

So privileged we are to have a Saint like
you,
'Martyrdom was the ultimate act you
could do!'

Mum said, "There's a saint upon our door,
pray to him and you'll be sure -
that 'he will' intercede for you,
and being from Wales he knows what to
do!"

The consolation we feel inside,
we're filled with love and beam with
pride.
That we have our own very local Saint,
and on our hearts these men did paint;
their zeal for Jesus for us to see,
there's more to this life than our eyes can
see.

So sad, in their thirties both men had to
go,
such in-depth knowledge they would have
shown.
To make this world a better place,
they left their legacy for us to embrace.

If we lift our minds and open our hearts,
feel with our souls and never depart -
from the love of Jesus, He will be by our
side,
in love and happiness where we'll always
abide.

'ALL ABOUT THE SEASON OF ADVENT' QUIZ

A quiz for all the family to try

- 1 What does the word Advent mean?
- 2 What is the liturgical colour for Advent?
- 3 In some countries there is a special feast day in Advent on 6th Dec. What is this day called?
- 4 When does Advent begin?
- 5 The Winter Solstice is in Advent. On which date?
- 6 What is the missing word from this Advent hymn?
"O, come, O come, Emmanuel, and _____ captive Israel
- 7 According to the Guinness Book of Records, where was the largest Advent calendar displayed?
- 8 We eat mince pies in Advent. What shape were the original ones?
- 9 In Sweden there is a special tradition with candles on St Lucia's Day. On which Advent day does this happen?
- 10 Father Christmas is getting ready too. How many reindeer does he have in the poem "Twas the night before Christmas"?
- 11 In Advent we decorate our Christmas trees. In which country did that tradition begin?
- 12 Who brought the first Christmas tree to England?
- 13 Where was Mary when she was told that Jesus was to be born?
- 14 What made Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem?
- 15 What do we call the song that Mary sang?
- 16 What do the 4 candles round the Advent wreath represent?
- 17 Who was born to prepare the way of the Lord?
- 18 In Advent we sing carols. One of them is written in Latin as "Adeste Fideles". Which one?
- 19 Who confirmed to Joseph that he should marry Mary?
- 20 When does Advent finish?
- 21 We send cards in Advent. Who first sent a Christmas card?
- 22 In which county is there a place called Advent?
- 23 A famous composer wrote "Messiah" which is often sung in Advent. Who, and where was he born?
- 24 What is the missing word from this Advent hymn?
"Hark the glad sound! The Saviour comes,
The Saviour long "

Daisy, Daisy, Give me your answer, do, I am half crazy, all for the love of you, It won't be a stylish marriage, I am too poor (*) But you'll look sweet, upon the seat. Of a bicycle made for two, (* I can't afford a carriage)	Jimmy, Jimmy, here is my answer true, you're half crazy if you'll think I'll marry you, if you can't afford a carriage, you can't afford a marriage. And I'll be damned if I'll be crammed on a 'Bicycle Built for Two'.(**) (**This is the unofficial version)
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A 'Bicycle made for Two'

Is this a genuine bit of history – or an 'April Fool'?

Supposedly found in a former monastery, when one translates the text, alongside, one may seriously question its provenance.

Whatever you may decide, it is a bit of fun!

(See the bottom of the page for the translation)

Primula, primula,
Da mihi responsum tuum
Ego insanus dimidium
Omnia ad amor tui
Nuptia ordinaria erunt
Pauper sum
Pulchra eris, in sella,
De birota facto duobus

A Missed Train

Having prayed for patience, a man later missed his train, by a few seconds. For an hour he stomped along the platform in pure anger. As the next train arrived, he realised his prayer had been answered! He had been given an hour to practise the virtue of patience. He had missed the opportunity and had wasted the hour!

(Bernard Hodgson)

A perspective on Freedom

A few years ago, a man went into a communist country police station to ask for permission to travel to Western Europe.

"Aren't you happy here" asked the police.

"I have no complaints" he replied.

"Are you dissatisfied with your work?"

"I have no complaints"

"Are you discontented with the living conditions?" was the next question.

"I have no complaints" the man replied once again.

"Then why do you want to go to the West?"

"Because there I can have complaints", he explained.

Which God do YOU believe in?

A little boy was visiting the home of an elderly woman and was intrigued at a cross stitch on the wall with the text: 'Thou, God seest me'. Noticing the lad's interest the lady took it down and explained: "Some people will tell you that God is watching you to see when and what you are doing wrong -so He can punish you. I don't see it that way. I would prefer that when you read the words, "Thou, God, seest me", you will remember that it is because God loves you so much, He cannot take his eyes off you"

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